

Teacher Guide

Courage: Resilience and Grit

Bounce Back • Keep Going

Thomas Fiddler Memorial School • Sandy Lake First Nation

Waaciye — Welcome.

This guide walks you through all 23 slides of Kevin's Resilience and Grit teacher deck.

At each  WORKSHEET block — pause and run the class activity before moving on.

 Red = Resilience (Bounce Back)  Brown = Grit (Keep Going)

Before Class — Things to Have Ready

- Story download link ready (Slide 2) — students can follow along as you read or play.
- Story audio link ready (Slide 2) — click to play Miigwan's Journey.
- Print the Class Worksheet — one per student.
- Print or have the Student Workbook available — on the student website or printed.
- Resilience Challenge link ready (Slide 21) — for after class use.
- Grit Challenge link ready (Slide 22) — for after class use.

✨ Slide 18 has a student activity built in — students fill in the four scenarios. You will need to allow 3–4 minutes here before revealing the answer key on Slide 19. The class worksheet has matching scenarios that reinforce this activity.

Lesson 1

Miigwan's Journey — Slides 1 to 3

SLIDE

1

Menu — 4 Lessons

Say this:

Today we are starting a unit about Courage — specifically about two kinds of courage that your community has always had: Resilience and Grit. By the end of this unit, you will know what they are, how they are different, and how to use them. Let me tell you a story first.

SLIDE

2

Lesson 1 — Miigwan's Journey — Story Intro

Say this:

Miigwan is a Grade 9 student at Sandy Lake Junior High. His story is about two very different kinds of hard. You can listen to the audio or follow along in the printed story — the download link is here.

- Click the audio button to play Miigwan's Journey — OR read the story aloud if audio is unavailable.
- Give students time to follow along — the printed story is in the download link on this slide.

✨ Let the story breathe. Do not narrate over it. Allow quiet after hard moments — especially the C– scene and the moment Miigwan almost quits the committee in August.

SLIDE

3

After the Story — Discussion

💬 **Say this:**

Before I tell you what resilience and grit mean — what did YOU notice about Miigwan's story?

This is the most important discussion moment in the unit. Use left column (Story Comprehension) first — these have clear right answers. Then move to right column (What Do YOU Think?).

Story Comprehension (left column — clear answers):

Q: Why did Miigwan feel like giving up after the C–?

A: He felt like maybe school wasn't for him. He poured his heart into the essay and it felt like a rejection of him, not just the work.

Q: What did his mom ask instead of just saying 'you'll do better'?

A: She asked what he would tell one of his cousins who got a C– and felt like giving up. This made him give himself the advice he needed.

Q: What made the advisory committee feel exciting at first — and hard by June?

A: Exciting: it felt important and he had ideas. Hard: disagreements, ideas shot down, progress slow, the meetings stopped feeling meaningful.

Q: What did his dad mean — something worth doing is hard, and you do it anyway?

A: That the difficulty is part of the purpose — not a sign to quit. If it mattered enough to start, the hard part is what makes it worth finishing.

🌿 Sandy Lake: The community question in the right column ('Think of someone in your community who bounced back from something hard') almost always generates powerful responses. Someone will name an Elder, a family member, or the REA fight. Let that breathe — do not rush it.

📄 **WORKSHEET — Activity 1 — Miigwan's Story — Comprehension** (7–10 min)

Activity 1 on the class worksheet.

Part 1 — True/False (teacher reads aloud): Six statements about Miigwan's story. Read each one. Students tick T or F. Read slowly — once through.

Part 2 — Fill lines: 'What moment showed Resilience? What showed Grit?' One sentence each. Teacher reads the prompts — students write individually.

Part 3 — Partner: 'Tell your partner the moment in the story that surprised you most. One sentence each. 60 seconds.' Then ask one pair to share.

Exit slip: 'The difference between Miigwan's C– moment and the four months of meetings was:

_____'Transition: 'Good. Now I'll show you what those two things are called and exactly how they are different.' Move to Slide 4.

Lesson 2

What is Resilience? What is Grit? — Slides 4 to 12

Lesson 2 Header — Resilience (tree in storm) vs Grit (paddler in canoe)

 Say this:

Lesson 2. We have two words for what Miigwan showed. Look at the two images. The tree bending in the storm but not breaking — that is resilience. The person paddling hard upstream in a canoe — that is grit. They are different things.

RESILIENCE — The Bounce Back

 Say this:

Resilience is your ability to recover from a setback, a failure, a loss, or a difficulty. The cycle: something hard happens — you feel it — you recover — you are stronger. Like a tree bending in the wind but not breaking. The wind passes, the tree springs back. That is resilience.

? **Ask:** When did Miigwan show resilience? What was the setback and how did he recover?

GRIT — The Keep Going

 Say this:

Grit is your determination to stay committed to something that matters to you, even when it stays hard over a long time. The cycle: you commit — it gets hard — you keep showing up. Like paddling against a strong current. The journey is long, hard, and doesn't get easier. You paddle anyway because reaching the destination matters.

? **Ask:** When did Miigwan show grit? How long did it last? When did he almost quit?

How They're Different

 Say this:

Here is the key difference. Resilience responds to ONE crisis or setback — it is short or medium term — the outcome is bouncing back to normal. Grit responds to a long-term difficult GOAL — it is ongoing — the outcome is moving toward something bigger. You need BOTH — but they do different jobs.

□ Read the comparison table across both columns. Left = Resilience. Right = Grit.

✨ The scenario examples in the table are important. 'Fail a test → recover' is resilience. 'Work hard at math all year' is grit. These match the scenarios on Slide 18. Plant this now.

 WORKSHEET — Activity 2 — Resilience vs Grit — Definitions and Sort (6–8 min)

Activity 2 on the class worksheet.

- Part 1 — True/False (teacher reads aloud): Five statements comparing resilience and grit. Read each one. Students tick T or F.

- Part 2 — Sort: Eight scenarios. Teacher reads each one aloud. Students tick Resilience, Grit, or Both. Give 2 minutes. Walk around. After: 'Can one pair share — which scenario was hardest to decide?' Reveal the correct answers from Slide 19 later.
- Part 3 — Fill in: Two sentences. 'Resilience = when something hard ____ and you get back up. Grit = when something stays hard for a ____ time and you keep going.' Fill in the blanks together as a class.
- Exit slip: 'The most important difference between resilience and grit is: ____' Transition: 'Good. Your ancestors had both. Let me show you.' Move to Slide 8.

SLIDE

8

Your Ancestors Had Both

Say this:

Your ancestors had resilience: when hunts failed, when winters were harsh, when government policies tried to destroy what mattered — they adapted, they got back up, they survived. And they had grit: Elders committed for generations to keeping the Oji-Cree language alive. In 1988, Chief Josias Fiddler and four Sandy Lake community members staged a hunger strike 300 kilometres from home. Sandy Lake had no hospital. People were dying. They didn't stop until government officials listened. Their grit built the First Nations Health Authorities that exist today. You need both — for school, for goals, for being part of your community's future.



Sandy Lake: Read the grit column word for word. Chief Josias Fiddler's name, the 300 km detail, the hospital fact — these are real and important. Students who have family connected to this history may respond strongly. Give space.

SLIDE

9

Benefits of Resilience

Say this:

Why does resilience matter? Five benefits: You recover faster from setbacks instead of staying stuck. You have better mental health — more hopeful, less likely to spiral. You build stronger relationships because people see your courage. You become more willing to try hard things because you know one failure is not permanent. And you handle change better — life in Sandy Lake is always changing, resilience helps you adapt.

? Ask: Which benefit matters most for your life right now?

SLIDE

10

Benefits of Grit

Say this:

Why does grit matter? Five benefits: You achieve big goals — things that seem impossible become possible when you stay committed. You build real mastery — you actually get good at things because you stuck with them long enough. You feel deep satisfaction — completing something hard feels better than anything easy. You become a leader — people look up to someone who doesn't give up. And you make lasting change — in Sandy Lake, big changes like keeping high school here happened through grit.

? **Ask:** Which benefit is hardest for you to believe about yourself?

SLIDE

11

What Happens in Our Brains

 **Say this:**

There is simple brain science behind this. When you face challenges and keep going, you strengthen your neural pathways — the connections in your brain. Like a muscle getting stronger from exercise. Both resilience and grit work this way. Each time you bounce back or keep going, your brain literally gets stronger. And here is the cultural parallel: learning from mistakes is part of traditional knowledge-sharing. Your ancestors knew this without brain science.

SLIDE

12

Why This Matters for YOU at Sandy Lake

 **Say this:**

Resilience and grit are not abstract ideas. School: resilience helps you recover from a bad test; grit helps you master math or writing over the whole year. Sports: resilience helps after a loss; grit is what makes you actually get good at a sport or skill. Language: resilience bounces you back when you mess up a word; grit keeps you practicing until you are fluent. Your future: you will need resilience when things don't go as planned; you will need grit to work toward what matters — college, a career, taking care of your family, helping your community.

WORKSHEET — Activity 3 — Ancestors and Benefits (6–8 min)

Activity 3 on the class worksheet.

Part 1 — True/False (teacher reads aloud): Six statements about the ancestors slide and benefits. Read each one. Students tick T or F.

Part 2 — Class vote (hands up, no names): 'Which benefit of resilience matters most for your school life? Raise your hand for each one as I read them.' Record tallies on the board.

Part 3 — Partner: 'The Sandy Lake example that shows the most grit is... tell your partner why. 60 seconds each.' Fill line: 'The Sandy Lake example I found most powerful was: ____'

Exit slip: 'Resilience and grit helped Sandy Lake because: ____' Transition: 'Now let's learn how to build both — strategies your community already knows and modern strategies too.' Move to Slide 13.

Lesson 3

Building Resilience and Grit — Slides 13 to 19

SLIDE

13

Lesson 3 — Building Resilience and Grit (Section Header)

 **Say this:**

Lesson 3. Building Resilience and Grit. Now that you know what they are, here is how to actually build them. We have four groups of strategies: Traditional Resilience, Modern Resilience, Traditional Grit, and Modern Grit.

SLIDE

14

Traditional Resilience Strategies

 **Say this:**

Rooted in Indigenous healing wisdom — four traditional resilience strategies: Connect to the Land: Go outside. Sit by water. Feel the earth. The land heals — it reminds us we are part of something bigger. Seek Healing from Elders: Talk to someone who has been through hard times and knows how to heal. Elder wisdom, prayers, and stories can guide you back. Gather with Community: Be with family. Share meals. Talk circles. We heal faster together. Community is medicine. Remember Your Strength: Look back at hard things you have already overcome. You have done hard things before — that strength is still in you.

 Sandy Lake: Go slowly on 'Connect to the Land.' For students in Sandy Lake, this is not abstract — fishing, hunting, berry picking, going to the cabin. These are real anxiety and resilience strategies, not just cultural activities.

SLIDE

15

Modern Resilience Strategies

 **Say this:**

Evidence-based tools for recovery — five modern resilience strategies: Talk to Someone You Trust: Counsellor, parent, friend, or mentor. Putting feelings into words helps process them. Change Unhelpful Thoughts: When you catch yourself thinking 'I'll never feel better' — pause. What is a kinder truth I could believe? Set Small Recovery Goals: Instead of 'feel better,' try 'have one good conversation this week.' Small wins build momentum. Self-Care Routines: Sleep, eat well, move your body. A cared-for body bounces back faster. Give Yourself Time Off: Take breaks from thinking about the problem. Your mind needs space to recover.

SLIDE

16

Traditional Grit Strategies

 **Say this:**

From the wisdom of those who stayed committed for generations — four traditional grit strategies: Seek Guidance from Elders: Their experience lights the path. They have stayed committed to hard things over long times. That knowledge is yours to ask for. Connect to Community: You are not alone. Share your struggle. Friends and family can keep you going when the goal feels far away. Practice Patience and Perseverance: Like growing a garden or building something strong — big things take time. Keep showing up even when progress feels slow. Find Purpose in Your Struggle: How does this help your family, community, or future? When you see the bigger picture, grit gets stronger.

SLIDE

17

Modern Grit Strategies

 Say this:

Evidence-based tools for sustained effort — five modern grit strategies: Break It Into Smaller Steps: Big goals feel impossible. Break them into tiny doable tasks. This is how Elders taught — one story, one skill at a time. Track Your Progress: Seeing even small progress builds confidence. Write down wins, no matter how small. Growth Mindset: 'I can't do this YET' — not 'I can't do this.' Your brain can learn and grow. Every struggle is a workout. Try Different Approaches: If one strategy isn't working, try another. Failure is information — not a dead end. Manage Your Environment: Remove distractions. Get what you need. Set yourself up to succeed — don't rely on willpower alone.

 WORKSHEET — Activity 4 — Strategy Sort — Traditional and Modern (6–8 min)

Activity 4 on the class worksheet.

Part 1 — Strategy sort (teacher reads aloud): Students sort eight strategies into Traditional Resilience, Modern Resilience, Traditional Grit, or Modern Grit by ticking the correct column. Teacher reads each strategy aloud. Give 2 minutes.

Part 2 — Personal choices: 'Circle the ONE traditional strategy you want to try for resilience. Circle the ONE modern strategy you want to try for grit.'

Part 3 — Partner: 'Tell your partner the strategy you chose and why. 60 seconds each.' Fill lines: One traditional strategy I chose + why. One modern strategy I chose + why.

Exit slip: 'The strategy that surprised me most was: ____' Transition: 'Now let's practise using these — four real scenarios.' Move to Slide 18.

SLIDE

18

Real Scenarios — Which Skill?

 Say this:

Four real scenarios. For each one — decide: what is the RESILIENCE response? What is the GRIT response? I'll give you 3 minutes to fill in all four. Then we'll look at the answers.

- Students fill in all four boxes on Slide 18 — 3 minutes.
- Walk around the room quietly. Do not give answers yet.

The four scenarios: 1) You don't make the sports team. 2) Math class is really hard all year. 3) A friend says something hurtful. 4) You want to learn to drum.

SLIDE

19

Real Scenarios — Answer Key

- Reveal the answers slide. Go through each scenario.
- Sports team — Resilience: Feel disappointed, talk to someone, recover. Grit: Train harder and try again — commit to the next season.
- Math — Resilience: Bomb one test → get help → bounce back on the next. Grit: Math is hard every week but you keep showing up.
- Friend — Resilience: Feel hurt, talk it through, repair or move forward. Grit: If friendship matters, stay committed through the hard moment.
- Drumming — Resilience: Mess up, feel frustrated, practice again. Grit: Keep showing up to lessons even when progress feels slow.

? Ask: Which scenario was hardest to decide? Why?

 WORKSHEET — Activity 5 — Scenarios — New Situations (5–7 min)

Activity 5 on the class worksheet.

- This activity gives students THREE NEW scenarios (different from the slides) to sort and respond to. Teacher reads each scenario aloud.
- Students tick Resilience, Grit, or Both. Then write one sentence: 'What would I do in this situation?' After completing all three — partner share: 'Which of the three was the easiest to handle? Which was hardest?' 60 seconds each.'
- Class vote: 'Hands up — who chose Traditional strategies for their response? Modern?' Tally on board.
- Exit slip: 'The hardest thing about using grit is: ____' Transition: 'Now let's talk about your challenge — your personal Bounce Back or Grit Goal.' Move to Slide 20.

Lesson 4

Resilience and Grit Challenges — Slides 20 to 23

SLIDE

20

Lesson 4 — Challenges for YOU — Section Header

 **Say this:**

Lesson 4. Now it is your turn. You have two challenges available. Choose the one that fits where you are right now.

SLIDE

21

Your Resilience Challenge

 **Say this:**

The Resilience Challenge is for you if you are dealing with something tough right now. Over 4 weeks, you will name the tough time, choose strategies, and track what helps you bounce back. This is not about forgetting the hard time — it is about moving forward and finding your strength.

- Click the Resilience Challenge link.
- Walk students through what they will track — the situation, their strategies, their progress.

This is available on the student website and as a printed tool. Students who are not currently in a tough time can choose the Grit Challenge instead.

SLIDE

22

Your Grit Challenge

 **Say this:**

The Grit Challenge is for you if you have something you want to commit to over the next 4 weeks. You will choose your challenge, choose your strategies, and track your progress. This is not about being perfect — it is about showing up and growing.

- Click the Grit Challenge link.
- Walk students through what they will track — the goal, their strategies, their weekly progress.

Closing — Fall 7 Times, Stand Up 8 **Say this:**

Fall 7 Times. Stand Up 8. That is resilience and grit together. Your community has lived this. Your ancestors lived this. You have everything you need. Start today.

Closing the Unit

- ☐ Collect completed class worksheets.
- ☐ Share links to the Resilience and Grit Challenges for students to use independently.
- ☐ Confirm the Student Workbook is available on the student website.
- ☐ If any student seemed to be in a genuinely tough situation — check in privately after class.