



ATHLETE STORIES

A STORY ABOUT RESILIENCE

Sarah Nurse was a key member of Canada's women's hockey team that won silver at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games. It was the apex of her hockey career and the culmination of 16 years of pursuing her dream. While most people would be overjoyed with an Olympic silver medal, the intense rivalry with Team USA makes anything less than a Canadian gold an unbearable disappointment for our team. Bouncing back from this defeat was only part of a career marked by incredible resilience.

Throughout her career, Sarah was a minority in the world of ice hockey. Not only was she a woman playing what many still perceived to be a man's game, she was a Black player. She demonstrated a resilience and determination to overcome stereotypes.

This resource examines resilience: the ability to get back up after defeat or disappointment. The role of positive habits in responding with resilience is discussed.

Her parents were the ones that coached her in focusing on good habits. These lessons seem to have been part of the family. Her cousins include Darnell Nurse (NHL), Kia Nurse (WNBA and Pan Am Games gold medalist) and two of her uncles played CFL football.

Sarah continues to play for Team Canada and hopes to play at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.



TEACHING VALUES THROUGH OLYMPIC STORIES

Olympic stories of triumph and disappointment can engage learners in discussions about important value issues. Through the stories and challenges of Olympic athletes, children and youth can explore and connect values to their lives, and perhaps begin to see their world in new and different ways.



TEACHING GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Current curriculum theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcing values education messages through narratives, storytelling, art, posters, drama, and physical movement, activities based on the stories, events, ceremonies and symbols of the Olympic Games stories have school-wide relevance.

THE OLYMPIC VALUES

The core Olympic Values are identified as Excellence, Respect and Friendship. The narratives which follow highlight these values. When you engage your learners with these narratives you will be expanding their moral and physical understanding and capabilities.

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The following principles of learning are highlighted in order to engage students actively in the values education process:

1. Learning is an active and not a passive activity. Students need to be actively engaged in discussion, sharing their ideas in small groups and exploring differing points of view.
2. People learn in different ways. Some people learn best by reading; some people learn best by listening; some people learn best by moving around. The activities associated with these narratives' present different ways of learning.
3. Learning is both an individual and a cooperative activity. Young people need opportunities to work together as well as independently. They also need to practice cooperative behaviours in order to learn competitive behaviours.

STAGES OF THE LEARNING SEQUENCE

Successful learning is built upon a carefully scaffolded series of steps that **connect** to students' prior understanding, actively **process** or practice new information, and finally **transform** their understandings into powerful demonstrations of learning.

Each values story is presented at three reading levels: Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, and Grades 6 -7. The accompanying activities are sufficiently open-ended to address a diverse range of learning styles and proficiencies. They focus on six main facets of understanding:

Explaining, Interpreting, Applying, Taking Perspective, Empathizing, and Developing Self-Knowledge. These critical thinking skills are woven into all three stages of the learning sequence in order to promote deep understanding of the values and concepts.



CONNECTING

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR NEW LEARNING

1. Partner Brainstorm (All Grades)

In pairs, students list some good habits and what these habits do to help them.

Examples might include brushing their teeth, eating a healthy breakfast, helping with chores, playing outside, doing their homework, or apologizing when they hurt someone's feelings.

2. Class Share (All Grades)

Make a class list of these good habits. Explain how good habits can prevent us from getting sick, give us routine, keep us focused on a task, or help us improve a skill.

Discuss how habits can also be a source of comfort through disappointments, discouragements, or difficult times. Olympic athletes use good habits to overcome difficulties or bounce back after injury or bad performances.

PROCESSING

USING STRATEGIES TO ACQUIRE AND USE KNOWLEDGE

Journal Entry (All Grades)

Ask the students to read the story silently on their own.

Reread the story with the students.

Ask the students to write a journal entry about their personal thoughts on Sarah's parents focus on habits instead of outcomes. What are some of the pros/cons about this approach?

How did habits help Sarah overcome difficulty and disappointment?

A "Be Olympic Journal" handout is available.

TRANSFORMING

SHOWING UNDERSTANDING IN A NEW WAY

Ask students to think of a good habit that they would like to start. Encourage them to pick a habit that will help them reach their goals, overcome a challenge, or work through difficulty or sadness.

Poster Creation (Grades 2-5)

Draw a poster promoting this habit. Write a short slogan for the poster that states the habit and how it will help.

Dialogue Writing (Grades 6-7)

Using proper punctuation, write a dialogue between a younger student and you, explaining the habit and how adopting it could help them.



SARAH NURSE

ICE HOCKEY

When Sarah was only seven years old, Team Canada won Olympic gold at women's hockey. She was so inspired that she made paper gold medals for her family. That day she knew she wanted to play hockey for Canada. She too wanted to win gold.

Sarah loved playing hockey. She loved the feeling of skating fast. She loved scoring goals and winning games.

Her parents said winning is not the main thing. They told her to focus on good habits. Focus on the habits that make you a winner. These help you succeed when things go well and when times are hard.

One game, her team was losing. With only a minute to go, Sarah scored two goals. The game ended in a tie. Her team was so happy and proud of her. On the drive home, her dad was not as happy. He talked to her about trying her best for the whole game. That was the winning habit.

"I was taught to focus on habits and not winning," she says. "In a game, I should focus on habits like making good passes, and having my head up. In school, I should focus on paying attention. If I won, my parents would ask me, 'what did you do to win?' And if the outcome wasn't good, they would say, 'you know what? Your habits are good, and you will be successful next time.'"

Some of the other players made fun of her for being different. Sarah is biracial, her dad is Black, and her mom is white. Some people said that Black girls weren't good at hockey.

She felt she had to show them that this was wrong. Hockey was for girls too and playing well didn't depend on your skin colour. Standing up for what is right is a good habit.

"If I wanted to silence them, I had to beat them on the ice," she says.

Sarah became one of the top players for her age. She won a scholarship to play at an American university. Her team played in front of big crowds. She was one of the best players on her team. But she kept focusing on good habits.

Making Team Canada wasn't easy. She wanted to play in the World Championships. She dreamed of being one of Canada's best players. For three years, she tried out for Canada's team. For three years, the coaches chose other players instead of her.

She was sad. It didn't seem fair. She kept thinking of her parents' advice. She focused on good habits. These habits helped her bounce back after disappointment.

"I trusted in the little things that I did every day. I trusted in doing my workouts and playing hard every game. I trusted this would help me be a winner."

It all paid off when she was picked to play for Canada's team for the 2018 Olympics. When she skated onto the ice for her first Olympic game, she couldn't believe that she was finally there.

She played the best hockey of her life. She scored a game-winning goal against the Americans. But this was one of the early games and the final was still to come. In the final game, the Americans came back for revenge. Canada lost in a shootout.

Yes, they won a silver medal. But they came to win gold. The team was heartbroken.

How would she bounce back from this loss? She focused on good habits. She tried her best. She didn't give up.

After the Olympics, Sarah was drafted to a professional women's hockey team. Again, she became one of her team's star players. But it didn't feel fair. Women hockey players were paid much less than the men playing in the NHL.

Sarah remembered being teased as a young player. People said Black girls weren't good hockey players. The more she thought about this, the more she wanted to help other girls play hockey. She wanted hockey to welcome all girls. It was time to exercise the habit of standing up for what is right.

"I want to show the world that all women belong in hockey," she says.

RESILIENCE



SCHOOL PROGRAM

SARAH NURSE

ICE HOCKEY

When she was seven years old, Sarah Nurse watched Team Canada win the Olympic gold medal in women's hockey. It was so inspiring that she made paper gold medals for her family. That day, she started dreaming of winning an Olympic medal for herself.

Sarah loved playing hockey. She loved the feeling of skating fast, scoring goals and winning games. Her parents always said that winning is not the most important thing. They helped her focus on the good habits she needed to be successful. These habits help you keep succeeding and bounce back when times are hard.

One game, her team was down for most of the game. In the last minute, she scored two quick goals. The game ended in a tie. Her coaches and teammates were so happy. Everyone congratulated her, except her dad. When they drove home, he reminded her that she did not try her best for most of the game. That winning habit was missing in this game.

"I was taught to focus on habits, not outcome," she says. "In a game, I should focus on habits like checking, making good passes, and having my head up. In school, I should focus on taking notes, studying, paying attention. If I was successful, my parents would ask me, 'what did you do to get yourself there?' And if the outcome wasn't successful, they would say, 'you know what? Your habits are good, and you will be successful next time.'"

Some of the other players put her down for being different. Sarah is biracial, her dad is Black, and her mom is white. Some people said that Black girls weren't good at hockey.

She felt she had to show them that this was wrong. Hockey was for girls too and playing well didn't depend on your skin colour. Standing up for what is right is a good habit.

"If I wanted to silence them, I had to outplay them on the ice," she says.

Sarah became one of the top players in her age group. She won a scholarship to play at an American university. Her team played in front of sold-out crowds and she felt like a professional. She kept focusing on good habits.

Making Team Canada wasn't easy. She wanted to play in the World Championships. She dreamed of proving that she was one of Canada's best players. For three years, she tried out for Canada's national team. For three years, the coaches chose other players instead of her.

It was discouraging. She kept thinking of her parents' advice to focus on the habits and not the outcome. It helped her to be resilient in difficult times. Resilience is being able to bounce back after disappointment or defeat.

"I trusted in the little things that I did every day. I trusted in doing my workouts and playing hard every game. I trusted this this would help me be successful."

It all paid off when she was selected to Canada's team for the 2018 Olympic Games. When she skated onto the ice for her first game in PyeongChang and saw the Olympic rings, she couldn't believe that she was finally there.

She played the best hockey of her life and scored a game-winning goal against the Americans early in the tournament. But in the final game, the Americans came back for revenge. Canada lost to the United States in a shootout.

The team was heartbroken. Her team's disappointment was the opposite of the celebration of the team in Salt Lake City that had inspired her so long ago. They had focused on nothing other than a gold medal and silver just wasn't good enough. She went home and thought about how to bounce back from that loss. What good habits would help her overcome this deep disappointment?

Soon after the Olympics, Sarah was drafted to a professional women's hockey team. She played very well on the team and scored great goals. But she knew that women were paid much less than men playing in the NHL.

She also thought about the racist comments she heard as a young hockey player. She remembered how people said that girls can't play hockey and she became determined to help girls overcome those challenges. The more she thought about this the more she was determined to try to change things. She wanted to make hockey more welcoming to young girls of all racial backgrounds. It was time to exercise the habit of standing up for what is right.

"Accomplishing my Olympic dream made me realize also that I'm more than an athlete. I have so much more to offer," she says. "I want to show the world that all women belong in hockey."



SARAH NURSE

ICE HOCKEY

When she was seven years old, Sarah Nurse watched the Canadian women's hockey team win gold at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. It was very inspiring. It was so moving that she made paper gold medals for her family. It was then that she started dreaming of winning an Olympic medal for herself.

Sarah loved playing hockey. She loved the feeling of skating fast, scoring goals and winning games. But her parents always taught her that winning is not the most important thing. They helped her focus on developing the habits she needed to be successful and to overcome difficulties.

She learned this lesson one evening when her team was down for most of the game. In the last minute, she scored two quick goals. The game ended in a tie. Her coaches and teammates were overjoyed. Everyone congratulated her, except her dad. When they got to the car, he reminded her that she did not try her best for most of the game. Focusing on the winning habit of doing her best was more important than the two goals she scored.

"I was taught to focus on habits, not outcome," she says. "In a game, I should focus on habits like checking, making good passes, and having my head up. Or in the classroom, I should focus on taking notes, studying, paying attention. If I was successful, my parents would ask me, 'what did you do to get yourself there?' And if the outcome wasn't successful, they would say, 'you know what? Your habits are good, and you will be successful next time.'"

Some of the other players put her down for being different. Sarah is biracial, her dad is Black, and her mom is white. She had to learn to ignore racist comments from people who thought she didn't belong in hockey. She also heard negative remarks about how girls were not as skilled at hockey as boys.

She felt she had to show them that this was wrong. Hockey was for girls too and playing well didn't depend on your skin colour. Standing up for what is right is a good habit.

"My response to everyone has always been through my play," she says. "If I wanted to silence them, I had to beat them on the ice."

Sarah became one of the top players in her age group and she won a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin. Her team played in front of sold-out arenas and she felt like a professional. With all the perks of being an excellent player, she had to keep focused on the good habits. It was these habits that would be required for her ultimate goal: playing at the Olympics.

Despite her university success, the goal of making Team Canada seemed elusive. For three years, she tried out for Canada's national team. For three years, the coaches chose other players instead of her. It was becoming discouraging.

She remembered her parents' advice of focusing on the good habits and not the outcomes. It helped her be resilient in difficult times. Resilience is the ability to bounce back up and try again after a setback or defeat.

"I trusted in the little things that I did every day. I trusted in my consistency, in doing my workouts and playing hard every game and that would help me be successful."

It all paid off, and in 2018 she was selected to Canada's team for the Olympic Games. When she skated onto the ice for her first game in PyeongChang and saw the Olympic rings, she couldn't believe that she was finally there.

She played the best hockey of her life and scored a game-winning goal against the Americans early in the tournament. But in the final game, the Americans came back for revenge. Canada lost to the United States in a shootout.

The team was heartbroken. Their disappointment was the opposite of the celebration of the team in Salt Lake City that had inspired her so long ago. They had focused on nothing other than a gold medal and silver just wasn't good enough. She went home and thought about how to bounce back from that loss. What good habits would help her overcome this deep disappointment?

Soon after the Olympics, Sarah was drafted to a professional women's hockey team. She played very well on the team and scored great goals. But she knew that she and her teammates earned far less money and were given far less respect than men in the National Hockey League (NHL). She thought about the comments she heard as a young hockey player. She remembered how people said that girls can't play hockey or that Black players weren't as good as white players. The more she thought about this, the more determined she was to help girls overcome those challenges.

Sarah now had a goal bigger than making the next Olympics. She wanted to make hockey more welcoming to young girls of all racial backgrounds. It was time to exercise the habit of standing up for what is right.

"Accomplishing one of my dreams made me realize also that I'm more than an athlete, that I have so much more to offer," she says. "I want to show the world that women belong in hockey."

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EFFORTS AND CREATIVITY

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