

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

Serendipity by Gabbie Benda

Grade Levels

3–7

Time

45–60 minutes

Common Core State Standards (CCSS ELA)

- **RL.3–7.1:** Ask and answer questions using evidence from the text.
 - **RL.3–7.2:** Determine the theme or central message.
 - **RL.3–7.3:** Describe how characters respond to challenges and change over time.
 - **RL.3–7.6:** Explain how a character's point of view influences events.
 - **RL.3–7.7:** Analyze how illustrations contribute to the mood, humor, and meaning of the story.
 - **W.3–7.3:** Write narratives using descriptive details, dialogue, and clear event sequences.
 - **W.3–7.1:** Write opinion pieces supported with reasons and evidence.
 - **SL.3–7.1:** Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
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Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how *Serendipity* changes as she learns to handle challenges and setbacks.
 - Explore themes of resilience, self-awareness, balance, perseverance, and growth.
 - Use evidence from the text and illustrations to support ideas about character and theme.
 - Examine how humor and visual storytelling help communicate emotions in a graphic novel.
 - Write a narrative about overcoming obstacles with determination and a positive mindset.
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Essential Questions

- How do we respond when things don't go as planned?
- Can setbacks help us grow?

- How do our thoughts influence the way we handle challenges?
 - How do illustrations help readers understand a character's emotions?
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Materials

- *Serendipity* by Gabbie Benda
 - Character Growth Graphic Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Writing Journals or Notebook Paper
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Vocabulary

- Serendipity
 - Resilience
 - Perseverance
 - Mindset
 - Conflict
 - Resolution
 - Perspective
 - Inference
 - Theme
 - Graphic Novel
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- Have you ever had a day when everything seemed to go wrong?
- What do you do when you make a mistake?
- Do you believe in luck, or do you believe success comes from hard work?
- How can challenges help us become stronger?

Students complete a **Think-Pair-Share**, followed by a whole-class discussion.

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Growth Tracker

Students record Serendipity's journey.

Story Event	Serendipity's Feelings	Evidence (Words & Pictures)	What She Learns
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Encourage students to notice:

- Facial expressions
- Dialogue
- Body language
- Visual humor
- Moments of success and failure
- Relationships with friends and family
- How Serendipity's thinking changes throughout the story

Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. Why does Serendipity believe she is cursed?
2. How do her choices affect the problems she faces?
3. What role do friends and family play in helping her?
4. How do the illustrations emphasize humor and emotion?
5. What lesson does Serendipity learn about luck and responsibility?

Mini-Lesson

Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset

Introduce the concepts of **growth mindset** and **fixed mindset**.

Create a class anchor chart.

Growth Mindset

- Learns from mistakes
- Tries again
- Accepts challenges
- Believes effort leads to improvement

Fixed Mindset

- Gives up easily
- Believes abilities cannot change
- Avoids challenges
- Blames outside circumstances

Discuss examples of each mindset from Serendipity's experiences.

Collaborative Activity (10–15 minutes)

Turning Bad Luck Around

Divide students into small groups.

Give each group a common setback, such as:

- Losing a game
- Forgetting homework
- Missing the bus
- Not getting a part in a play

Groups discuss:

- How might someone react with a fixed mindset?
- How could they respond with a growth mindset?
- What advice would they give Serendipity?

Groups share their responses with the class.

Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Imagine you wake up one morning convinced that you have the worst luck ever because everything seems to go wrong. As the day continues, you begin to realize that your attitude and choices may be just as important as luck. Write a story describing the challenges you face, the people who help you, and what you learn about resilience, perseverance, and believing in yourself. Include descriptive details, dialogue, and an ending that shows how you grow from the experience.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

Lucky Charm Design

Create a lucky charm.

Include:

- What it looks like
 - What it symbolizes
 - How it reminds you to stay positive
 - Illustration
 - A paragraph explaining why confidence is more powerful than luck
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Grades 5–7

Opinion Writing

Write an essay answering:

Is success determined more by luck or by effort?

Support your opinion with evidence from *Serendipity* and your own experiences.

Graphic Novel Project

Create a six-panel comic showing:

- A surprising setback
 - Feeling discouraged
 - Receiving encouragement
 - Trying again
 - Solving the problem
 - Celebrating personal growth
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Assessment

Formative

- Participation in discussions
 - Character Growth Organizer
 - Group collaboration
 - Reading observations
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Summative Writing Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Creative and thoughtful	Clear	Developing	Limited
Organization	Well organized	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow
Text Evidence	Strong support	Some support	Minimal support	No evidence
Conventions	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors	Many errors

Exit Ticket

Students answer one question:

- What helped Serendipity grow the most?
- Was Serendipity really cursed? Why or why not?
- What lesson about resilience can you apply to your own life?
- What advice would you give Serendipity after the carnival?

Differentiation

Support

- Partner reading
- Graphic organizers
- Sentence starters
- Teacher-guided discussion
- Visual vocabulary cards
- Read-aloud support, if available

Extension

- Compare *Serendipity* with another story in which a character overcomes setbacks through perseverance rather than luck.
- Rewrite an important scene from the perspective of one of Serendipity's friends or family members.

- Research the origins of common lucky symbols (such as four-leaf clovers, horseshoes, or wishbones) and create a presentation explaining their history and cultural significance.
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Cross-Curricular Connections

Math: Collect classroom data about common beliefs related to luck (favorite lucky numbers, lucky traditions, etc.) and create bar graphs or pie charts to display the results.

Art: Design a comic page that uses color, facial expressions, panel size, and visual humor to show the emotional ups and downs of Serendipity's journey.

Health/SEL: Discuss healthy ways to manage disappointment, stress, and mistakes. Practice strategies such as positive self-talk, goal setting, and problem-solving.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Connection

Students reflect on:

- Resilience
 - Self-awareness
 - Growth mindset
 - Perseverance
 - Responsible decision-making
 - Confidence
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Big Idea

Serendipity reminds readers that while we cannot control every circumstance, we can control how we respond to challenges. Through humor and heartfelt moments, Serendipity discovers that resilience, effort, and a positive mindset are far more powerful than luck. Students learn that mistakes and setbacks are opportunities to grow, and that confidence comes from perseverance rather than perfect outcomes.