



HOW TO SOLVE A PROBLEM



A Growth Mindset Activity Guide

Ashima Shiraishi, one of the youngest professional rock climbers in the world, shares the trials and tribulations of climbing while challenging readers to face their problems head-on. An exemplar of growth mindset, Shiraishi shows readers how to rise to great heights—inside and outside of the classroom. Below you will find activities that are both aligned to Common Core State Standards and help students develop a strong growth mindset.

Pre-Reading Activities

Before reading *How to Solve a Problem*, talk to students about different kinds of mistakes. Start with stretch mistakes and sloppy mistakes.

Stretch mistakes happen when we are learning something new. As we figure out how to do this new thing, we make mistakes, but the mistakes are helping us to learn.

Sloppy mistakes happen when we are doing something we know how to do, but lose focus. Everyone makes the occasional sloppy mistake; we are only human. However, if we make too many sloppy mistakes, it is a sign that we need to regain focus to ensure success.

Normalize error by providing an example of a time you have made each kind of mistake, and ask students to share their own examples.

Discuss: which is the best kind of mistake to make and why? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4)

Show students a video of Ashima Shiraishi: [youtube.com/watch?v=D4zBVDosL7Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4zBVDosL7Y).

After watching, ask students: What problems might Shiraishi have to solve in this story?

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6)



Read Together

Pause on the page that begins with “There were twists and turns,” and ask students to **describe the problem**, unpacking details and images like “slick as glass” and “shaped like a question mark.” Which kind of mistake is Shiraishi most likely to make? Why? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.4)

Ask students: Was Shiraishi’s mistake a stretch mistake or a sloppy mistake? How do you know? Support with text evidence. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6)

Small group discussion: Does Shiraishi fail in this story? Why or why not? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6)

Extension Activities

Challenge students to design their personal growth challenge! Ask students to name one activity or skill that they want to learn or improve. Then, they should design a series of activities that will be difficult enough to build their skill. Have them draw or write a plan for their personal growth challenge!

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6)

Personal Growth Challenge
Example: I want to get better at using American Sign Language. The first event in my growth challenge would be to check out an ASL glossary from the library and practice signing. The second event would be to make an ASL music video in which I record myself signing the chorus to my favorite song. My final event would be to sign a conversation with a friend.



Let your readers be researchers! Instruct students to research some “famous failures.” What experiments went terribly wrong? Which writers went unpublished for lengths of time? Are there TV hosts who were fired from jobs early in their careers? Most importantly, discuss what information these failures produced and how failures allowed for growth and discovery. Have students present research to the class.

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.10)

