

No Place for Hate® Activity Library

Living and Playing with a Disability

Lesson Plan and Overview

Lesson Plan: The Present and Living with a Disability

The Present is an animated short film that was released in 2014 and quickly went viral. The film was created by German animator Jacob Frey who was inspired by a comic strip by Brazilian artist Fabio Coala. Frey said he was in awe of the storyline of the comic and was inspired to translate it into an animated short film. The film is about a boy who is enthusiastically playing video games indoors; his Mom comes home and brings him a new puppy as a present but the boy seems more interested in his video games than playing with his new dog. The dog has a disability, and it turns out that the dog and the boy have something in common, which is revealed at the end. The film can spark a conversation about people with disabilities in an age appropriate, accessible and engaging way.

Grade Level

Grades K–5

Learning Objectives

- Students will watch *The Present*, a short film about a boy with a disability, and reflect on its themes.
- Students will learn more about people with disabilities.
- Students will create a comic strip that highlights a part of the story that resonates with them.

Materials Needed

- *The Present* (video)
- Paper, markers, crayons and other drawing materials
- Comic strip templates (use templates from lesson plan)
- ADL's [collection of books about ability, disability and ableism](#)

Words You Might Use

Ableism: Prejudice and/or discrimination against people with mental and/or physical disabilities.

Bias: A preference either for or against an individual or group that affects fair judgment.

Disability: A mental or physical condition that restricts an individual's ability to engage in one or more major life activities (e.g., seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, communicating, sensing, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working or caring for oneself).

Core Activity

First, show the video: *The Present* to students. You may want to show it twice to make sure they grasp all the details. After watching, have students turn and talk with someone sitting near them to share their first thoughts about the video. Then engage them in a class discussion by asking some or all of the following questions:

- *Who are the characters in the video? What do we know about them?*
- *What happens in the video (in the beginning, middle and end)?*
- *How does the boy feel when he opens the box? How do you know?*
- *What does the boy notice about the dog? What is the boy's reaction?*
- *What is the dog doing, and what is the boy's reaction?*
- *How is the boy feeling as he watches the dog play? How do you know?*
- *Why do you think the boy decides to go outside with the dog?*
- *How did the boy change from the beginning to the end of the video? Why did he change?*
- *Did anything surprise you?*
- *Why do you think it is called *The Present*?*
- *If you could ask the boy something, what would you ask?*
- *What is the message of the video?*

When students share what they think the message of the video is, you can draw out a lesson or theme from the video (e.g., although the boy has a physical disability, he can still play; he learned that from the dog).

Next, discuss with students what it means to have a disability. Ask students: *What is a disability?* Elicit and define disability as a mental or physical condition that affects a person's movements, senses or activities. Ask students: *What kind of disability did the boy in the video have?* Elicit that he had forearm crutches, which allow him to walk and do other activities with his legs that he not be able to do otherwise. Provide other examples of disabilities such as: hearing loss and deafness, vision loss and blindness, learning disability such as dyslexia, speech and language disorders, physical disabilities such as an inability to use legs, arms or the body trunk, mobility and movement impairments, etc. Draw out and emphasize the important point that while people with disabilities may have some limitations in what they can do, this doesn't mean they are incapable of doing most things and many use "assistive technology" (e.g., a forearm crutch like the boy in the video) to help them.

Finally, explain to students that the filmmaker who made *The Present* originally came up with the idea from a comic strip that he really liked. Ask students: *Why do you think the filmmakers decided to tell this story? What can we learn from the story? (Grades 3–5) How was the dog a good friend for the boy? How can we be a good friend to a fellow student with a disability?*

Tell students that they are going to make their own drawings (younger students) or comic strips (older students), based on what they learned from watching *The Present*. First have students select the scene(s) they want to illustrate. Next, have them write a description/caption of what's happening or if they create a comic strip, write the narration that goes along with the pictures. Then, have students write some words of dialogue that go with their drawing or comic strip. Invite younger students to write or dictate a way they can be a good friend, and ask older students to write dialogue that shows something they learned from the story. Provide time for students to work on their drawings and then share all of them in common spaces, the school's website or by making a video of students describing their illustrations.

Optional Follow-Up/ Going Further

Note: These additional activities can be done as follow-ups to the core activity and they can also serve as an additional NPFH activity if the core activity is completed first.

- Engage students in reading an article together (see two articles below) about a young person with a disability. For students in grades K–2, teachers can read the article aloud and for students in grades 3–5, students can read on their own. After reading the article, engage students in a discussion and have them write either a letter to the person highlighted in the story or write a response to the article.
 - No legs, no defeats, Alabama teen wins high school wrestling championship (3rd grade level—see page 5)
 - Teen soccer star plays with one leg and a crutch and scores! (3rd grade level—see page 7)
- Have a discussion with students about how to make their school and community more accessible for people with disabilities. Explain that people with disabilities often face bias in a few ways: (1) they experience different treatment compared to people without disabilities, (2) they may not have or be provided with what they need to fully participate in life's activities and (3) people with disabilities are not always visible/well-represented in books, TV shows, games, etc. You can ask students for examples or provide these two: (1) if a student has a learning disability and doesn't get the extra help they need to keep up in school or (2) if a student with a hearing disability that uses a hearing aid but the teacher doesn't use a microphone system to amplify their voice, which is often needed in noisy classrooms. Engage students in a brainstorming session about how their school or community could be more accessible for people with disabilities. After the discussion and brainstorming, you can have students draw pictures or write an essay about one of the ideas and then share all of these school-wide.
- Engage in an all-school read with one of the books in ADL's collection of books about ability, disability and ableism. After reading the book as a school, engage in a discussion about the book and do at least one activity that extends their learning about the book.

Home Connection

Provide ADL's list of children's books about ability, disability and ableism to read at home.

How Activity Meets NPFH Requirements

All students will engage in discussions about ability and disability, the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities and addressing ableism when it arises. Building student's understanding and empathy regarding this aspect of identity and bias will have a school-wide impact with a focus on equity, inclusion and diversity.

Virtual Variation

Have students watch the [The Present](#) video on their own or with a family member. After watching, engage students in a virtual classroom conversation using the discussion questions or have them respond in writing to at least three of the questions, and submit those responses. For the next part of the activity, make (and share) a short video of yourself defining the word disability, explaining more about what it means to have a disability and providing examples. In the final activity, have students create their own drawings (younger students) and comic strips (older students) based on what they learned from the video *The Present*. Have them write captions, dialogue or a description for their illustrations. The illustrations should then be submitted and posted on a sharing platform.

No legs, no defeats, Alabama teen wins high school wrestling championship

By *Washington Post*, adapted by Newsela staff 03.03.2016
reprinted with permission from <https://newsela.com/read/womens-soccer-gender-discrimination/id/50195/>

Recommended for: Upper Elementary School–High School

Word Count: 410

Text Level: 3



Hasaan Hawthorne (right), from Pelham High School in Alabama, competes in the AHSAA State Wrestling Championships at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

Hasaan Hawthorne is a champion wrestler. He became a champion even though his legs end at his knees. Hawthorne is 18 and in the 12th grade. He lives in Pelham, Alabama. Hawthorne was born without tibias. These are the large, lower leg bones that allow people to stand.

A doctor took off Hawthorne's legs and feet when he was a baby. The amputation left him with nothing below his knees. Hawthorne got his first prosthetic legs when he was 14 months old. Prosthetics are fake body parts.

Learning To Walk, Then Wrestling

At first, Hawthorne tripped and fell many times. In time, Hawthorne starting falling less. He ditched his walker when he was 2 or 3 years old. He started to walk around on his hands. Hawthorne climbed out of his crib, and began roughhousing with his father and babysitters.

Hawthorne loved to wrestle with his babysitter, Duke Frison. Hawthorne pretended that he was a wrestler on television. He loved to watch World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). He would climb to the top of his couch. In his

mind it was the top rope of the wrestling ring. Then he threw himself down onto Frison. Sometimes Hawthorne hit his head or missed. Frison said he would “start laughing and go right back to having fun.”

Playing Baseball With “Different Legs”

Soon Hawthorne discovered that he loved sports. He started playing baseball when he was 5 years old. He kept playing as he grew. He slid into bases and played as good or better than the other kids.

He said that he was just like other people, only with “different legs.”

Hawthorne started wrestling seriously in sixth grade.

“I said ‘why can’t I do it?’” Hawthorne said. “It just looked cool to me.”

Wrestling On “Nubs”

Wrestling allowed Hawthorne to be truly himself. He did not wear prosthetics. He wrestled on his amputated legs. He calls them his “nubs.”

Recently, Hawthorne took part in the Alabama state wrestling championship. He moved quickly on the mat and pinned one wrestler after another.

Undefeated, With Big Dreams

Hawthorne was undefeated. He won all 37 of his matches during the season, and became the state champion. He stood on his nubs on the awards stage. His head was just below the wrestlers he beat. Yet, his smile was the biggest in the room.

Hawthorne’s wrestling dreams are not over. He hopes to go to the national championships, and wrestle in college.



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Teen soccer star plays with one leg and a crutch and scores!

By *Agence France-Presse*, adapted by Newsela staff 04.23.2019
reprinted with permission from <https://newsela.com/read/myanmar-soccer-teen/id/51021/>

Recommended for: Lower Elementary School–Upper Elementary School

Word Count: 505

Text Level: 3



Kaung Khant Lin (center) fights for the ball during a soccer match in Yangon, Myanmar. The 16-year-old was honored as the best player in a recent tournament. Photo by: Sai Aung Main/AFP/Getty Images

Kaung Khant Lin loves soccer. The 16-year-old's favorite team is England's Manchester United. He worships the star player, Lionel Messi. Kaung Khant Lin plays soccer, too. And he is good! He was named the best player in a recent series of games.

That is a success for anyone. It is an extra big win for Kaung Khant Lin. That is because he was born with only part of his right leg. To play soccer, he uses a crutch.

"Whenever I play, I forget about my legs," he says.

Love Of Soccer Began At Age 5

Kaung Khant Lin is from Myanmar. This country is also known as Burma. It is located in Southeast Asia. Kaung Khant Lin plays soccer in the city of Yangon. He is an expert at using his crutch. When he is ready to score a goal, he leans on the crutch. Then he kicks with his left foot.

Kaung Khant Lin started practicing soccer when he was 5 years old. His uncle made him a wooden crutch. This helped Kaung Khant Lin to keep his balance.

He does not believe his missing leg is a big weakness. In his opinion, his height is a bigger challenge.



Kaung Khant Lin (center) fights for the ball during a soccer match in Yangon, Myanmar. The 16-year-old was honored as the best player in a recent tournament. Photo by: Sai Aung Main/AFP/Getty Images

want to see Kaung Khant Lin get injured. He hopes his son will keep studying and go to college.

Kaung Khant Lin works hard at school. He wants to study engineering. He also wants to be a soccer coach.

For now, he will keep trying to play like his hero, Lionel Messi.

“He’s left-handed and I am too,” Kaung Khant Lin says. “I practice free kicks just like he does.”

“Nobody can get past me,” he says. But, because he is short, “it’s hard for me to defend against free kicks.”

Best Player Award

Many people in Myanmar have a physical challenge that makes it hard to walk. Not all of them were not born that way. Many have been hurt by bombs. The bombs are left over from many years of war in Myanmar.

Life in Myanmar is not easy for people who have disabilities. They face unfair treatment. Most of them cannot get jobs. People think that because they cannot walk well, they cannot work.

Kaung Khant Lin is proving that this is not true. He is a top player on his team. In a recent series of games, he scored two goals that helped his team win. He was named the best player.

Kaung Khant Lin Has Future Goals

Moe Sat Han is one of Kaung Khant Lin’s teammates. He says the team used to worry about Kaung Khant Lin. They did not want him to get hurt. They learned they could not stop him from playing, though. He was too determined. Now, the team plays together from morning until night. Sometimes they even forget to eat.

Kaung Khant Lin’s dad does not like to watch his son play. He still worries. He does not