

The Power of Failure

How to make failure work for you

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 840L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to synthesize key ideas from a nonfiction article and an infographic

Featured Skill: synthesis

Additional skills covered in this lesson plan: author's craft, key ideas and details, text evidence

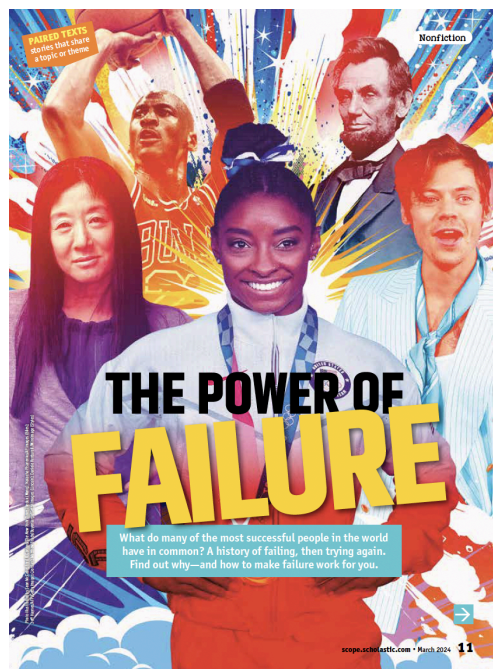
Essential Questions:

- What is failure?
- What is success?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, R.9, W.2, SL.1

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-alouds
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Differentiated Article:

- Lower-Lexile version

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "The Worst"
- "Mistake"
- "Song of Bravery"

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Synthesis
- Choice Board
- Core Skills Workout: Text Evidence*
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (15 minutes)

Do Now: Journal (5 minutes)

- Project the prompts below. Have students choose one prompt to respond to.
 - What is failure? What is success?
 - Think of a time when you failed at something. What happened? Did you learn anything from the experience?
 - Just like everyone, famous and highly successful people experience failure. Choose someone famous who has failed at something. What did this person fail at? How did they cope with their failure?
 - Though failing at something can be difficult, it can also be a positive experience. What do you think some of the positives might be?
- Invite volunteers to share their responses, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *aspire, counterintuitive, inevitable, intellect, reluctant, visionaries*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

“Secrets of a Slam Dunk Fail”

- Invite a volunteer to read the As You Read box on page 12 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the lower-Lexile version of the article.*) Optionally, have students listen to the **audio read-aloud** while they follow

along. The read-aloud is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.

- Divide students into groups to read the article again and respond to the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**, also located in the Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions

(25 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Why does author Jessica Press wait to reveal Michael Jordan's name until the fifth paragraph of the introduction?** (author's craft) *Press waits to reveal Michael Jordan's name to build suspense. Once we learn that the person she is describing "didn't make the varsity team," we assume that he must not be a great basketball player. Thus, we are surprised to learn that the person is Michael Jordan! By catching the reader off-guard and showing that even celebrities face setbacks, Press begins building her main argument: Failure can help us succeed.*
2. **According to the article, how can being afraid to fail hold us back?** (key ideas and details) *The article explains, "When you're afraid of failing, you may choose to do only what you're good at rather than what interests you." In other words, fear of failure can make you hesitant to try something new, or you might quit a new activity if you don't excel right away. You could miss the chance to discover a new interest or talent. Fear of failure can also keep you from acquiring grit, a strength of mind that helps people get through life's challenges.*
3. **Why do leaders in the field of technology embrace making mistakes?** (text evidence) *Technology leaders know that failure can be an important step. Rather than view a failed app or website as a problem, they view it as an opportunity to create something better next time, using their new knowledge.*
4. **How does Steve Jobs's career path show that failure is part of being successful?** (text evidence) *Jobs's career path shows the importance of not giving up—that even when faced with setbacks, you can still be successful if you choose to keep at it. Jobs helped start Apple back in 1976. He was later fired after getting into a disagreement with colleagues. So he started a new technology business. Apple eventually hired him back, and he quickly became the CEO. Jobs went on to launch the iPhone, one of the most important technologies of the 21st century.*

"How to Fail Like a Pro"

- Read the infographic as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the read-aloud while they follow along. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- As a class, discuss the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**, some of which apply to both texts.

Close-Reading Question

(3 minutes)

The following question can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **How does each celebrity profile highlight a healthy way to cope with setbacks?** (text evidence) *Each celebrity responded to a setback in a different but powerful way. After being eliminated on a talent show, Harry Styles tried again—but this time he partnered up with other artists. Vera Wang moved on to pursue a different interest. Abraham Lincoln went back to work, slowly rebuilding his reputation over many years. And Simone Biles dropped out of the Olympics, choosing to prioritize her health over what others expected of her.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Why is it important to learn about failure?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that learning about failure will help them to cope with it better. They may also say that failure is not a subject people often talk about and that having open discussions about failure can help people to have a more positive view of it and be honest with themselves and each other about mistakes.*
2. **Think of a character from a film, book, or show who doesn't handle failure well. Based on information from the article and the infographic, how could that character have responded differently?** *Answers will vary.*
3. **Have your ideas about failure changed after reading the article and the infographic? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary.*
4. **The article states that "as a culture we are obsessed with perfection." What do you think it would take for our culture to change, from one obsessed with perfection to one that embraces failure?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Write About It: Synthesis

(45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Synthesis**. This activity prepares them to respond to the writing prompt on page 15 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

How can failure be a positive experience and what are some ways to cope with it? Draw from both "Secrets of a Slam Dunk Fail" and "How to Fail Like a Pro" to support your ideas.

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives that explore themes of perfection, failure, and making mistakes:

- ["The Worst"](#)
- ["Mistake"](#)
- ["Song of Bravery"](#)