

Teaching News Is Elementary February 10, 2017

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times print replica, computer or smart board, pencils or pens, paper

Article: Sports star of the Year nominee: Marks speaks to his younger self in letter

Pages: SPORTS, page C1

Print Replica Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2017

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Objectives:

Students will read and examine a letter, and will search for personal connections or lessons they see in their own lives.

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Examine the following pictures:



What do you see? What questions do you have about the photos? Does it bring up a personal memory? Have you played sports before? What character-building traits come from being a part of a team? What does it take to become a college athlete?

Reading Activity:

Over the last five years, Gabe Marks has made a name for himself as Washington State's star receiver, but football is just one dimension of his complex personality.

Marks, 22, graduated from WSU in 2016 as the Cougars' career record-holder for receptions (316), touchdown catches (37) and receiving yards (3,453). He's the Pac-12's all-time leader in receptions and a two-time All-Pac-12 selection, and he's also one of five finalists for the 2017 MTRWestern Seattle Male Sports Star of the Year award.

The 6-foot, 190-pound receiver is now training for the NFL combine, hoping to get the chance to further his football career.

But regardless of what happens in April's NFL draft, the last five years at WSU have shown Marks that he is not defined by his chosen profession of "football player."

With Marks now having closed the book on a successful college career, The Seattle Times asked the receiver to write a letter to his younger self.

What would 22-year-old Gabe Marks tell 14-year-old Gabe Marks if he could provide his younger self with a note of guidance to help him navigate the world?

Here's what Marks wrote, unedited, as submitted to The Seattle Times:

Dear Gabe,

This letter to you is less about your life as an athlete and more about you personally and the way you choose to walk through this life and how you choose to affect the people that you encounter.

*As far as football is concerned you will be fine. Your drive to be great and your willingness to work when others won't will take you further than you ever could have imagined. The countless hours that you will put in over the next years will become your crutch to lean on in times of **adversity** when you begin to question yourself. You will face adversity. You will learn to use adversity as your **ally** and wield that energy in your favor throughout your life on and off the field.*

*You will soon begin to see that the game that you love will give you the perfect platform to affect change in the world around you. No matter how big or how small that change may be, you will feel that it is your duty as a human being to do your part. In the trying times that lie ahead, you will see more division, hate, and overall **digression** of people's ability to empathize with one another than you could ever have imagined. I know it may be hard to understand now but your voice over time will prove to be far more valuable than anything that you could accomplish on a football field.*

*Trust your upbringing. You were raised right. Continue to show **empathy** and understanding to others even if it seems like an unpopular stance to take. People who oppose you will eventually come around. No matter what, always stay true to yourself and say what's truly in your heart. You will slowly begin to see that you speak for more people than yourself.*

*Learn to embrace being alone. You will spark your greatest thoughts and come to your greatest realizations about the world and yourself in these precious moments of **solitude**.*

Read more. Knowledge is the key to the rest of the world that is currently hidden from your sight. Be brave and unyielding in your quest for the truth. Ask questions to things that you do not understand.

Be accepting and tolerant to those who lose their way. You will need people to do the same for you when your trail goes cold, because it will. Embrace moments of darkness. You will always find the light again.

*Accept change in yourself as well as in others. You will find this to be one of the greatest **obstacles** you face. As difficult as this will be for you, it will be something that you will overcome.*

*I know the things I'm speaking to you about might seem a bit heavy, but I know that you feel that unrelenting restlessness inside of you to not only be a great football player but also a great person. These things I ask of you are things that can't be done in a day or a month. This is a life's work of evolving as a person every day and working on yourself every moment. These things I ask of you will mold you into the player that you want to be on the field that people will be unable to deny, as well as a man whom people will respect and love off the field. Keep going against the grain and challenging the **status quo**, my friend.*

Sincerely,

Your forever evolving self

Vocabulary:

These words were taken from the letter. Please look up the definitions and write them down, using your own words.

adversity

ally

digression

empathy

obstacle

solitude

status quo

Journal Writing Prompts:

Gabe Marks wrote a letter, providing his younger self with a note of guidance to help him navigate the world. It's your turn to do the same thing.

Write a 1-page letter to your younger self, what advice would you give? What have you learned about life and personal relationships with your friends and family? How should you treat others? What traits will make you a good friend? What will help you do better in school? How will you overcome challenging times?

Discussion Questions:

- What was one lesson in Marks letter that personally connected with you? Why?
- What were your “take-aways” from his letter? Was it filled with good advice for others, as well?
- How do you show empathy toward others?
- Do you like being alone, in solitude? Why or why not?
- Does writing help you process your feelings and emotions?
- Do you ever take time to stop and think, in solitude, in quiet moments and reflect on your life...your personal choices and decisions that can take your life in different paths? Why or why not?
- Why is personal reflection important?