

Clara Barton | Lesson Plan

What is resilience, and why is it important in the face of adversity?

Through examining the life and contributions of Clara Barton, students will recognize the importance of resilience. They will understand why quick recovery from hardship is vital to success, even when life is unfair.

Learning Objectives:

- Examine the life and contributions of Clara Barton.
- Define the term “resilience” and cite real-world examples.
- Explain why resilience in overcoming obstacles is vital to success.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Resilience:** The ability to bounce back after difficulty.
- **Abolitionist:** A person who wanted to put an end to slavery.
- **Government:** A group of people who make laws and decisions to help run a country, state, city, or community.
- **Political:** Having to do with the work or study of government.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, Women of History, Resilience

What You'll Need

- Video: *Clara Barton: Founder of the American Red Cross* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Clara Barton: Founder of the American Red Cross* (Click [Here](#))
- Rubber bands, one for each student

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Give each student a rubber band. Explain that students must keep the rubber bands in their own spaces. Caution students to handle the rubber bands carefully to avoid injuring themselves or others.
2. Ask students to examine their rubber bands and discuss what happens when they are gently stretched in different directions. (The rubber bands return to their original shape or “bounce” back.)
3. Challenge students to stretch the rubber bands into different shapes (square, rectangle, triangle, oval, heart, etc.).
4. Explain that the rubber band is resilient, meaning that no matter which direction the band is pulled and stretched, it quickly recovers, returning to its original position.



5. Collect the rubber bands.
6. Explain that the class will watch a video about a memorable woman in U.S. history named Clara Barton. Clara displayed resilience in many unfair situations.
7. Give the students a brief introduction to her life:
 - She was a teacher for twelve years and created the first free public school in New Jersey.
 - Barton was fired from her government job by President James Buchanan because of her abolitionist (anti-slavery) political beliefs. But Clara Barton consistently bounced back from disappointment quickly. She was resilient.
 - When the Civil War broke out, Clara Barton was a battlefield nurse and was even given the title “Lady in Charge.”
 - After the Civil War, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross, an organization that, for over 140 years, has helped people experiencing emergencies and natural disasters.
8. Display the worksheet and distribute individual copies to students.
9. Read over the worksheet as a class so that students know what to listen for during the video.

Watch and Complete: (15 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause throughout the video to allow students to complete the answers.

Wrap-Up: (20 minutes)

1. Allow students several minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Invite volunteers to share their responses to the chart at the bottom of the worksheet.
3. Review the concept that when life is unfair, resilience is key.
4. Collect the worksheet as a formative assessment or participation grade.
5. As a culminating activity, pose the following questions for classroom discussion.
 - What does it mean to be resilient? Give several real-world examples.
 - In what specific ways did Clara Barton demonstrate resilience in her life?
 - Why is it important to learn to bounce back and recover quickly when you are treated unfairly?
6. Summarize the main idea of the lesson: When something unfair happens, it is important to have resilience—bouncing back and figuring out how to have better opportunities.
7. Conclude by encouraging students to reflect on the value of studying Clara Barton’s life. Not only was she an inspiring visionary who was wholeheartedly devoted to helping people in need, but her response to adversity provides a timeless example of how resilience is a necessary part of success.

Don’t have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.