

Chicago: Felix Fights Equity | Lesson Plan

How does the push for equity of outcome in schools affect student achievement, discipline, and motivation?

Students will understand how Felix's experience reveals the failure of equity-based educational policies and affirms the importance of discipline, high expectations, and personal perseverance in the pursuit of real learning.

Learning Objectives:

- Locate and identify the city of Chicago, IL, on a map and describe its geographic and cultural significance, including major landmarks.
- Locate and identify the island of Puerto Rico on a map and determine the distance to Chicago, IL.
- Describe how Felix's identity and daily life are shaped by his values, his family, and his experience growing up as a Chicagoan.
- Analyze how equity-based education policies influence classroom behavior, academic achievement, and school culture.
- Explain the connection between discipline, high expectations, and student motivation. Reflect on how perseverance and personal initiative can overcome the effects of flawed systems.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Puerto Rico:** A Caribbean island with a primarily Spanish-speaking populace.
- **Equity of outcome:** The idea that all students should end up with the same results, even if they don't do the same work or behave the same way.
- **Equality:** An American ideal that means everyone is treated the same under the law, with the same rules, rights, and expectations, regardless of background or identity.
- **DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion):** A set of institutional practices and policies that claim to promote fairness by shifting focus from individual effort to group identity but often replace merit and discipline with lowered standards and identity-based outcomes.
- **Discrimination:** Unfair treatment of individuals based on traits like race, gender, or religion.
- **Bigot:** A person who refuses to accept others' beliefs or differences and treats people unfairly because of it.
- **Restorative justice:** A controversial behavior management strategy that aims to repair relationships and create accountability without punishments.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6

Academic Subject Areas: Civics, U.S. History, Western Civilization, Social Studies, Geography, Culture, Global Awareness



What You'll Need

- Video: *Around the World: Felix Fights Equity* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Around the World: Felix Fights Equity* (Click [Here](#))
- Optional: construction paper, glue, magazines, colored pencils or markers

Lesson Plan (Two 45-minute Class Periods)

Part 1: Reading the Book (25-30 min)

Note to Teachers:

- We recommend beginning this lesson with a sustained, uninterrupted read-aloud of *Around the World: Felix Fights Equity* while students follow along on their devices or printed copies. This will take 25–30 minutes.
- This method is intentional—it rebuilds attention spans, immerses students in meaningful narrative, and restores a lost tradition: attentive listening. If possible, resist the temptation to break up the reading into smaller sessions.
- Encourage students to follow along with a pencil in hand and mark moments they find surprising, confusing, or important. After reading, allow a few moments for quiet reflection or discussion before beginning Part 2 of the lesson plan.

Part 2: Geography Focus (10-15 min)

- Activity: Use the **Geography Focus** section of the worksheets—*North America & the Caribbean* and *Downtown Chicago*—to guide students through a hands-on mapping activity. Students will locate and label relevant places, trace routes, estimate distance, and identify major geographic features and landmarks.
- Discuss the following questions:
 - Why is Chicago's location important to the story and the challenges Felix faces?
 - What is a metropolis, and why does that word describe Chicago?
 - How might living in a city known for both success and struggle shape someone's daily life?

Part 3: Vocabulary Focus and Sentence Writing (5-10 min)

- Vocabulary Focus: Introduce and define the key vocabulary terms listed in the worksheet (e.g., *equity of outcome*, *equality*, *restorative justice*, *DEI*, etc.). Discuss how these terms show up in the story and impact the characters. You may choose to pre-teach these words or explore them after reading using the worksheet section.

Part 4: Systems, Struggles, and Solutions (20-25 min)

- Activity: Use the **Cause & Effect Chart** in the worksheet to help students connect events in the story to the broader educational systems and ideologies that shape Felix's experience. These systems are the core focus of *Felix Fights Equity* and can be discussed beforehand or used as a helpful guide if students get stuck:
 - DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)

- How it shows up: Teacher training is focused more on identity than subject knowledge; teachers are discouraged from asking hard questions.
 - Result: Ms. Sanchez is unprepared to teach math effectively.
 - Equity of Outcome:
 - How it shows up: Students are given or expected to achieve the same results regardless of effort or behavior.
 - Result: Felix sees that good grades don't mean that he actually learned anything; effort isn't rewarded.
 - Restorative Justice:
 - How it shows up: Disruptive students face no consequences for bad behavior.
 - Result: Classrooms are chaotic; students lose out on learning.
 - Progressive Grading Policies:
 - How it shows up: Students can't receive below 50%, even for incomplete or missing work.
 - Result: There is no incentive to try hard; motivated students are neglected while teachers scramble to justify low grades.
 - Standardized Testing Pushback:
 - How it shows up: Tests are labeled "racist"; low scores are dismissed as system bias.
 - Result: Teachers avoid challenging material; students don't get an honest picture of how their learning compares to others across the country or the world.
 - Cultural Pressure and Identity-Based Insults:
 - How it shows up: Felix is mocked for "sounding white"; classroom culture punishes academic excellence.
 - Result: Academic success becomes socially risky; Felix feels isolated for trying to do the right thing.
- Small Group or Partner Work: Students identify 2–3 problems Felix faces and connect them to a system or policy described in the story. Then, explain how that system affected Felix's learning or mindset.
- Whole-Class Debrief: Guide a discussion using these questions:
 - What system or belief caused the biggest challenge in Felix's story?
 - What values or actions helped him push through?
- Teacher Note: This activity encourages students to recognize how flawed policies shape educational outcomes—but also how personal values like perseverance, truth, and discipline offer a better path forward, even within broken systems.

Part 5: Personal Reflection / Writing Activity (20-25 min)

- Activity: Have students complete the **Reading Comprehension and Personal Reflection** section of the worksheet. This portion reinforces key plot points and encourages students to think critically about learning, effort, and growth.

- Teacher Guidance:
 - Review the comprehension questions aloud or in small groups to check understanding before students begin writing.
 - Encourage students to refer to specific moments from the story in their answers.
 - For the reflection prompt, give students quiet time to think before writing. Emphasize honesty and effort over length.
 - Optional: Invite volunteers to share their reflections with the class to build connection and discussion.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (25 minutes)

Step 1: Watch the Around the World: Felix Fights Equity video together as a class.

Step 2: Lead a focused discussion using the following guiding questions:

- What were some of the biggest challenges Felix faced in his school?
- How did certain school policies affect his ability to learn?
- What did Felix do to overcome those challenges?
- What does this story tell us about effort, discipline, and personal responsibility?

Optional Extension: Distribute the worksheet and invite students to complete one or two sections independently—such as the Vocabulary Focus & Sentence Writing or the Cause & Effect Chart—as a follow-up or homework assignment.