



## Instructor Guide

### Unit 2: Lesson 1 What Makes a Hero

#### Objectives:

- The learner will identify attributes of heroes and compare and contrast these attributes with those of celebrities.
- The learner will use graphic organizers to sort attributes and match them to notable figures and characters.
- The learner will understand what defines an individual as a hero.

**Time Needed:** It is flexible. You can choose to do everything in this guide, or you might select just a few parts to do with the kids each day

#### Materials, depending on which activities you choose:

- **2-1-5 Venn Diagrams for Heroes versus Celebrities** (2 printed copies of page 3 per child)
- **2-1-8 Assessment for What Makes a Hero** (1 per child)
- **2-1-6 Names of Heroes and Celebrities worksheet** (1 printed copy per child)
- **2-1-7 Qualities of Heroes and Celebrities worksheet** (1 printed copy per child)
- Whiteboard, projector
- Markers, pens and paper
- For visual art activity, provide T-shirts, ideally blank of the back, for superhero capes, along with fabric markers or fabric paints, Sharpies, and pre-cut felt letters and fabric glue.
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
  - [Kindness Is My Superpower by Alicia Ortego](#)
  - [Malala's Pencil by Malala Yousafzai](#)
  - [Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean's Most Fearless Scientist by Jess Keating](#)
- A copy of **2-1-4 Sharing Circle Script for What Makes a Hero?**

**Fundamental Skill:** Critical thinking

## Part One: Watch Video for Kids about What Makes a Hero?

Start by watching the **What Makes a Hero? Video for Kids**. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

## **Part Two: Discussions about What Makes a Hero**

**Essential Questions:** What is the difference between a hero and a celebrity?

### **Introduction to what makes a hero:**

*Who are some of your everyday heroes?* Invite kids to name a few heroes.

*What makes them heroic?* Prompt kids to describe the qualities or behaviors that make someone a hero.

### **Teaching Kids the Difference between Heroes and Celebrities:**

**Key Concept 1:** A hero is someone who makes a sacrifice or takes a risk, however small, for the sake of others. Being an everyday hero is something anyone can achieve.

- An act of heroism could be something as simple as giving up the chance to partner with your best friend on an activity because you see someone else is lonely and never gets asked to be a partner.
- It could be skipping a chance to hang out and play video games with friends so you can help your grandma cook dinner and fold the laundry at the end of a long day.

**Key Concept 2:** Celebrities tend to focus more on themselves and heroes focus more on others.

- Celebrities often promote their brand and their name as a primary goal.
- Heroes don't need recognition. They promote issues and advocate for causes as their primary goal, because their focus is on helping others.
- There are people who can be both heroes and celebrities! We will examine that later.

**Key Concept 3:** Many heroes will make a difference in just one or two people's lives.

- You don't have to save the whole world to be heroic. Sure, Ironman and the Avengers saved the whole universe from Thanos, but you can be heroic by helping just one person in your life.

## **Part Three: Activity Options**

\*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see **2-1-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for What Makes a Hero?**

**Activity Option 1: Examining the difference between heroes and celebrities using charts and Venn diagrams. This is a four-part activity that may take extra time.**

### **Before the kids come into the room:**

On a white board, set up two identical empty T-Charts similar to the examples provided in **2-1-7 Qualities of Heroes and Celebrities** and **2-1-6 Names of Heroes and Celebrities**. When the children come in, as part of the activity, they will brainstorm names and qualities with you to populate the charts.

### **Part One of Activity 1: List the characteristics of heroes and celebrities.**

- Use a flipboard, a white board, or a large screen to project the T-chart modeled in worksheet **2-1-7 Qualities of Heroes and Celebrities**. Children may also write on their own copy.
- Ask children to provide *describing words* for heroes and celebrities, and ask them which column the words should go in. For examples of descriptive words, see the first page of **2-1-5 Venn Diagram for Heroes vs Celebrities**.
- As your students give answers, write them down on the board. You'll get a wide variety of answers—everything from “they’re strong!” to “they care about people.” Start to look for responses that get at the definition of a real-life hero: *someone who makes a sacrifice or takes a risk, however small, for the sake of others*.
- As you add words to the chart, ensure that the students understand their meaning. Ask for reasoning behind each descriptive and its placement on the chart. There will be disagreements, so take advantage of these to encourage critical thinking.

### **Part Two of Activity 1: Categorize figures as heroes or celebrities (or both).**

- Use a flipboard, a white board, or a large screen to project the T-chart modeled in worksheet **2-1-6 Names of Heroes and Celebrities**. Children may also write on their own copy.
- Invite children to brainstorm names for you to add to this second chart. Ask kids whether the person should be listed as a Hero or a Celebrity. Encourage children to include actors, singers, and sports players along with recognizable heroes and superheroes from comic books, literature, film, and TV shows!
- Acknowledge that some of the names could go in both columns.
- Throughout the discussion and name placing, some concepts of heroism and celebrity will likely come up, including fame, bravery, “doing good,” etc. Facilitate this discussion and then move on to the next word.

### **Part Three of Activity 1: Small group work to make Venn diagrams.**

- Using the T-charts the whole group has generated in parts one and two as guides, have children work in small groups (2-4 kids) to create two Venn Diagrams. The children will each need two identical printed copies of page three of **2-1-5 Venn Diagrams for Heroes versus Celebrities**.
  - In the first Venn diagram, ask children to write in people who are heroes, people who are celebrities, and an intersection of people who are both. They can use the examples from the whole group discussion or generate their own new ones.
  - In the second Venn diagram, children will write in the *qualities* of heroes, celebrities, and the intersection of both. Again, they may use the examples from the whole group discussion or generate their own new ones.

## **Part Four of Activity 1: Whole group follow-up discussion on heroes and celebrities**

- Come back together as a group. Invite each group to share an example from their Venn diagram.
- Ask: “*What characteristics do the heroes have in common?*”
- If needed, explain that you’re looking for what *makes* these people heroes, or what the students *admire* about them, apart from a certain talent.
- Ask students thought-provoking questions.
  - “*Do you think it’s easy for these people to be heroes?*” Students will know the answer is no. From here, you can ask other open-ended questions:
  - “*What’s the hardest thing these heroes had to do?*”
  - “*Why did these heroes do what they did, if it’s not easy?*”
- This will get students thinking about the cost of being a hero: the sacrifice or risk involved. At this point, you can summarize what they’ve said and offer this definition of heroism and write it on the board: **A hero is someone who makes a sacrifice or takes a risk, however small, for the sake of others.**

### **Activity Option 2: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss What Makes a Hero?**

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled **2-1-4 Sharing Circle Script on What Makes a Hero**. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

### **Activity Option 3: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about What Makes a Hero.**

- We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how they think the story relates to practicing origin stories.
- Children can also draw pictures of the stories as they are listening (or afterwards as a separate activity).
  - Kindness Is My Superpower by Alicia Ortego
  - Malala's Pencil by Malala Yousafzai
  - Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean's Most Fearless Scientist by Jess Keating

### **Activity Option 4: Physical activity:** Ask children to pretend that they are attending a superhero training camp and they need to teach superhero movements to each other. Each child can be a specialist in a different type of movement that they will create and then teach to the whole group. For example:

- Practice a special sprinting run that launches a hero into the sky to fly.
- Practice dodging flying objects and rolling across the ground to avoid obstacles.
- Practice handstands or backbends or cartwheels to avoid magical lasers.
- After each child has had a chance to be the specialist, ask the children to combine multiple movements that they have learned from each other into a whole routine, and see how many they can do in a row!

**Activity Option 5: Drama/Theater activity:** Invite kids to form groups and create a skit about this week's theme, which is What Makes a Hero? Below are prompts:

- “You and your friends are on your way to a day at the county fair. Just outside the entrance, a family is upset because they lost their dog. You all want to spend as much time as possible at the fair, and you also want to help this family. What do you do?”
- “A severe storm sweeps through your town and causes damage to buildings, homes and schools. Show how you would organize friends to find small ways of helping your community during the recovery. There are many ways to help – watching over young kids, cleaning up trash, baking cookies for first responders – so be creative!

**Activity Option 6: Visual Art activity:** Each child will make a superhero cape. You can use large YMCA T-shirts or have children bring old T-shirts from home. Ideally the shirts are plain on the back.

- Cut off the arms of the T-shirt. Cut it open along the sides. Cut off the front of the T-shirt, leaving just the neck, so that the cape can fit over the child's head. See the image for clarity.
- Children can use fabric markers, fabric paints, or Sharpies to decorate their cape.
- Children can also glue pre-cut felt letters onto their cape to make their name or write out the name of the superhero they wish to be.



## Part Four: Assessment

If you want to do a formal assessment at the end, hand out one printed copy to each child of **2-1-8 Assessment for What Makes a Hero**. Ask the children to do the written exercise. For primary students, you can talk through this assessment as a discussion.

- Observe student understanding of the concepts through the discussions.
- Assess the two Venn diagrams completed in group work, based on students' sorting and their ability to explain *why* they placed certain people or attributes where they did.

## Accommodations/Modifications for diverse learners in your classroom:

Ensure that the names of heroes and celebrities you use includes a diverse group of people from various genders, races and ethnicities, and has representatives that reflect the makeup of your student population.

## Enrichment Activity:

Challenge students to find credible resources about celebrities that do charitable or heroic deeds. If they choose, students may write brief summary descriptions of one or more of these activities.

## Supplemental/Extended Readings:

### Informational Text:

D. Truby, *15 Ways Students Are Changing the World*, [www.weareteachers.com](http://www.weareteachers.com), October 24, 2016, <https://www.weareteachers.com/15-ways-students-changing-world/>.

## Fictional Text:

1. *Action Comics #1*
2. *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, a series of fantasy adventure novels, by Rick Riordan
3. *Legend of the Mantamaji Book 1* by Eric Dean Seaton. This comic specifically deals with a protagonist that is self-centered, but must quickly learn to adopt heroic traits when he discovers that he is the last of a line of mystic knights that must defend the world from a group of evil wizards. The author, Eric Dean Seaton, is Black, and the cast of characters is ethnically diverse, with a Black protagonist.

## **Common Core Standards**

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.B

Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.C

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.D

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4

Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; ... gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.