



## November's Key to Character

# CO-OPERATION

### Definitions

Elementary: Working together for a common purpose.

Secondary: Collaboration; working together to accomplish a goal.

### Related Words

representation	allegiance	dedication	concurrency
self-sacrifice	accomplish	consideration	respect

### KEYS TO COOPERATION

Communicate

Share ideas

Compromise when needed

Take turns

Show appreciation to others

Make others feel needed

Look directly at the person talking

Include everyone

Encourage others to do their best

Be a role model

Volunteer to do the job no one wants

Respect differences in others

Improve conditions

Be responsible

Agree to disagree when needed

Treat others as you want to be treated

Realize that we are all better together

### What Does Cooperation Look Like?

When you choose to cooperate, you make a commitment to LISTEN, COMPROMISE, UNDERSTAND, AND PARTICIPATE.

A simple formula to use when you practice Cooperation is to remember the "3C Equation:"

*Consideration + Compromise = Cooperation.*

### Cooperation Is...

Cooperation is... listening to the ideas of others.

Cooperation is... working together to get things done.

Cooperation is... respecting each person's job as important.

Cooperation is... doing your fair share of the work.

Cooperation is... giving what you do best to help the situation.

By being cooperative we are part of the solution rather than the problem. It takes a daily personal commitment toward good choices and positive attitudes.

### Spotlight on Schools

The Grouchy Ladybug made a visit to Sarah Musick's class at Eagle Lake Elementary. After reading the book and discussing how the ladybug could use self-control, students chose one of the quotes about self-control to put on the backs of ten paper ladybugs used to create a bulletin board titled "Un-Grouchy Ladybugs Use Self-Control." Grass and a ladybug border added a finishing touch. They refer to the bulletin board throughout the day. Keep up the good work Eagle Lake!

*"It isn't what the student will be today that counts. It's what the student will be tomorrow."*

### FCAT Writes

*Think about these situations, then write a paragraph or essay that describes your feelings and a way to be cooperative.*

- *Ben and Dan are cleaning house together, but Dan does not want to take out the trash.*
- *Ken, Clair, Jan and Ryan are working on a skit for science class. Ryan wants to do the skit on nutrition but Clair wants to do a skit on gravity.*
- *The Mayor of your city asked all residents to water their lawn only one day per week.*
- *People are coming to your school to stay for shelter because fires are threatening their homes.*
- *Jill and Bill want the same seat on the bus.*

# Integrating Character Education Across the Curriculum

Character education ideas for a variety of curriculum areas.

## Visual Arts

Ask students to bring in cartoons or comic strips where characters are behaving in cooperative or not cooperating ways. Discuss in small groups or as a whole class. Students can draw their own cartoons demonstrating one of the school's core values.

## Social Studies

Prepare index cards with a specific situation that calls for immediate action by the leader of a country being studied. Distribute cards to each student who describes briefly what he/she determines to be the most cooperative action. Divide into small groups for discussion of each response. The group must come to consensus as to the most cooperative course of action and explain why this choice was selected over other alternatives.

## Language Arts

- Have each student pick another student's name out of a hat and write a positive adjective about the person they picked (or have each student write a positive adjective about every student in their class). Pass the notes to the children they describe and have them make a collage of the answers.
- Choose a book at the library or a story in the reading book that describes someone being cooperative with someone else. Read the story aloud in the classroom. Students should explore their feelings about how it feels to be cooperative and share personal experiences of others being cooperative with them. This can be done in a class discussion format or through a free-writing exercise.
- Have the students think about a time when they were not cooperative and have them rewrite the situation with a different outcome.
- Ask the students to think of all the people who have been cooperative with them. Have students write letters of appreciation to two of those people and explain how the cooperative person made a difference in their life—or even their day.
- Conduct a newspaper character trait search. Have the students look through the newspaper for stories that reflect a cooperative spirit, action or attitude. Students could each choose a favorite story, summarize for the rest of the class, and explain how it demonstrates cooperation.

## Math

- Make a quilt out of paper or fabric as part of a unit on measurement with each patch containing a drawing of an example of cooperation. After it is completed the class could donate the quilt to a local charity or display in the classroom.
- Conduct a study to see how much aluminum, paper, and other recyclable materials are currently being thrown away in school or at home. Calculate how much space they would take up in a landfill. Discuss cooperation needed in recycling and consequences for not cooperating.
- Have your students tutor younger students in math.

## Science

- Learn how pollution and trash affect the environment, including animals and plants. Discuss how cooperating to protect our environment could help humans, animals, and plants.
- Plant a tree or small flower garden on the school grounds; discuss each type of plant or flower and how best to care for them.
- Adopt a nearby park and learn about the ecosystems within that park while keeping it clean and beautiful at the same time.
- Learn how to make homes more energy efficient and share the information with local residents. Discuss how energy efficiency helps the environment and, in turn, humans and animals.

## Social Studies

- Identify community helpers such as crossing guards, firefighters, and police officers. Visit the places where they work and learn about their jobs. Discuss how their jobs help the community.
- Meet with senior citizens and record their memories of what the community was like when they were growing up. Compare their likes and dislikes with those of young people today. Compare prices from then and now.
- Choose a problem (using consensus) in the community, such as a need for a crosswalk at a certain intersection or the lack of a bookmobile stop at an assisted living center. Contact local officials with ideas for solving the problem and explore how to initiate the change. Learn about the political process by attending city council meetings, visiting local officials, and writing letters.
- When studying people in history have the students illustrate how they showed cooperation.
- Create a crossword puzzle with the names of cooperative people students learn about in history. When puzzle is complete, discuss how each historical figure was cooperative. Source: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1081>

# Parent Connection

Children are involved in learning activities designed to develop good character and empower young people to make good choices for themselves. Your cooperation with these activities will support our overall program.

**Here are some things you can do to support the idea that cooperation is an important life skill and that the rewards outweigh the sacrifices.**

- Initiate a fun project that involves all family members (a garden, jigsaw puzzle, homemade pizza, etc.)
- “Catch” your child cooperating (or attempting to cooperate) and offer your encouragement by verbally showing your appreciation; material rewards are not necessary.
- Pick one television program and watch it with your family. Afterward, have a family discussion about things people did in the program that were examples of either good or bad cooperation. Make a list of these examples.

## Skills To Gain Cooperation

1. Describe what you see or describe the problem: "The toys need to be put away."
2. Give information: "Toys left out can get broken or lost."
3. Say it with a word: "Toys."
4. Describe what you feel: "I don't like seeing toys left out."
5. Write a note or picture: "Put toys away, after play."

## Additional Strategies

- Offer a choice: "You can pick up toys now or before supper."
- Use humor: "Toys, what are you still doing out?" "Have you lost your way? Billy, the toys need your help to get back to their shelf."
- Use playful voice: Robot: "All—toys—books—coats—shoes—must be picked up after play."
- Make it a game: "How fast can you pick up? I'll time you!"
- Play music, sing, dance, and tell stories while you work.
- Credit accomplishments: "You are such a help to me. Thank you." Give hugs and rewards. "Let's have two stories tonight."

## Important Components of Cooperation

- Our **tone or attitude** can defeat any skill. Young children are very sensitive to the attitude we communicate. Strategies can help us gain self-control and speak to what is best in our children — their intelligence, desire to please, sense of responsibility, helpfulness.
- Acknowledging emotions can help a child feel understood and more cooperative. Children can feel manipulated by any strategy when their feelings are disregarded or the relationship is reduced to a formula (I say this, now you respond).
- Building time to enjoy each other can keep a relationship strong. Research indicates that positive experiences with parents enable children to better handle stress and negative emotions.

These components can help us nurture an emotional atmosphere where cooperation can grow.

*Source: Spring, 2002 "Nibbles" series written by the Family Life Team*

## Bulletin Board Ideas

Label a bulletin board:

### "COOPERATION IN THE UNITED STATES"

Have students locate pictures of people cooperating, such as army soldiers, hospital workers, school teachers with students, parents with children, presidential figures reading to students, famous individuals sharing with students in appropriate settings, etc.

Design a "How to Cooperate" poster that illustrates the cooperative behaviors listed on the first page of this newsletter. Keep it displayed on the wall.

### Cut out the letters for "My Very Own Interpretation about Cooperation"

Have students choose a quotation and write their interpretation of the quote as it relates to cooperation. Make a collage of the papers on the bulletin board below the subject area.



## Websites

[www.desertskyone.com/charactercooperation](http://www.desertskyone.com/charactercooperation)

Books about cooperation... Key, Francis. The kids in Mrs. Coleman's class, snow.war...

[www.pvsd.k12pa.us/characterEd/charact.PDF](http://www.pvsd.k12pa.us/characterEd/charact.PDF)

Traits to be reinforced and practiced... cooperation, teamwork, encouraging others, and friendship.

[www.rvschools.org/lhoffman/characterEdWebquest](http://www.rvschools.org/lhoffman/characterEdWebquest)

Summarize key details of informational text, connecting new information to explain how various behaviors promote or hinder cooperation...

[www.peace.ca/whatispeaceeducationbyadams.htm](http://www.peace.ca/whatispeaceeducationbyadams.htm)

What is peace education. A strong learning partnership founded in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation between all stakeholders is the key.

[www.occoc.com/character/cooperation](http://www.occoc.com/character/cooperation)

More information on the Orangeburg County Community of character initiative.

[shine.yahoo.com/channel/parenting/education-is-the-key](http://shine.yahoo.com/channel/parenting/education-is-the-key)

Education is the key////Parenting learning the basis for understanding and cooperation.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

"We are born for cooperation, as are the feet, the hands, the eyelids and the upper and lower jaws."

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus

"One hand can not applaud alone."

Arabian Proverb

"Nothing less than a sense of divine cooperation can sustain us in the long pull of restoring the world to the orderly procedures of life."

Ralph W. Sockman

"Cooperation is spelled with two letter — WE."

George Verity

"Vital to every operation is cooperation."

Frank Tyger

"The world must learn to work together, or finally it will not work at all."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

## **The Legend of the Five Kernels**



**It was very cold for the Pilgrims that first winter.**

**Food was in short supply.**

**Some days, they had only five kernels of corn.**

**When spring came, the Pilgrims planted the remaining corn.**

**The sun and rain helped the seeds to grow**

**and much food was harvested in the fall.**

**Every Thanksgiving thereafter, the Pilgrims placed**

**five kernels of corn beside each plate**

**to remind them of their blessings.**

**The first kernel reminded them of the autumn beauty.**

**The second kernel reminded them of their love for each other.**

**The third kernel reminded them of their family's love.**

**The fourth kernel reminded them of their friends...**

**especially their Indian brothers.**

**The fifth kernel reminded them of their freedom.**

## **School Wide Project**

When teaching cooperation/citizenship ask for puzzles to be donated to the school. When students earn time, allow them to go work on the puzzle. Each time they complete a puzzle secure the puzzle pieces and display the puzzle in the hall with a sign about cooperation. One school put a 2500 piece puzzle in the foyer of their school. Parents and others who attended events or picked up kids from practice all participated in putting the puzzle together.

## **Thanksgiving Fable**

It was a hungry pussy cat; upon Thanksgiving morn,

And she watched a thankful little mouse, that ate an ear of corn.

If I ate that thankful little mouse, how thankful he should be,

When he was made a meal himself, to make a meal for me.

"Then with his thanks for having fed, and his thanks for feeding me.

With all his thankfulness inside, how thankful I shall be!"

Thus mused the hungry pussy cat, upon Thanksgiving day;

But the little mouse had overheard and declined (with thanks) to stay.

Source: [www.applesfortheteacher.com](http://www.applesfortheteacher.com)



## Holding Up the Sky



*This story comes from China. It reminds us that each person has a part to play in the success of family, school, and community. What is your part??*

One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying flat on its back on the ground. The bird's tiny feet were raised up into the air.

"What on earth are you doing, Hummingbird?" asked the elephant.

The hummingbird replied, "I have heard that the sky might fall today. If that should happen, I am ready to do my bit in holding it up."

The elephant laughed and mocked the tiny bird. "Do you think THOSE little feet could hold up the SKY?"

"Not alone," admitted the hummingbird. "But each must do what he can. And this is what I can do."

The hummingbird knew that it takes the cooperation of many to make a group work well. The bird's effort seemed small to the elephant. But it often takes many small efforts to make one big success.

## Sunshine State Standards

### PreK-2

The students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion (HE.A.1.1)

The students will know health-enhancing behaviors (HE.B.1.1)

The students will know how to use effective communication skills that enhance health (HE.B.3.1)

### Grades 3-5

Students comprehend concepts related to health (HE.A.1.2)

Students know health-enhancing behaviors (HE.B.1.2)

Students know how to use effective interpersonal communication skills that enhance health (HE.B.3.2)

### Grades 6-8

Students comprehend concepts related to health promotion (HE.A.1.3)

Students know health-enhancing behaviors (HE.B.1.3)

Students know how to use effective interpersonal communication skills that enhance health (HE.B.3.3)

### Grades 9-12

Students comprehend concepts related to health promotion (HE.A.1.4)

Students know health-enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks (HE.B.1.4)

Students know how to use effective interpersonal communication skills that enhance health. (HE.B.3.4)

## An Interesting Visit

A few years ago I was living in Japan. One day my friends and I decided to take a trip to climb Mt. Fuji. It was a considerable distance from where we lived so we had several hours on the train.

To pass the time, we visited amongst ourselves and with others in our car. There were tourists from various parts of Japan as well as several foreign countries. At one point I witnessed a most unusual conversation. One of my Japanese friends wanted to talk to a young man from France. My friend only spoke Japanese, and the French tourist spoke only French. The Frenchman had a traveling companion who knew some Spanish, and one of our groups had studied Spanish in high school.

With a little creativity, our dilemma was solved. Sitting four abreast on a train bench the conversation went something like this:

The Japanese boy introduced himself in Japanese to my American friend. He translated in his mind from Japanese to English and then to Spanish. He passed on the message in Spanish to one gentleman who then conveyed the message to his friend in French. The response came back in the opposite order from one end of the bench to the other. And so the conversation was carried on. It was a little slow, quite laborious, and I suspect something got lost in the translation (or the translation or maybe the other translation)! In the end, new friendships blossomed, and everyone marveled at our ability to communicate - more or less.

With a little cooperation, some ingenuity, and perseverance, there are not many problems that we can't solve together.

*Source: Character Building Stories*

## Discussion Topics:

What makes working in groups fun?

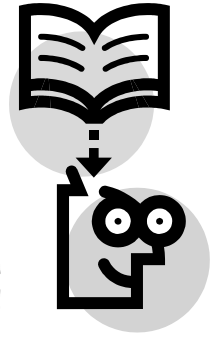
What does the word "cooperate" mean?

What makes you feel like an important part of a group?





# Suggested Reading List



## Primary

Chestnut Cove by Tim Egan. When King Milford offers his entire kingdom to the person who can grow the largest, juiciest watermelon, the inhabitants of Chestnut Cove become selfish and stop helping each other.

Snow in Jerusalem by Deborah daCosta. In contemporary Jerusalem, two boys, one from the Jewish Quarter and one from the Muslim Quarter, discover that they have both been caring for the same stray cat. As a rare snowfall occurs, their dispute is resolved when the boys, surprised to see four kittens, agree to share them and their mother equally.

Stone Soup by Tony Ross. When three hungry soldiers come to a town where all the food has been hidden, they set out to make soup of water and stones, and the entire town enjoys the feast.

The Elephant and the Crocodile. Elephant must listen to his neighbor, Crocodile, practice his violin day after day, and far into the night. Elephant decides to learn to play the trumpet. The noise is awful. Finally they learn to cooperate and make music together.

Not Like That, Like This by Tony Bradman. Dad and Thomas go for a walk. They start to tease about how to stick their heads through the iron railings of a fence. Everyone has to cooperate to get Dad unstuck.

## Intermediate

Saving Lilly by Peg Kehret. While researching a school report, Erin and her friend David learn a lot about animal cruelty. She refuses to attend the class field trip to the Glitter Tent Circus, one of the worst animal rights offenders. After hearing of the plan to send Lilly, the abused elephant, to a hunting park, she and her classmates collect enough money to send her to an elephant sanctuary.

Stone Fox by John Gardiner. Ten-year-old Willy must earn money to pay taxes after his grandfather won't get out of bed. The only way to do it is by winning the dogsled race.

Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth Speare. Left alone to guard the family's wilderness home in eighteenth-century Maine, a boy is hard-pressed to survive until local Indians teach him their skills.

## Middle

Holes by Louis Sachar. As further evidence of his family's bad fortune, which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

The Leftover Kid by Carol Snyder. As relatives begin to move into her family's home, Wendy learns that everyone has to assume responsibility and cooperate.

The Young Landlords by Walter Myers. The derelict Stratford Arms is turned over to the Action Group to be cleaned up. Five devoted friends become landlords and try to make their Harlem neighborhood a better place to live. The group later realizes that there is an outrageous bunch of tenants living in the building.

## High

Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick. Two eighth graders form an exceptional friendship and partnership. Twelve-year-old Kevin (Freak) is a genius whose growth has been severely stunted due to a birth defect and his friend Max, who is gigantic in stature, is a low achiever at school. They learn that when they combine forces they make a powerful team.

Lilies of the Field by William Barrett. This is a story about two unlikely friends, a black Baptist former GI and the head of a group of Catholic nuns, who have come to America hoping to work with troubled inner-city boys. They team up to fulfill the impossible dream of building a chapel in the desert of New Mexico.



# Cooperation Quotes

## Week One

"When spider webs unite, they can tie up a tiger." ~Ethiopian proverb

"When we turn to each other, and not away from each other, that's victory." ~ Unknown

"When we build each other and not destroy each other, that's victory." ~Jesse Jackson

"The law of life should not be... competition, but cooperation, the good of each contributing to the good of all." ~Jawaharlal Nehru

"It is not question of can we live in the same world and cooperate, but we must live in the same world and learn to cooperate." ~Eleanor Roosevelt

## Week Two

"A rope that has three parts wrapped together is hard to break."

~King Solomon

"A single twig breaks, but the bundle of twigs is strong." ~Tecumseh

"We must all hang together, or most assuredly we will all hang separately."

~Benjamin Franklin

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." ~Helen Keller

"Many hands make light work." ~John Heywood

## Week Three

"All for one and one for all." ~Alexander Dumas

"You can not help someone without helping yourself." ~Unknown

"A house divided against itself cannot stand."

~Abraham Lincoln

"TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More." Unknown

"United we stand, divided we fall." ~Aesop

## Week Four

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress." ~Henry Ford

"Individuals play the game, but teams win championships." ~Unknown

"No matter what accomplishment you make, somebody helped you."

~Althea Gibson

"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat."

~Martin Luther King Jr.

"Light is the task, when many share the toil." ~Homer

## Teacher Cooperation Activities

- Explain and discuss the 3C Equation: Consideration + Compromise = Cooperation. Explain that cooperating means considering the needs and feelings of others and compromising when there are differences.
- Have groups make lists of what to do and what not to do when cooperating with others: **Cooperating/Not Cooperating.**
- In groups, have students write a story that contains elements of truth from each person's life in the group (where they were born, an event that happened, etc.). Students have to make sure everyone remains involved in the assignment. When finished, have groups share their stories. Discuss some of the problems students had working together and how they dealt with those problems.
- Ask students to interview an adult and find out the role cooperation plays in their work.
- Write an acrostic poem using the letters of cooperation.
- Make list of things people can do when they are cooperating with others.
- Write a story where each student adds one or two sentences.
- On a nice day outside, take students out to run a 3-legged race. Discuss afterwards.
- Make a teamwork mobile, allowing each student to write his/her name on a cutout of a person. Allow each student to decorate the cutout. String all the people onto the mobile under the headline "We Make a Great Team!"
- If you can tolerate noise, do the hand twister game. Have students form a circle and grasp hands with others in the circle, but not those standing next to them. Without letting go, have the students twist and turn to untangle themselves until they form another circle. Afterwards discuss the cooperation required to be successful.
- Invite local firefighters to class to discuss the importance of cooperation within their line of work.
- Ask students to create a new game in which cooperation between players is important for winning.
- Have the class create quilts for a local hospital ward. Have class work cooperatively in designing and sewing the quilt.
- Have students research how animals cooperate with one another within their own families to achieve certain goals such as finding food, producing food and protecting the young.