

Intro to Resilience

Most Resilient Creature

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 3 or more

Time: 30-45 minutes

Introduction: In this activity, students will get creative as they try to come up with the world's "most resilient creature." This leads into a discussion about what makes us stand apart as humans in our own capacity for resilience.

Materials:

- 1 poster board per group of 3-4
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils for each group of 3-4

Activity:

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Display the definition of resilience on the board, and tell students that today we're going to be using what we know about resilience to design the most resilient creature on Earth. Give students 5 minutes to create a list in their small groups of all the qualities this creature might have. For example, quick healing powers, extra-bouncy legs, etc. – The sky is the limit! When time is up, distribute the poster board and art materials and tell students that they'll now be using their lists to design their resilient creature.

Give students plenty of time to complete their design, then have them present their posters to the class. Have each group explain why they chose the features they chose for their resilient creature. Give each group a round of applause after they present their creature.

Following the presentations, tell students that they may be interested to know which *non-fictional* creature is considered to be the most resilient on Earth. This animal is called the water bear, and has the following resilient qualities:

- It can survive extreme environments that would kill other animals, like the bottom of the ocean, glaciers, and hot springs.
- It can withstand temperatures ranging from absolute zero to hotter than boiling water.
- It can withstand 1000 times more radiation than humans.
- It can live over ten years without water.
- It is the only animal that can survive in outer space.

For more information on the water bear and images to include in your presentation, the following site is a good resource: <http://mudfooted.com/water-bear-world-toughest-animal/>

Processing the Experience:

- Did the creatures you designed have more resilience against physical challenges or mental challenges?
- While humans may not have the same powers as some of our imaginary creatures and the water bear, in what ways are humans good at adapting to their conditions?
- What makes humans unique when it comes to our ability to be resilient?

- Do you think everyone is capable of increasing their resilience?
- What can we learn from our resilient creatures today about being more resilient in our own lives?

You may want to display the posters on the wall of your classroom and title it something like, "Resilient Creature Gallery."