

The True Story of Abbie Burgess

<p>Grade Level: 1</p> <p>Character Education Focus: Courage and Responsibility</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>Students will read a story about Abbie Burgess and identify at least three specific actions this main character takes to make the author call her a heroine exhibiting traits of <i>courage</i> and <i>responsibility</i>. Through discussion of the story, students will learn that children as well as adults can become heroes by helping others out in a time of need. Students will also learn to identify the beginning, middle, and end of a story. (30 minutes)</p>	<p>Materials Needed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vaughn, M. & Farnsworth, B. (1999) <i>Abbie against the storm: The true story of a young heroine and a lighthouse.</i> Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing, Inc. 2. Note: other books about Abbie Burgess would also work well with this lesson plan. 3. Strips of white construction paper 9" by 18" folded into thirds.
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Academic - Character Education Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify Abbie Burgess as the main character of the story and provide at least three examples as to why the author labels her a hero.
2. Gain an understanding that a hero (or heroine) is a person of *responsibility* and distinguished *courage* or ability, admired for his/her brave deeds and noble qualities.
3. Define *courage* and *responsibility* with examples of each from the story.
4. Distinguish the beginning, middle, and end of the story by drawing simple pictures.

California English-Language Arts Standards Addressed

Reading

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

- 3.1 Identify and describe the elements of plot, setting, and character(s) in a story, as well as the story's beginning, middle, and ending.
- 3.3 Recollect, talk, and write about books read during the school year.

Lesson Procedures

1. Discuss with students the definition of a *hero*, or *heroine* - a person of distinguished *courage* or ability, admired for his/her brave deeds and noble qualities. Discuss the definition of *courage* - the ability to face difficulty without fear; bravery. Provide examples familiar to students.

2. Then link the concept of heroic action with *responsibility* - to be accountable for your own actions and choices (and their consequences) without blaming others. Ask, *how do heroes show responsibility?*
3. Discuss the meaning of a main character in a story. (The main character is the person that the story is actually about; it is their life we follow most closely in the story.) Tell students they will be reading about a heroine who not only showed *courage* in her actions, but also demonstrated a strong sense of *responsibility*. Ask students to think about how the main character Abbie, shows both *courage* and *responsibility* in this true story.
4. Read the story. Referring to the definition of *main character* ask students to identify the main character of the story (Abbie Burgess). Referring to the critical attributes of the definition, ask students to tell you why she is the main character.
5. Remind students of the definition of hero. Have students identify at least three reasons why the author considers Abbie Burgess a hero. Ask students how Abbie shows *responsibility*.
6. During the whole class discussion of the story ask individual students to identify the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Then ask students what pictures they could draw to show each of the three parts of the story.
7. Direct students in how to fold their paper in thirds. Have students draw three pictures, one per box, depicting the beginning, middle, and end of the story on their own strip of paper.
8. In groups of four, have students share their pictures that depict the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Taking turns, students describe their pictures.
9. To close the lesson, ask the students to turn to a partner and respond to these questions, *What heroic acts did Abbie do? How do these acts show courage? How do these acts show responsibility?*

Academic - Character Education Assessment

Academic Assessment: The student drawings and responses will provide evidence of their knowledge of beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Character Education Assessment: The teacher will know from the students' responses their understanding of a hero and the qualities they exhibit, i.e. *courage, responsibility, etc.*

Students can also process their small group work with one or more of these questions, *How did each person in the group show responsibility? Did each person take turns in sharing their responses? What would the group do differently next time?*

Reflective Journaling Prompts

- Who do you think is a hero? What thing(s) did he/she do to show that he/she is a hero?
- What is something difficult for you to do?
- What makes you afraid? What do you do to take away the fear?
- Tell me about a time someone helped you do something difficult.

Extensions and Variations

Create a bulletin board entitled *Courage and Responsibility*. Cut blue construction paper ribbons to hang on the board. Students can write about times when they exhibited *courage* and/or *responsibility*, observed or read about something *courageous* someone else has done.

Invite a parent, older student, principal, custodian, etc. into the classroom to share a time that they observed a heroic or *courageous* act by another person. (This is especially great if you can get a grandparent who has lived through a disaster to come and share with the class).

Teacher Notes or References

Most teachers have been exposed to Abbie Burgess the heroine Lighthouse Keeper whose story has been read by countless schoolchildren. For more background on this heroine, go to: <http://users.tellurian.com/freddie/burgess/abbie.htm>. There you will find information on Abbie taken from a book called "*The Lighthouses of New England*" written by Edward Rowe Snow.

For other books on lighthouses and heroines of lighthouses go to:
<http://www.tonibuzzeo.com/booksseachestbooks.html>

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