Objective: Students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of the concept of perseverance.
- Identify examples of perseverance from their own lives.
- Explain how perseverance directly relates to accomplishing goals.

Time Required: 1 class period

Advance Preparation:
- Request a copy of the book *The Longest Season* by Cal Ripken, Jr. from your school library. The librarian may need a few days to get it on loan.

Materials Needed:
- A copy of the book *The Longest Season* by Cal Ripken, Jr.
- Construction paper
- Markers or colored pencils

Vocabulary:
Obstacle - Something that obstructs or hinders progress
Perseverance - To continue a course of action in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement
Applicable Common Core State Standards

**RL.3.1.** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

**RL.3.3.** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

**RL.3.4.** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

**RL.4.1.** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**RL.4.3.** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).

**RL.4.4.** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

**RL.4.6.** Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

**RL.5.1.** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**RL.5.3.** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

**RL.5.4.** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

**RL.5.6.** Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.

**RF.3.3., RF.4.3., RF.5.3.** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

**RF.3.4., RF.4.4., RF.5.4.** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
SL.3.1., SL.4.1., SL.5.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.3.2., SL.4.2., SL.5.2. Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

L.3.1., L.4.1., L.5.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.3.2., L.4.2., L.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Other Relevant National Learning Standards
(Based on Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)


Thinking and Reasoning. Standard 5. Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques
1. Start the lesson by asking students to think about a time when they had to work very hard at something. Ask students if they would like to share any of their experiences.

2. After they have shared their stories, ask each volunteer how they felt after they accomplished something that was, at first, very difficult.

3. Now ask students if they have ever experienced a time when something didn't go well even though they tried very hard. You may want to share one of your own experiences before asking students if they would like to share their experiences.

4. As students share their stories, ask each how they handled the situation in which they were disappointed that things didn't work out as planned.

5. Write the word "perseverance" on the board. Explain that "perseverance" means the ability to keep trying even when you feel disappointed or discouraged.

6. Ask students, “What might cause someone to give up and stop trying? What might you say to encourage a friend who wants to give up on something? What would you like your friends to say to you when you feel like giving up?”

7. Introduce *The Longest Season* by Cal Ripken, Jr. Explain that Cal Ripken, Jr. is a member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. He played shortstop and third base for the Baltimore Orioles for 21 seasons! Although he was a very good player, there were times when things didn't go well for him.

8. Read the story aloud. Once you finish reading, hold a class discussion in which students analyze the elements of the story (setting, characters, themes, etc.). Have students summarize the events of the story. Discuss the meanings of any unfamiliar words.

9. Have students identify the point of view. Ask, “Would this story be considered a firsthand account?”
10. Ask students to identify different situations in the story when Cal Ripken, Jr. showed perseverance. For each circumstance referenced by the students, ask follow up questions such as:
   - How did Cal Ripken, Jr. react to the situation? How did he feel? Angry? Sad?
   - Did he ever feel like giving up?
   - How did Cal persevere? What made him want to try hard to do better next time?

11. Ask students to identify the turning point of the story. Even though the Orioles were still losing, they came together as a team. Why? (They learned to be happy about little victories like earning runs, they supported each other when it felt like the fans did not.)

12. Ask students how Cal Ripken, Jr. and the other members of the Orioles felt after their losing streak was finally broken.

13. Introduce the activity.
1. After the story discussion, give each student a sheet of construction paper. In the center of the paper, have students write down one obstacle that kids their age might encounter as they try to achieve goals in school, in sports, and so on. (Possible examples could include: getting a low grade on a test instead of an "A", missing a goal during a big game, etc.)

2. Have students fold their sheets of construction paper into fourths. In each square, ask students to draw or write ways to overcome the obstacle they identified in the center of the sheet. (Possible examples could include:)
   - Try another way to reach your goal.
   - Get some encouragement from a friend, teacher, coach, or parent.
   - Take a big breath and try again later.
   - Make changes to your goal.
   - Cheer yourself up by doing something you like.
   - Make a mental picture of succeeding.
   - Give yourself a pep talk.

3. Emphasize that a key to overcoming obstacles and being perseverant is having a good attitude. If you're confident and believe you can do something, you are half way to achieving your goal.

4. Display the papers on a bulletin board entitled, *We Can Do It!*

**Conclusion:**

To conclude this lesson, have students write a short response addressing the following prompt: "If I could give someone an award for perseverance it would be ____________." Students must explain how their award nominee showed perseverance and why he or she deserves to be recognized.