

Perfect Game Lesson Plan:
Raising Awareness about the word *Retarded*
Using scenes from the story and other resources



Common Core Connection: Meets Literature/Craft and Structure standard (Grades 4-6) to explain how a series of scenes fits together to develop a theme/plot.



Common Core Connection: Meets Literature/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas standard (Grades 4-6) to integrate information from two texts on the same topic.

Introduction:

“Perfect Game” centers on the relationship between two athletes. One is a baseball player on a typical school team. The other is a basketball player on a Special Olympics team. The friendship is not an easy one at first; the baseball player dismisses the Special Olympics athlete as *retarded*. But as one reviewer points out, the story can help children see how hurtful that term can be. Here’s that review:

Interwoven [in the plot] is the more serious topic of Isaac's unrealistic drive and his slow acceptance of the players on the Special Olympics team. This portrayal is almost painfully realistic— as often as teachers and parents tell children not to use the term "retard", they still do. Seeing Isaac use this term out of ignorance and then learn why it is hurtful is more helpful than all the lectures adults can deliver.

—YA and Kids Books Central blog, Karen Yingling, Middle School Teacher-Librarian, Ohio

Part One

There are three scenes in the “Perfect Game” where the word *retarded* is used in an off-hand way to describe a Special Olympics athlete:

Scene 1: page 36

Scene 2: page 66

Scene 3: page 110

Look at each scene and describe Isaac’s relationship with Kevin at that point in the story. Now look at each scene and describe Isaac’s attitude toward the use of the word *retarded*. How did Isaac’s relationship with Kevin affect his attitude toward the word?

Part Two

Two college students started a campaign to end the use of the word *retard* or *retarded* when referring to someone with intellectual disabilities or when referring to someone doing something foolish. Go to the web site www.r-word.org * and read about this campaign (you will find a lot of very interesting information!) and take the pledge not to use the word.

Part Three:

View the public service announcement: It's Not Acceptable.

<http://www.r-word.org/Not-Acceptable-R-word-PSA.aspx> **

It is a very powerful video that will make some viewers uncomfortable in important ways. Two actresses from "Glee" - Jane Lynch and co-star and self-advocate Lauren Potter - make a call to action for everyone to stop using word and to make a pledge online at <http://www.r-word.org> not to do so.

* If you have trouble with a link, just go to Fred Bowen's website, the Perfect Game page, and click the same link posted under "For Teachers." That one will work!

**Teachers should view it before showing it to students to help prepare them.