

Choose Your Own Adventure – Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 9

Suggested Duration: 3 hours or 3 class periods

Target Audience: Students who may need to build awareness of their postsecondary options and build resilience when things don't go as planned

Video: "How I Got Here: Greg"

§110.31. English Language Arts and Reading, English I (One Credit)

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(13) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:

(A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea

(B) structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way (e.g., using outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, lists) and develop drafts in timed and open-ended situations that include transitions and the rhetorical devices used to convey meaning

(C) revise drafts to improve style, word choice, figurative language, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed

(D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

(E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences

(14) Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing. Students are expected to:

(A) write an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, and a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot

Greg is living his dream life as a music professional in New York City. However, his path was anything but smooth. There were a few unexpected turns, but Greg stuck to his goals. In this lesson, students will practice being proactive in their college and career planning, and practice resilience when things go awry.

Student Objective: Students write a “choose your own adventure” story in which a character has opportunities to a) choose a variety of postsecondary study options, b) experience a variety of unexpected challenges, and c) respond to those challenges in ways that might lead to positive or not-so-positive outcomes.

Lesson Preparation: While preparing for this lesson with your students, make sure to watch the “How I Got Here: Greg” video first. The video will provide guidance on how to navigate the lesson with your students and highlight the key messages for them to take away. You may also wish to find an old “choose your own adventure book” to share with students to remind them how these stories are structured.

Educator Direction: (15 min) Play the “How I Got Here: Greg” video for your class and ask students to recall the events leading up to his current position as a successful music professional in New York City. Key incidents to recall are:

- Enrolled at The University of Texas at San Antonio
- Lost his scholarship
- Took out student loans
- Got paid internships
- Graduated and moved to New York City

Emphasize that Greg did not give up after he lost his scholarship. Instead he displayed resilience. Ask students what resilience means to them, then follow up by writing on the board and/or reading this definition by Diana Coutu in the *Harvard Business Review*...

Resilience is showing the following traits when faced with hardships:

- Having a staunch acceptance of reality
- Making meaning of hardship rather than crying out in despair
- Improvising solutions

Next, ask students how they have been resilient—allowing them an opportunity to realize they already have resiliency. Then ask them what they think Greg may have said or done to exemplify each bullet point above. Examples are below:

- Having a staunch acceptance of reality: “I made a bad choice, and I lost my scholarship.”
- Making meaning of hardship rather than crying out in despair: “I have to learn from this experience and move on. I cannot sit here and feel sorry for myself. I need to keep my focus on my dreams.”
- Improvising solutions: “I will go online and figure out how to fill out a financial aid application,” or “I will ask my career services office to help me with my resume so I can get an internship.”

(30 min) Then tell students that they are going to create a “choose your own adventure” story for Greg that builds on the video they watched. (Note: At this time, you may also wish to share a “choose your own adventure” book with students to remind them how these stories are structured.) Story planning will occur together as a class using a concept map. Put the graphic from Greg’s Concept Map (see below) on the screen.

Possible Educator Dialogue:

This concept map shows Greg’s story, and luckily it has a happy ending because he was resilient. Let’s look at the Happy Outcome in Option 1a. Greg made good decisions to lead to this ending. However, can someone think of another decision that Greg could have made to have a not-so-happy ending? (Fill in box for Option 1b with students’ responses.)

Now imagine if, after losing his scholarship, Greg took a different path. Let’s think of what scenario we could put in Option 2. (Sample text: Greg decided that school was not worth the money and opted to work full-time instead. Because all he had was a high school diploma, he got a job in retail that paid \$11/hour.)

What might be a happy ending for Greg? What might he do to have a happy ending? (Elicit student responses and write them in Option 2a. A sample response might be that Greg took night classes at a community college while he worked in retail. Later, he transferred to a four-year college, took out small loans, got his degree, and got a great job in the music industry.)

What might be a not-so-happy ending for Greg? What might he do to have a not-so-happy ending? (Elicit student responses and write them in Option 2b. Sample: Greg blamed the world for his luck, stayed in his retail job, bought a car, and gave up on college because he didn’t think it was worth the investment.)

(15 min) Next, have students fill in Option 3 and the boxes below individually (on a separate piece of paper), and have them share their responses with the class. Guide the discussion to emphasize examples of resilience or lack of resilience.

(100 min) Then introduce the individual writing task. Students will develop their own “choose your own adventure” story for Greg based on the Concept Map the class developed. Stories should:

- Employ a solid writing process, with clear audience, purpose, and use of language, plus excellent grammar, spelling, and mechanics
- Have an engaging story with a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, and a range of literary strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense) and devices to enhance the plot
- Include examples or non-examples of resilience

Activity logistics may vary, depending on time, student interest and readiness, and availability of technology.

- Students may work individually or in groups.
- Each student or group may write an entire story or just one path in the “choose your own adventure.”
- Students may use pencil and paper, or use the Inklewriter website (<https://writer.inklestudios.com/>), which allows for a “choose your own adventure” format.
- Reviews may be done by peers or by the educator.
- Revisions may happen in class or as homework.
- Educators may wish to provide different options for Greg (such as community college, apprenticeships) that are not listed in the Concept Map. Educators may also choose to have students create their own character altogether.

(20 min) To close the lesson, students may share their stories with classmates. They may comment on what they might do if they were in situations presented in their classmates’ stories and why they would make those decisions.

Greg knew he wanted to go into the music business. He went to college on scholarship. Unfortunately, Greg lost his scholarship.

Option 1 – College, Loans, and Jobs

Greg licked his wounds and decided to take out small student loans and work to pay his bills.

1a. Happy Ending:

Greg stuck with it, though it was hard work. He graduated, has a successful career, and is repaying his loans.

1b. Not-So-Happy Ending:

Option 2 – Work and No College

2a. Happy Ending:

2b. Not-So-Happy Ending:

Option 3 – College, Big Loans, and No Job

3a. Happy Ending:

3b. Not-So-Happy Ending: