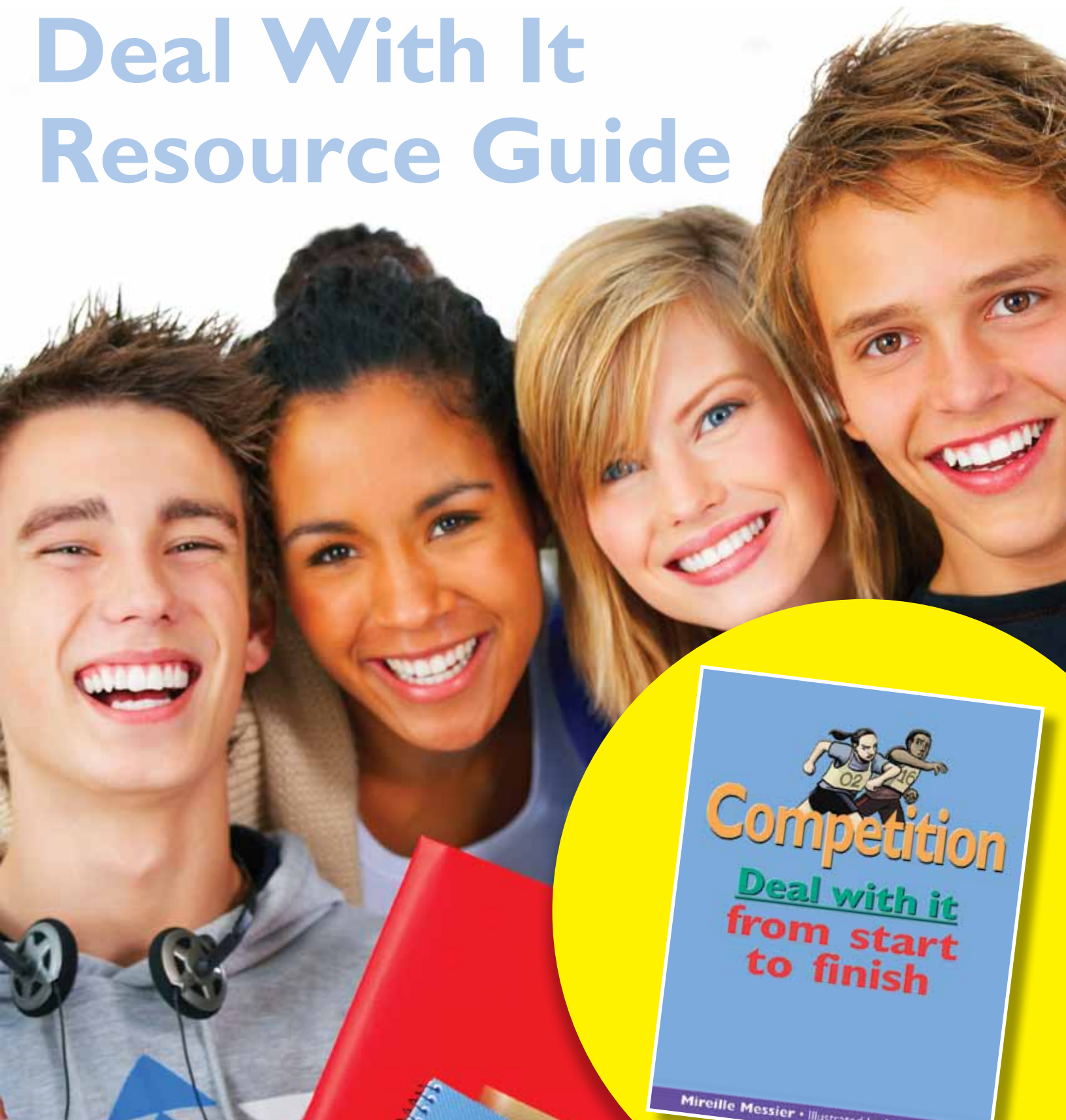


# Competition: Deal With It Resource Guide



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James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers, Toronto

# How to Use this Guide

This guide offers a number of informative and enjoyable discussion questions and teaching activities that allow for in-depth coverage of the causes of conflict from several angles.

## Guide Map

This guide begins on page 3 with an introduction to the issue covered in the Deal With It book. Please be sure to read the **Before You Begin** section, which provides suggestions to help you consider the specific needs and interests of your class. It also outlines any particular scenarios presented in the Deal With It book that may be sensitive to some students.

The pages that follow correspond with the sections of the Deal With It book.

## These sections are:

- A **101** section that introduces readers to a subject (See page 4 of this guide)
- An **Instigator** section that focuses on the person who instigates the conflict (See page 6 of this guide)
- A **Target** section that focuses on the person who feels victimized in the conflict (See page 8 of this guide)
- A **Witness** section with tips for those caught in between (See page 10 of this guide)

## For each of these sections, you will find:

**Highlights** that briefly capture the main points from the Deal With It book, which you will want to review with students.

**Discussion Questions** that are designed to introduce students to the topics and encourage them to think critically about the topics at hand.

**Teaching Activities** that correspond to page numbers in the Deal With It book, and are designated as activities for Individuals (I), Pairs (P), or Groups (G).

## About the Series

The **Deal With It** series is a set of 32-page books that empower **kids ages 9–12** to resolve conflict in their lives. Information is presented in an interactive and graphic style to engage readers and help spark discussion of issues. The information in this **Resource Guide** is intended to help educators plan lessons around conflict resolution using the **Deal With It** books.



## Competition: Deal with it from start to finish

It is natural for people to be competitive. Each day, students compete in a variety of ways: when they play sports or try to get good grades; when they vie for attention in class, at home, and in social circles; and even when they strive to stay ahead of the latest electronic or fashion trends. Teachers should be sensitive to how they treat competition in the classroom because it can have a direct influence on how students initiate and respond to competition in their own lives.

**Competition: Deal with it from start to finish** presents students with a variety of real-life situations that can trigger a person's competitive instincts, and gives them tools to make them more aware of their personal reactions and to help them deal with competition in a positive way. The resource guide is designed to facilitate discussions based on your students' personal experiences, enabling them to grow and to develop skills that will help them identify their personal competition style and any hurdles they may need to overcome.



### Before You Begin

As you plan this unit, consider the following suggestions:

- Gather together a collection of age-appropriate materials to supplement your unit and provide a variety of points of view on the topic. In addition to **Competition: Deal with it from start to finish** (See More Help on p. 32 of **Competition** for a listing of materials), try to include any relevant materials that the class is already familiar with, such as books they are reading in Language Arts.
- You may wish to send a letter home, outlining your program to parents and encouraging them to follow-up with their children to reinforce what they learn in this unit.
- Review your school's Character Education program to see if you can connect your lesson plans to the program.
- Share your lesson plans with other staff and community members to see if they have suggestions or are aware of situations that you can integrate into your discussions. You may wish to invite a guest speaker to address your class.
- Consider how you might integrate this topic into other subject areas and current class projects.
- Be aware that this book deals with subject matter that may not be appropriate for all students, including steroid use, and sexual and dangerous competition. Teachers should review all the material before presenting it to their students. You may wish to create a "Word Wall" or glossary for junior grades to help them understand the materials being presented.

# Competition 101

## Highlights

- Competition is when people or groups try to perform better than anyone else at a specified task.
- Everyone feels the pressure of competition from time to time. Some of us feel pressure when we play sports, some in academic situations, and some in social situations.
- Competition may inspire a mix of anticipation and fear that can cause physical symptoms such as a rush or discomfort. Learning how to deal with these feelings and channelling them into a healthy response will help us deal with competition without letting it dictate how we do things and interact with others.
- Competition occurs in the classroom and social situations, and during sports and recreational activities.
- Competition can result in cooperation, having fun, sportsmanship, improving your skills and celebrating success. These are healthy responses that make us feel good.
- It may also result in cheating, anxiety, bragging, engaging in dangerous/reckless activities and behaviours, selfishness, bullying, and aggression. These are unhealthy responses that can negatively affect us emotionally and physically.

## Discussion Questions

- Competition means something different to each of us. What does it mean to you? Do you think it is a negative or a positive thing? Explain your thinking.
- How does competing make you feel? Has competition made you feel better about yourself? Has it ever made you feel badly about yourself?
- Have your ideas about competition changed as you've gotten older? Do you think you handle competition better than you used to or do you think it's gotten harder because you are competing for more important things now?
- Have you heard the phrase "healthy competition"? What do you think might make competition healthy or unhealthy? Have you ever been involved in an unhealthy competition? What feelings do you associate with unhealthy and healthy competition? What are some of the possible outcomes of both types of competition?
- Have you ever encountered the types of situations shown in the comic strips on pp. 6–7? Do you recognize these behaviours in yourself or other people? How do you feel when you are around people who have these reactions to competition?
- What other myths about competition can you think of in addition to those on pp. 12–13? Where do you think these myths come from? Is there any truth in them? Explain your thinking.
- Who do you think puts the most pressure on people to compete and succeed: parents, friends, teachers, or yourself? Why do you think someone might pressure another person to succeed? How does it feel to be pressured to compete?

# Teaching Activities

I = Individual      P = Pair      G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 2–5	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I/G)	Have students brainstorm a list of competitive situations that they might encounter on a daily basis and post it on the wall for everyone to see. Ask them to keep a journal for one week, noting how they react when they encounter these situations. Ask volunteers to share their findings and discuss them as a class. Encourage students to explore their feelings around competition by asking if they were surprised by how many situations came up and how they reacted.
pp. 2–5	Language Arts/ The Arts (visual) (P)	Have students work with a partner. Ask them to write positive and negative aspects of each of the following types of people: Loser, Cheater, Winner, and Teammate. Bring the class together to brainstorm a list of competitive situations, such as tests; sports, art, drama, or music tryouts; being the first to have the trendiest gadgets or clothes; and risky behaviour. With their partner, have students create their own comic strip about one of the four types of people in one of the suggested competition scenarios. Encourage students to make a clear connection between the character’s attitude and behaviour and the result. Have students present their strips to the class, asking others to suggest positive ways to resolve the situation.
pp. 6–7	The Arts (visual) (I)	Have students create a collage to represent what “healthy” or “unhealthy” competition looks like. Students may choose to focus on one aspect or they can divide their paper in half and show healthy competition on one side and unhealthy competition on the other side. When students are finished, display the collages in the classroom and ask other students to describe what feelings the images inspire.
pp. 8–9	Language Arts (G)	Divide the class into groups and have them complete the quiz. Ask each group to come up with a list of Do’s and Don’ts for dealing with competition in a positive way based on what they learned from answers given. Bring the groups together and create a class list of Do’s and Don’ts for dealing with competition in a positive way.
pp. 10–11	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I)	Have students write an anonymous letter to “The Competition Counsellor” asking for advice about a situation involving competition. Put all the letters into a box and have students randomly draw one. Ask students to identify which personality they are dealing with (Competitor, Underdog, or Spectator) and review the tip sheets for that personality before preparing their answer. Letters and responses can be displayed on a class message board.
pp. 10–11	Mathematics/ Language Arts (G)	Have students work in pairs to create a survey to find out how their peers feel about competition. Questions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you ever feel nervous before a test?</li> <li>• Do you feel pressure from other people to get good grades?</li> <li>• Do you feel pressure to buy the same toys or gadgets that your friends do?</li> <li>• Do you think that the point of competition is to win?</li> </ul> Have students survey their classmates and then tally and graph their results. Ask them to present their findings to the class and discuss how they might encourage their peers to deal with competition in a positive way.

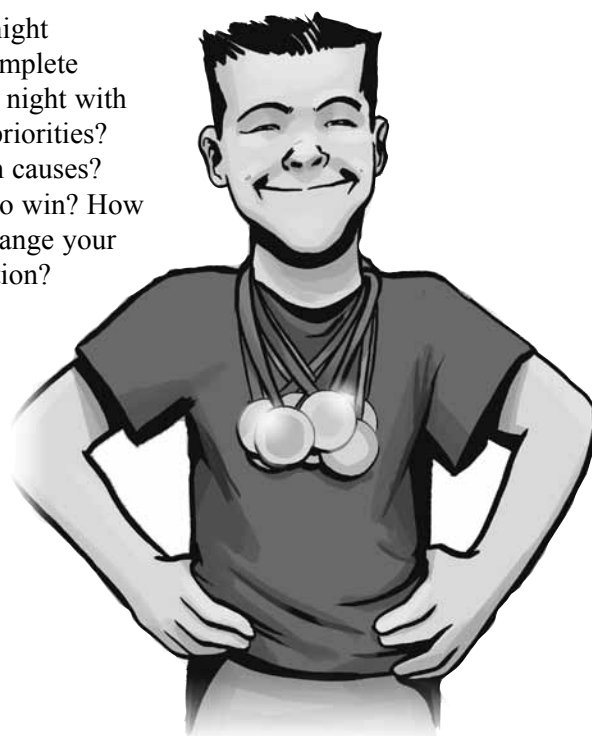
# The Competitor

## Highlights

- The Competitor is someone who loves the rush of winning and doesn't like to lose. To the Competitor, winning means everything.
- It's important to realize that, although winning is nice, you can learn valuable lessons from losing.
- You can prepare for and deal with competition in a positive, healthy way by
  - ☛ learning and practicing to win and lose gracefully: always shake hands and celebrate your efforts
  - ☛ learning from your mistakes
  - ☛ being humble about your success
  - ☛ playing and acting cooperatively by sharing responsibilities in a group task and trusting that everyone will contribute and try their best
  - ☛ always playing fair by respecting and following the rules
  - ☛ keeping a realistic perspective on the task or event
  - ☛ demonstrating a positive and enthusiastic attitude by focusing on cooperation, playing fair, and having fun

## Discussion Questions

- Do you know anyone who has taken extreme measures to win? What makes you think that they took competition too far? How did the situation make you feel? How might you have dealt with the situation in a positive way?
- Can you think of examples of situations in which someone was a graceful loser? How did others react? How did it make you feel to see someone act this way?
- Imagine that you are assigned a group task and are placed in a group with a fellow student who is determined to get the best mark in the class. How would you deal with his or her competitive nature? Do you think this would motivate you to work harder? Explain your thinking.
- Imagine having an important family commitment the night before a homework assignment is due. You want to complete the assignment on time but, you'll be busy most of the night with your family. How could you balance your competing priorities? How might you deal with the tension that this situation causes?
- Have you ever known someone who cheated in order to win? How did it make you feel? What did you do? Would you change your actions the next time if you're placed in a similar position? Why or why not? Would it make a difference if the cheater were on your team and helped you to win? Explain your thinking.
- How do you handle the stress of competition? What tips would you give others to help them deal with competition in a positive way?
- Are there any athletes or role models you admire for their ability to keep a cool head during competition? What do you think makes them good competitors?



# Teaching Activities

I = Individual      P = Pair      G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 14–15	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I)	Have students assume the role of a counsellor to write a response to “Confused About Competing” on how to deal with his parents’ attitude towards competition and winning. Encourage them to include information about the positive and negative effects of competition and tips on how to have a healthy attitude towards competition. Ask volunteers to share their letters with the class.
pp. 14–15	Language Arts/ Physical Education (G)	Have students work in groups of three or four. Ask them to think of games or sports that they play and what makes them competitive. Have students create a co-operative game by either modifying the rules of one they know or creating a new game. Ask students to write out the instructions for their game and present them to the class. Allow them to try playing one or two games and follow up by discussing the similarities and differences between competitive and co-operative games.
pp. 16–17	Language Arts/ Physical Education (G)	Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to brainstorm a list of positive things that they could say or do to acknowledge a losing team’s efforts. Ask the other group to do the same for a winning team’s efforts. Have each group present their lists to the class. Ask students to try at least one suggestion from the lists the next time they are in a competitive situation and to report back to the class on the reaction they get from other players.
pp. 16–17	Guidance and Career Education (I)	Have students work through the quiz independently, recording their responses. Based on their answers, have students write a journal entry about their strengths and weaknesses when dealing with competition. As part of their entry, ask students to include three goals to help them improve their attitude and behaviour in competitive situations. Encourage students to refer to this list throughout the year to see if they are able to achieve their goals.
pp. 18–19	The Arts (visual) (I)	Ask students to choose one “Do” and one “Don’t” from the list on p. 19. Have them create a poster that encourages other students to be healthy competitors by following the “Do” and avoiding the “Don’t”. Have students present their posters and display them around the classroom.
pp. 18–19	Language Arts/ Social Studies (G)	Have students work in small groups to create a “Healthy Competitor Award” to honour people in their school or community who demonstrate good sportsmanship. Ask them to create a list of criteria for their award based on what they think it means to be a good sport and design a trophy that represents their award.

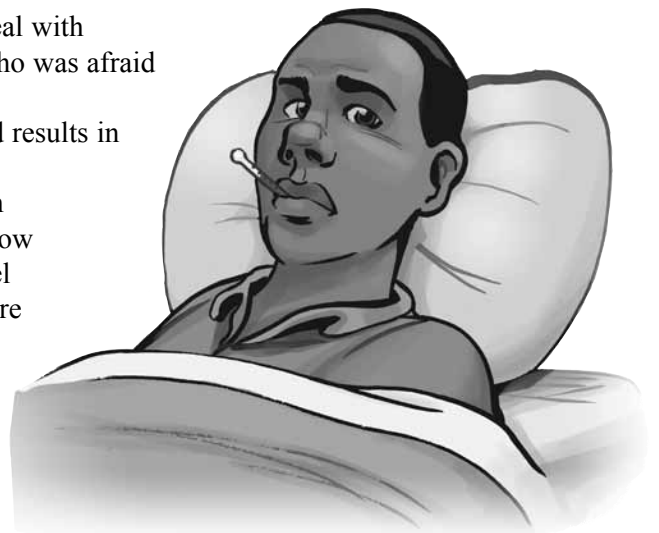
# The Underdog

## Highlights

- The Underdog is someone who would rather avoid than face competition.
- The Underdog may want the rush that the Competitor thrives on, but is afraid to take the risks that could get them there. This fear can affect him or her both mentally and physically and make him or her a master of avoidance.
- If you think you are an Underdog, you can try:
  - ☛ making small changes and taking on manageable challenges
  - ☛ asking someone to support you and remind you of your strengths
  - ☛ to understand that we can't be winners at everything and that we lose more by not trying at all
  - ☛ asking a friend to help you or try new activities with you
- You can learn to deal with competition in a positive way by
  - ☛ not pretending to be “too cool” for or ridiculing anything that someone else has worked hard to accomplish
  - ☛ having realistic goals that give you a good chance of succeeding
  - ☛ visualizing yourself doing well to help boost your confidence
  - ☛ keep your cool by studying or practising to be sure you are prepared
  - ☛ let a trusted friend or adult know if you are feeling overwhelmed

## Discussion Questions

- Have you ever avoided trying something new because you were worried you wouldn't be able to do it as well as your peers? How did this make you feel? What might happen if you did try and you weren't as good as or you were better than your peers? Explain your thinking.
- How might you feel if your friends had the newest, coolest things and you didn't? What emotions would you associate with this situation? Why?
- Has anyone ever made you feel discouraged by not supporting you? What do you wish you could say to that person to make them understand how you feel?
- Have you ever used an excuse to avoid a challenge? How did you feel? How might you deal with the same situation in a more positive way?
- Has anyone ever given you good advice on how to deal with competition? What advice would you give a friend who was afraid of competition?
- How could being prepared affect your confidence and results in a competition?
- Have there been times when you thought you were an Underdog in a competition but came out a winner? How did you feel before the competition? How did you feel afterwards? How might your success help you in future competitions?
- What are some positive things you have learned from failing or losing?
- What is your favourite underdog movie? Why do you think there are so many movies about underdogs? What messages do these movies give?



# Teaching Activities

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Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 20–21	Language Arts/ The Arts (drama) (G)	Have students work with a partner to write a short skit about a Competitor and an Underdog. Ask them to choose a scenario, such as after a game or looking at report cards. Encourage students to think about how both the Competitor and the Underdog might learn from each other to bring the chosen scenario to a positive conclusion.
pp. 20–21	Language Arts/ The Arts (visual) (I)	Ask students to read the “Do’s and Don’ts” on p. 21 and use them to come up with an inspirational slogan to encourage Underdogs to do their best. Have students create posters for their slogans and display them in the classroom.
pp. 22–23	Language Arts (G)	Have students work in groups of two or three to create two new quiz questions based on their own experiences. Have groups exchange their questions with another group and suggest how to resolve the situations in a positive way. Compile all the questions and solutions into a class quiz. As an extension, students may wish to present their quiz and solutions to younger classes to help them deal with competition in a positive way.
pp. 24–25	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (I)	Ask students to collect media stories about competition, including sporting events, business, <i>Guinness World Records</i> attempts, contests, etc. Ask students to write a journal entry about how the winners and losers are portrayed in these articles. Encourage students to include their thoughts on how the subjects of the articles might feel after they read them and to include advice they would give the subjects.
pp. 24–25	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (I)	Read and discuss the statement about “Consumer competition” on pp. 25. Ask students to record the details (music, sound effects, characters, wardrobe, camera position, etc.) of three commercials that encourage people to compete as consumers. Have students compare and discuss their findings in small groups, including how the different elements of the commercials helped create their impression of the product and the target audience. Have each group present their findings to the class and discuss their feelings about consumer competition.
pp. 24–25	Language Arts/ The Arts (drama) (G)	Read and discuss the statement about “Group competition” on pp. 25. Ask students to brainstorm a list of movies, TV shows, and novels that deal with gangs and group competition (e.g., <i>Mean Girls</i> , <i>The Outsiders</i> , etc.). Using this list as a starting point, have students work in groups of three or four to write a skit or short story about a Spectator who witnesses an Underdog being encouraged to join a gang by a Competitor. Encourage students to think about the choices each character makes and how they might be able to reach a positive outcome.

# The Spectator

## Highlights

- The Spectator is a witness to other people having a hard time dealing with competition. He or she has the power to help them learn to handle it in a healthier way.
- A Spectator can help someone who takes competition too seriously by staying calm, being a good example, and letting cheaters and gloaters know that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- A Spectator can help someone who has a hard time dealing with competition by being the cheering section and reminding them of their successes, helping them prepare for competition, and encouraging them to have fun.
- You can be a positive role model by:
  - ☛ being a good sport
  - ☛ letting cheaters know that you don't approve of their behaviour
  - ☛ offering your support to kids who struggle with the pressures of competition
  - ☛ suggesting cooperative activities instead of competitive games

## Discussion Questions

- Do you recognize yourself in any of the scenarios on pp. 28–31? What might you do to resolve these situations in a positive way?
- Which competition style do you think is the healthiest? Why? How might Underdogs, Competitors, and Spectators learn from each other?
- Look at the “Do’s and Don’ts” on p. 27. How many times have you witnessed people using one of these approaches in the last few days? Do you use any of these techniques to deal with competition? How do people react? How do you feel about their reactions?
- What do you think it means to be a good Spectator? What behaviours do you think a good Spectator might exhibit? How might a Spectator encourage others to deal with competition in a positive way?
- Do you think there are other types of competitors that are not mentioned in this book? What characteristics might they have? How do they deal with competition?
- How could you help a friend to feel more confident in a competitive situation?
- How could you use what you have learned in this unit to deal with competition in a healthy way? Has your attitude towards competition changed? In what ways? What changes could you make in your own attitude towards competition to help others handle it in a positive way?



# Teaching Activities

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Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 26–27	Media Literacy/ Social Studies (I/G)	Have students collect news stories about spectators behaving badly. As a class, review the stories and select one on which to base a mock court. Have the students play the roles of defendant, defence counsel, prosecution, judge, and jury. Allow students to prepare for their roles and conduct the mock trial. After the trial, have the class hand down a sentence that would encourage the Spectator to improve his or her attitude and behaviour.
pp. 26–27	The Arts (visual)/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Divide students into groups of three and assign each student the role of Competitor, Underdog, or Spectator. Ask them to review the list of “Do’s and Don’ts” for each of their roles (see pp. 19, 21, and 27). Ask each student to come up with one suggestion for how his or her role could make the class a positive place for all students to safely compete. Have each group make a poster with their suggestions and display them around the classroom.
pp. 28–31	Language Arts (G)	Ask students for examples of competitive situations they encountered in the past week. Have students anonymously describe some of their reactions to these situations. Collect all the reactions and read them to the class, having students identify whether or not the responses were positive or negative and recording their ideas in a T-chart. Then, using the descriptions on pp. 14, 20, and 26, decide as a class if they most encourage the behaviours of Competitors, Underdogs, or Spectators. Have the students write a journal piece reflecting on the nature of the classroom.
pp. 28–31	Language Arts/ The Arts (drama) (P/G)	Have students work with a partner to identify the personalities (Competitor, Underdog, and Spectator) involved in each of the quiz scenarios. Have pairs choose one scenario and write a dialogue that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets the scene</li> <li>• Demonstrates the reactions of each character to the situation, based on the descriptions given in the “Do’s and Don’ts” sections</li> <li>• Resolves the situation in a positive way</li> </ul> When each pair has finished, have them present the dialogue as part of a drama.
pp. 28–31	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Have students create a class Appreciation Book or Wall. To do this, each person writes an anonymous compliment for every other person in the class about the way that he or she deals with competition. For example, a student might admire the way another student tries lots of different types of competition or that another student shows up to all of the basketball team’s games and always cheers. Gather the compliment pages together into a book or display them on an “Appreciation Wall.”

## Additional Resources

- [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca): Hockey Canada’s series of “Relax, It’s Just a Game” public service announcements address the pressure that some parents put on their children to compete.
- Covey, Sean. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York, NY: Fireside, 1998.
- Hinton, S. E. *The Outsiders*. Viking Children’s Books, 1967.
- *Mean Girls*. Film. Paramount Pictures, 2004.

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### Guide Credits:

Editor: Tricia Carmichael

Illustrations by: Steven Murray

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ISBN-10: 1-4954-0004-6 ISBN-13: 978-1-4594-0004-7

James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers  
317 Adelaide Street West, Suite 1002  
Toronto, ON, Canada  
M5V 1P9  
[www.lorimer.ca](http://www.lorimer.ca)

Distributed in the United States by:  
Orca Book Publishers  
P.O. Box 468  
Custer, WA USA  
98240-0468