



## Herb Brooks | Lesson Plan

How can strong leadership and innovative thinking turn the impossible into reality?

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Using Herb Brooks' biography, students will understand how strong leadership, determination, and innovative coaching can influence a team's success and shape an individual's legacy.

### Learning Objectives:

- Recount key facts about Herb Brooks' life and achievements.
- Explain the importance of leadership and determination.
- Reflect on how innovative strategies and unity can lead to success.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Rivalry:** An antagonistic competitive relationship between two teams who have played each other several times in the past. Brooks had to deal with rivalries between teammates on his Olympic team.
- **Exhibition:** An unofficial game played between two teams, usually as a part of preseason training, that doesn't count towards their record. When Brooks' team tied Norway in an exhibition game, Brooks made them run "Herbies" to exhaustion.
- **Cold War:** A state of hostility and dislike between two countries that does not reach open war. This expression is most often used to describe the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States after the end of WWII.
- **Soviet Union:** Sometimes abbreviated USSR, the Soviet Union was a communist state that spanned much of Eastern Europe from 1922 to 1991.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** Biography, Historical Figures, Character Development

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Herb Brooks* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: Herb Brooks* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids biographical book: [Sports Legends: Herb Brooks](#)
- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers

### Lesson Plan: Read and Complete (45-60 minutes)

#### Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion about sports and famous athletes and coaches. Ask students if they know any coaches who are also known for their leadership and determination.



2. Introduce Herb Brooks, a famous hockey coach known for his role in the "Miracle on Ice." Show pictures from the booklet and give a brief overview of his life.

**Reading and Comprehension Group Work:** (25-30 minutes)

1. Divide the students into six groups. Each group will focus on one section of Eric Liddell's life from the digital book:
  - Group 1: *Early Life, College Life, Cut at the Last Minute* (pages 2-3)
  - Group 2: *A New Path, The Olympics Come Calling Again, Picking the "Dream Team"* (pages 4-5)
  - Group 3: *The Team to Beat, Settling Old Rivalries* (pages 6-7)
  - Group 4: *Herbie's Coaching Style* (pages 8-9)
  - Group 5: *On the Verge of Greatness, Training Days* (pages 10-11)
  - Group 6: *The Last One Cut - Again, A Country in Need of a Miracle, The Cold War* (pages 12-13)
  - Group 7: *A Sneak Preview, The Road to the Medal Rounds* (pages 14-15)
  - As a Whole Class: *Do You Believe in Miracles?... Yes!* (pages 15-19)
2. Provide each group with the corresponding section of the Herb Brooks digital book or printed copy. Ensure each group has enough copies of their section or access to the digital version of the book. Because the *Do You Believe in Miracles?* section is a bit longer, it is recommended that the teacher leads the whole class through this section, detailing the key facts throughout the reading.
3. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
4. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down the key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
5. Allow each group two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

**Worksheet Activity:** (10-15 minutes)

1. Distribute the "Guess or Mess: Herb Brooks Worksheet" to each student and allow them time to complete it individually. (Note: The multiple-choice section corresponds to the *Guess or Mess* episode and can also be used to play along while watching. See "Extension Activity" below.)
2. Go over the answers as a class, discussing important comprehension questions to ensure understanding.
3. Use the discussion questions from the worksheet to talk about leadership, determination, and innovative coaching. Encourage students to share their thoughts and personal experiences.
4. Collect worksheets as a formative assessment.

**Wrap-Up:** (5 minutes)

1. Summarize the key points about Herb Brooks' life, character, and legacy.

2. Encourage students to think of one way they can show leadership and determination in their daily lives and to share that idea with a family member or a friend.

**Extension Activity:** (20 minutes)

**Guess or Mess Trivia Show:** After the lesson, students can participate in the "Guess or Mess" trivia show for Herb Brooks. Direct students to the multiple-choice section of the worksheet. Students can play along with the contestants to see if they can answer the trivia questions correctly.

**Don't have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)**

Read the *Herb Brooks* book together as a class, with students taking turns reading aloud. Then, watch the *Guess or Mess* video and play along with the trivia questions.