Two Stories

How long does it take?
15 minutes

How do I do it?
In this writing activity, you reflect on a time when you succeeded and the steps you took to succeed, and also a time when you failed and what you learned from that.

How does it work?
People learn from experience by incorporating their experiences into a coherent story. Researchers found that you grow if your life story extracts the good from the bad and if it emphasizes your agency.

Everyone occasionally experiences failures. Think about a time you feel you failed at something. For example, you might write about a time you lost in a competition or didn’t attain a goal that was important to you.

How did the failure happen? Include as many details as you can.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Describe at least one way in which this failure changed you for the better.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Think about a time you succeeded at something important to you. This success can be from any area of your life: school, extracurricular activities, hobbies, or personal relationships, for example.

How did the success happen? Include as many details as you can.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

What steps did you take to make this success a reality?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Copyright © 2018 Character Lab. All rights reserved. Visit characterlab.org/two-stories for more information.
Two Stories

EXAMPLE

1. Everyone occasionally experiences failures. Think about a time you feel you failed at something. For example, you might write about a time you lost in a competition or didn’t attain a goal that was important to you.

   How did the failure happen? Include as many details as you can.
   
   Last year, I ran for student government but didn’t win. I wanted to be class secretary but so did Mariah. We both campaigned but she won. I worked hard to make posters and campaign but it just didn’t work.

   Describe at least one way in which this failure changed you for the better.
   
   I met a lot of new kids in my grade who I didn’t really know. I was really upset when I lost but I am still proud of myself for running because it was brave.

2. Think about a time you succeeded at something important to you. This success can be from any area of your life: school, extracurricular activities, hobbies, or personal relationships, for example.

   How did the success happen? Include as many details as you can.
   
   I got an A+ on my project about ancient Egypt. I made a diorama and a poster and a website about my topic of mummies. I read so much about them. I was happy that my work got me the A+.

   What steps did you take to make this success a reality?
   
   - Read all the books my teacher recommended
   - Watched videos online
   - Asked my mom for help
   - Redid my poster when paint spilled
   - Typed all the things I learned on my webpage.
   - Asked for feedback

---

Copyright © 2018 Character Lab. All rights reserved. Visit characterlab.org/two-stories for more information.