

# Excellence

**EXCELLENCE** means very high quality—something that sets a person or thing apart.

## LESSON 1

Read the definition of **EXCELLENCE**. Read: **To excel, you have to work hard, never give up, and try to do your best. Everyone has the ability to excel. When you set high goals, persevere, and strive to give your best effort . . . you can achieve excellence!** Write the following phrases on the board: **Work Hard, Never Give Up, and Try to Do Your Best.** Ask students to listen to the following scenarios, and suggest specific actions they can do to develop excellence.

- **Shalisa would like to improve her messy handwriting.** (practice, keep trying)
- **Keaton loves to play basketball, but he is shorter than all his friends.** (practice often, don't quit)
- **Anthony really wants to play the guitar well.** (ask someone to teach him, practice often, persevere)

***School/Home Link** Ask students to talk with a family member about striving for excellence by working hard, never giving up, and strive to do their best.*

## LESSON 2

Review the definition of **EXCELLENCE**. Tell students that a “motto” is a short saying or phrase that describes a goal or belief. Write the following mottos about excellence on the board: **Excellence is never an accident! and Give your best -- nothing less!** Discuss the meaning of the two mottos. Examples include: Excellence takes hard work and perseverance, so it doesn't happen by accident. Excellence comes when people try to do their best. Encourage students to never be satisfied with anything less than their best effort. As time allows, ask students to create their own motto about excellence or brainstorm together to create a class excellence motto. Post it where all can see. Encourage students to do and be their personal best.

***School/Home Link** Ask students to talk with a family member about one of the mottos on excellence.*

## LESSON 3

Review the definition of **EXCELLENCE**. Read and discuss the quote by educator Marva Collins, **“Excellence is not an act, but a habit. The things you do the most are the things you will do best.”** Ask students to think about an activity or area of interest where they would like to excel. Examples include: soccer, math, dancing, reading, playing the violin, basketball, writing stories, etc. Instruct students to estimate the amount of time they spent participating in their chosen activity during the past week. As time allows, have students calculate how much time they would have spent on the activity over the course of one month if they spent the same amount of time each week. Ask: **Are you spending enough time working on your interest to improve?** Call on students to explain why or why not. Remind students that the things they spend the most time doing will be the areas where they will excel.

***School/Home Link** Ask students to talk with a family member about areas where they want to excel.*

## LESSON 4

Review the definition of **EXCELLENCE**. Tell students that setting high goals can help them achieve excellence. Ask: **What can you do each day to achieve excellence in your schoolwork?** Write their ideas on the board. Examples include: getting enough sleep each night, reading your assignments twice, doing your best job, turning homework in on time, asking questions when you don't understand, eating healthy foods, etc. Encourage students to make specific plans that will help them achieve their goals of excellence. As time allows, have students write a compound sentence stating their goal and what they will do to accomplish it. (Example: I want to make an “A” on my math test, so I will review what I learned in class every night.)

***School/Home Link** Ask students to talk with a family member about setting goals to achieve excellence.*

## LESSON 5

Review the definition of **EXCELLENCE**. Write the following words as headings on the board: Extra and Ordinary. Ask students to think of synonyms (words that mean the same) for each word, and write them on the board in columns under the appropriate heading. (Examples for Extra: added, spare, surplus, etc. Examples for Ordinary: average, common, everyday, etc.) Put a plus sign (+) between Extra and Ordinary and an equal sign (=) after Ordinary and write the new compound word: Extraordinary on the board. Ask students to think of synonyms for Extraordinary and write them below in a third column. Examples include: exceptional, fantastic, remarkable, special, excellent, etc. Compare and contrast the three columns. Read the quote by American writer John W. Gardner, **“Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.”** Encourage students to strive for excellence by putting extra effort into their everyday activities. As time allows, ask students to choose two synonyms from the “Extraordinary” column and write a compound sentence.

***School/Home Link** Ask students to talk to a family member about doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways.*