

P.S. 131 **January**
2026 Book of the
Month Slides with
Activities!



Quote of the Month

“If at first you don’t succeed,
try, try again.”

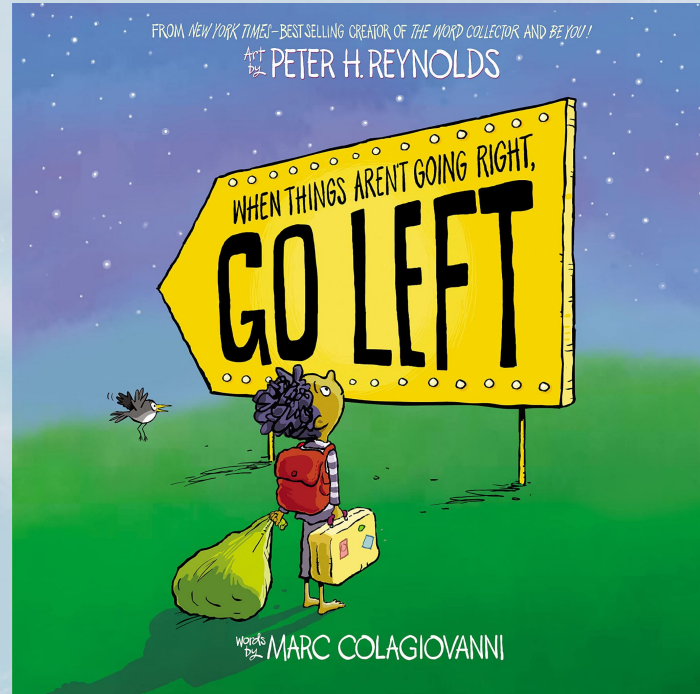
-William Edward Hickson



January Book of the Month:

When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left

By Marc Colagiovanni



Book Summary:

To celebrate the New Year 2026, and all the new opportunities it represents, *When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left* tells an inspirational story about staying optimistic to overcome adversity and succeed at any task. As the narrator embarks on a long journey, he gets rid of all the things that can hold him back from achieving his goals, including doubts, fears, worries, and frustrations. Once he can think more clearly, he is able to try new strategies and solve his problems! This story reminds readers of the strength, power, and perseverance they have to direct their own path, which are critical to keep in mind as we resolve to make the new year great!



Read-Aloud Video



Click for Related Book Activities!

Resilience Mindset Book Companion

NAME _____

A STORY ABOUT TRYING AGAIN

I HAD TO TRY AGAIN WHEN I...

AT FIRST, I HAD FEAR AND DOUBT! I DIDN'T THINK I COULD DO IT. I EVEN TOLD MYSELF...

BUT THEN, I LEFT BEHIND MY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS. INSTEAD, I TOLD MYSELF...

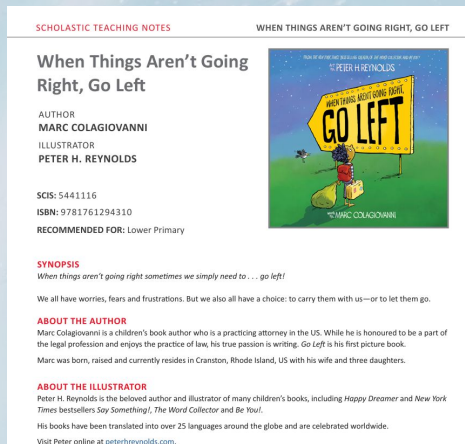
FINALLY, I WAS SUCCESSFUL! I FELT...

AND I LEARNED THAT...

AND NOW MY THOUGHTS AREN'T SO HARD TO HANDLE ANYMORE!



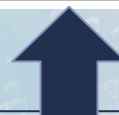
Scholastic Teaching Notes



Discussion Questions and Activities



Managing Worries Activities



Theme of the Month

Perseverance



Perseverance is about never giving up on a project or a goal, even when it's tough. Someone with perseverance makes sure to try their best and finish what they started, and finds ways to overcome challenges.



Theme of the Month: Perseverance



Perseverance



Definitions and Social Skills Guide

Definitions

Perseverance
Persistence to do something, despite difficulties or obstacles

Determination
Firm intention when working towards a goal

Diligence
Careful and continued work in completing a task

Hard Work
A great deal of effort or endurance

Carelessness
Not paying attention, and without effort to what one is doing

Social Skills

Social skills are skills facilitating interaction and communication with others. Be on the lookout for these and other social skills related to perseverance:

- Active listening (providing feedback to the person so they know you have heard them. Some good listening skills include: providing eye contact, facing the person, using appropriate body language, not interrupting, listening to directions on how to complete a task)
- Showing consideration (showing respect for others and for a project)
- Praising others (no put downs, complimenting others when they have done worked hard)
- Clear Communication (communicating clearly in a positive and respectful manner when expressing what needs to be done)
- Remaining calm when frustrated (staying focused and controlling behavior regardless of how hard something is)
- Accepting responsibility (acknowledging mistakes, but not giving up)
- Respecting yourself and others (taking care of yourself, accepting, cooperating, sharing, being kind, encouraging, persevering and listening to others)
- Seeking attention in an appropriate manner (speaking in a polite tone, and showing patience when working on a diligent matter)
- Showing an interest in others (asking questions about people and investigating what needs the needs of others)
- Understanding the impact of your behavior on others (quitting a team project would impact the group)

© Classroom Harmony

Why is it
important to
persevere
through
challenges to
finish a task?



Perseverance

Students demonstrate the trait of perseverance by continuing to perform their responsibilities and pursue their goals with vigor and tenacity despite frustrations, mistakes, setbacks, and other obstacles that make their tasks difficult or seem impossible. They resist temptations and pressures to give up or quit, choosing instead, to persist as long as they are able.

Key Beliefs:

I will be a better student if I act on the following beliefs:

- When something doesn't work right, try again and again.
- I am able to resist temptations and pressures to give up or quit, choosing instead to persist as long as I can.
- I will always finish what I start.
- I can learn to face and accept what happens in my life.
- I need to grow from my experiences, including the ones that hurt.

Habit of Mind: Taking Responsible Risks

Taking responsible risks means trying new things that might be uncomfortable for you, even if you might not be good at it at first! It also means trying new things thoughtfully and carefully, rather than making dangerous or bad choices. In When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left, the main character was able to go to new places, achieve new things, and grow by taking responsible risks. Can you try new things in 2026, just like in the story?



Active Learning "Taking Responsible Risks" Grade: 1

MAKE YOUR OWN MAP
Students will learn the learning about responsible risks by creating their own map of a risky journey that would be worth taking.

Materials Needed:

- butcher paper
- markers
- compass or colored pencils
- Maps

Preparation:

- Cut butcher paper into "loop sized" pieces for each student.
- Gather examples of maps for students to use as reference.

Steps to Success:

1. Tell students to imagine that they're going to take a responsible risk and go on a long journey to get to something they want (see their work and find).
2. Show students examples of maps. Point out the main features of a map. Tell students that they will be creating their own maps to show the progression of their journey.
3. Pass out butcher paper, markers, and compass or colored pencils.
4. Guide the students in creating a starting point, destination, and landmarks in between. Encourage students to use their imagination and create a destination that would make the journey worth the risk.
5. Then, have them draw their route from start to finish. Allow them to label the route they want to take.
6. Lastly, they can color the end of the map.

How Can I Take Responsible Risks?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Responsible Risk-takers

In the space below, draw a picture of someone taking a responsible risk. You might draw someone you know, such as a family member, or a public or historical figure. Then, respond to the questions at the bottom of the page.

Describe how this person took a risk.

How did taking this risk help them or others?

How Can I Take Responsible Risks?

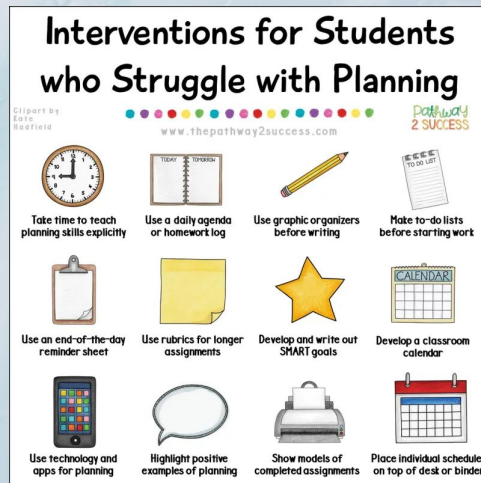
Part 2: My Own Responsible Risks

Question	Response
What is a responsible risk that you've taken in the past? What happened? How did it feel?	
Do you feel that trying new things is easy or hard for you?	
What is a responsible risk that you would like to take in the next month or year? How can you prepare to do this?	
What is a responsible risk that you would like to take in the future? How can you prepare to do this?	
How could taking responsible risks help you at school, in your career, or in life?	

Executive Functioning Focus: Planning

When you're going out on a long journey, like the main character in When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left!, it is important to **plan** ahead by setting goals, creating a step-by-step strategy to reach those goals, and organizing your time and resources to make sure it's a success.

A new year can also be like a long journey, full of opportunities to make it your best year yet! This month, try to set goals for the year and plan ahead to make sure you achieve them!



Training My Brain!

I CAN PLAN

Name: _____

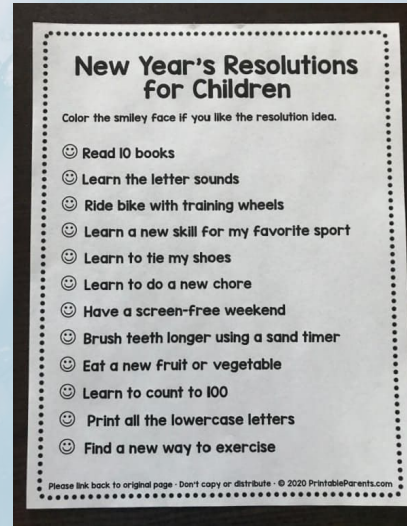
Brain Trainers!

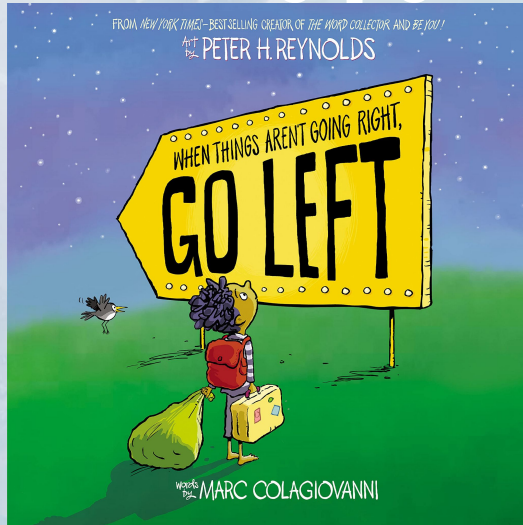
Hello there, brain trainer! In these lessons, you will learn how to boost and build your brain. These skills are called executive functioning skills. When you work at these skills, you can train and get better over time!

Are you ready to TRAIN YOUR BRAIN? Let's get started!

Executive Functioning Focus: Planning for the New Year!

Students can practice planning by creating **New Year's resolutions**, or a personal goal to achieve a positive change. They can brainstorm something they want to accomplish this year, and describe actionable steps that they should take to achieve that goal. How will they know that they have succeeded?





Limited print copies of “When Things Aren’t Going Right, Go Left!” are available in the school library (Room 212). Please reach out to Ms. Keiser (dkeiser@schools.nyc.gov) if you would like to borrow a copy.