

Tiger Stripes: Purpose, Service, and Self-Leadership

Grade Level: Middle School
Course Length: 36 Weeks Full Year
Schedule: 5 days/week full class period

Course Description

Positive Personal Development:

Tiger Stripes is a year-long interdisciplinary course designed to support adolescent boys and girls in developing purpose, self-leadership, resilience, responsibility, and positive identity. The course addresses the challenges young students face in today's social climate by promoting self-awareness, empathy, service, and constructive leadership.

Through literature, discussion, service learning, physical engagement, and reflective practice, students explore what it means to live with purpose and integrity while rejecting harmful stereotypes and destructive behaviors.

This course emphasizes character development, community engagement, and personal accountability while aligning with Idaho State Standards in English Language Arts, Health, and Social Studies.

Course Goals

Students will:

- Build confidence through discipline, effort, and service
- Practice empathy and perspective-taking
- Strengthen communication, collaboration, and leadership skills
- Understand responsibility, service, and integrity
- Develop emotional awareness and self-regulation skills
- Apply learning to real-world challenges and community involvement

QUARTER 1: Life Is Hard, But You Are Capable

Core Theme

Developing resilience through effort and discipline. Building confidence through effort, physical engagement, and problem-solving. Students thrive when they are challenged and needed. This unit introduces productive struggle as a path to confidence rather than avoidance.

Guiding Questions

- Why does effort matter?
- How do struggle and responsibility build confidence?
- What does it mean to earn self-respect?
- What makes a role model?

Key Learning Components

- Physical challenges and fitness tracking
- Project-based fundraising using applied math (ratios, budgeting, profit/loss)
- Guest speakers from trades, military, athletics, & skilled labor
- Reflection on discipline, routine, and consistency
- “The Leader I Am Becoming” Portfolio

Quarter 1 Core Project: Greenhouse Fundraiser

Students work in teams to design, budget, and build small tabletop or backyard greenhouses to sell.

Standards

Math (Idaho):

- 8.EE.A.1 – Exponents & real-world quantities
- 8.EE.B.5 – Proportional relationships
- 8.SP.A.1 – Data interpretation

ELA:

- RW 8.1 – Develop flexibility in writing by routinely engaging in the production of shorter and longer pieces for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. This could

include, among others, summaries, reflections, descriptions, critiques, letters, and poetry, etc.

- OC.8.1 – Collaborative discussions

Health:

- HS.S.1.8.1 – Managing stress through productive effort
 - jective(s):
 - 6-8.H.6.1.1 Assess personal health practices.
 - 6-8.H.6.1.2 Develop a goal to adopt, maintain, or improve a personal health practice.
 - 6-8.H.6.1.3 Apply effective strategies and skills needed to attain a personal health goal (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goal setting strategy).
 - 6-8.H.7.1.1 Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.
 - 6-8.H.7.1.2 Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
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Weekly Lesson Breakdown Q1

Week 1: What Is Strength?

Objective:

- Define healthy leadership and personal responsibility. Set physical baseline numbers

Activities:

- Class discussion: “What makes someone strong?”
- Journal reflection
- Physical safety
- Workout days

Assessment:

- Personal goal statement, record baseline workout metrics

Week 2: Growth Through Challenge

Objective:

- Understand how struggle builds confidence

Activities:

- Growth mindset lesson
- Physical challenge (team-based)
- Identify areas of weakness

Assessment:

- Reflection paragraph

Week 3: Discipline & Habit Formation

Objective:

- Practice consistency and follow-through

Activities:

- Daily habit tracker
- Create workout plan
- Guest speaker, trade, veteran, or skilled labor, – on value of hard work.

Assessment:

- Habit reflection log

Week 4–5: Greenhouse Planning (meet with local building supply store for donations)

Objective:

- Apply math to real-world problem-solving

Activities:

- Design planning
- Build Models
- Cost analysis
- Ratio and measurement calculations
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Blueprint + cost proposal

Week 6–9: Build & Market

Objective:

- Collaborate and execute a project

Activities:

- Construction
- Branding and sales pitch

- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Product quality + teamwork rubric

Week 10: Reflection & Presentation

Objective:

- Analyze success, failure, and effort

Activities:

- Continue with workout plan
- Record growth toward personal goal

Assessment:

- Presentation + written reflection

QUARTER 2: You Are Not Center of The Universe — But You Still Matter

Core Theme

Building empathy, humility, and perspective. students feel invisible and disconnected. This unit directly addresses isolation by strengthening relational skills and teaching that purpose emerges through connection to others.

Guiding Questions

- How do my choices affect others?
- What does respect look like in action?
- Why does empathy require strength?

Learning Activities

- Literature circles focused on empathy and moral decision-making
- Guest readers sharing lived experience
- Reflection journals exploring perspective-taking

Anchor Texts (tbd)

- The Outsiders – S.E. Hinton
- Esperanza Rising – Pam Muñoz Ryan
- The Watsons Go to Birmingham – Christopher Paul Curtis
- Refugee – Alan Gratz

Standards

ELA

- RC 6.6a – Determine central ideas and analyze development
- RC 5.5b – Analyze how dialogue and events shape characters
- RC 8.3 – Use evidence from nonfiction works to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.

Social Studies

- 8.SS.1.2 – Analyze multiple perspectives
- 8.SS.2.1 – Examine civic and cultural identity

Health

- 6-8.H.6.1.3 Apply effective strategies and skills needed to attain a personal health goal (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goal setting strategy).
- 6-8.H.7.1.2 Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Weekly Structure

Week 11: Introduction to empathy & identity

Objective:

- Understand how differences in in experience shape perspectives

Activities:

- Historical or social context lesson for each book
- Class discussion: “What makes someone a leader?”
- Journal reflection
- Workout day

Assessment:

- Reflection paragraph

Weeks 12–15: Literature circles

Objective:

- Analyze how authors develop character and theme.

Activities:

- Literature circle discussions
- Character decision mapping
- Journal reflection connecting text to personal experience
- Journal: “A time I stood up or should have”
- Socratic seminar on moral courage
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Short written response analyzing character perspective
- Teacher observation of discussion engagement
- Written response analyzing a character’s choice
- Literature circle participation rubric
- Reflection paragraphs

Weeks 16: Discussion & analysis

Objective:

- Understand moral courage and ethical decision-making. Evaluate consequences of action vs. inaction.

Activities:

- Student-generated questions
- Guest speaker or recorded testimony on Moral Courage
- Reflection writing
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Reflection journal
- Question quality rubric

Week 17: Reflection project

Objective:

- Synthesize learning across texts and experiences. Explain traits of a leader. Connect empathy to real-life behavior.

Activities:

- Begin work on Character analysis essay
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Character analysis essay

Week 18: Assessment

Objective:

- Analyze success, failure, and effort

Activities:

- Socratic seminar about character traits of leaders
- Create a “Perspective Portfolio”
 - Use reflection journals and character analysis
- Continue with workout plan
 - Record growth toward personal goal

Assessment:

- Portfolio presentation rubric
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QUARTER 3: Your Life Is Not Just About You

Theme: Leadership, service, responsibility, and contribution as the foundation of healthy leadership. Purpose—not pleasure—is the foundation of long-term fulfillment. This unit prioritizes that philosophy through action.

Essential Questions

- How do strong leaders contribute to their communities?
- What does leadership look like without dominance?
- How does service create purpose?

Integrated Standards

ELA

- RC 8.1 – Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the higher end of the grades 6–8 band.
- RC 5.5b – Analyze how dialogue and events shape characters
- RC 6.6a – Determine central ideas and analyze development

- RC 8.3 – Use evidence from nonfiction works to demonstrate understanding of grade-level texts.
- RW 8.2 – Present claims with relevant evidence

Social Studies

- 8.SS.1.2 – Analyze multiple perspectives
- 8.SS.2.1 – Examine civic and cultural identity

Health

- 6-8 S.3.1.3 – Locate reliable and valid health products and services and determine accessibility.
- 6-8.H.4.1.3 – Demonstrate effective conflict management or resolution strategies.
- 6-8.H.6.1.3 – Apply effective strategies and skills needed to attain a personal health goal (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goal setting strategy).
- 6-8.H.7.1.2 – Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Service Project Options (Choose from options)

Option A: Community Clean-Up Initiative

Students organize, promote, and execute a cleanup of a local park or school area.

Option B: Elementary Mentorship Program

Students plan and run reading or activity sessions for younger students.

Option C: Food or Clothing Drive

Students manage logistics, marketing, and distribution.

Option D: Senior Outreach Project

Students create care packages or host a service day for seniors.

Week 19: What Is Leadership?

Objectives:

- Students will define leadership as responsibility and service.
- Students will distinguish between leadership and authority.

Activities:

- Class discussion: “Who do you trust to lead and why?”
- Leadership case studies (historical or local examples)
- Journal reflection: “When have I led or avoided leading?”
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment:

- Reflection journal (formative)
- Participation rubric

Week 20: Understanding Community Needs

Objectives

- Identify real needs within the school or local community.
- Practice empathy and critical observation.

Activities

- Community needs brainstorm
- Small-group research or interviews
- Guest speaker (community leader or counselor)
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Needs assessment worksheet
- Exit ticket summarizing identified need

Week 21: Service Project Planning

Objectives

- Develop a service plan addressing an identified need.
- Practice collaboration and shared responsibility.

Activities

- Choose service project option
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Create timeline and goals
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Service project proposal
- Teamwork self-assessment

Week 22: Preparing to Serve

Objectives

- Demonstrate readiness and accountability.
- Practice professional communication.

Activities

- Draft communication materials (emails, flyers)
- Rehearse logistics
- Discuss ethical service (respect, humility)
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Preparedness checklist
- Teacher observation

Week 23: Service Implementation (Phase I)

Objectives

- Demonstrate leadership through action.
- Collaborate effectively during service.

Activities

- Execute service project
- Daily debrief discussions
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Teacher observation rubric
- Reflection journal

Week 24: Service Implementation (Phase II)

Objectives

- Persist through challenges.
- Evaluate effectiveness of service actions.

Activities

- Continue service work
- Problem-solving discussions
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Group reflection
- Peer feedback

Week 25: Measuring Impact

Objectives

- Analyze the impact of service on others and self.
- Use evidence to evaluate success.

Activities

- Collect data (hours served, feedback)
- Impact discussion
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Written impact analysis

Week 26: Synthesis & Argument Writing

Objectives

- Argue why service matters.
- Support claims with evidence.

Activities

- Write argumentative essay: “Why Service Builds Strong Leaders”
- Peer editing
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Final essay

Week 27: Presentation & Evaluation

Objectives

- Communicate service outcomes clearly.
- Reflect on leadership growth.

Activities

- Student presentations
- Self-evaluation discussion
- Record growth toward personal goal

Assessment

- Presentation rubric

- Self-reflection
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QUARTER 4: You Are Not In Control — But You Can Control Your Response

Quarter Theme

Resilience, emotional regulation, accountability, and perseverance through challenge; culminating in an experiential outdoor learning excursion that serves as a rite of passage. This unit equips students with tools to manage adversity rather than escape it.

Quarter Rationale

Adolescent students benefit from structured challenge that requires perseverance, cooperation, and self-regulation. Research and practice show that guided adversity, when paired with reflection and mentorship, builds confidence, emotional control, and personal responsibility.

This quarter intentionally moves students from classroom learning into real-world application, culminating in a supervised camping excursion designed to help students practice overcoming discomfort, frustration, and uncertainty in healthy, constructive ways.

Essential Questions

- What can I control when life becomes difficult?
- How do I respond to stress, failure, and conflict?
- What does it mean to endure challenges with integrity?
- How do shared challenges build confidence and community?

Integrated Standards

ELA

- RC 6.6a – Determine central ideas and analyze development
- RC 5.5b – Analyze how dialogue and events shape characters
- W.8.5 – Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ODC 8.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners.

- ODC.8.4 – Present claims with relevant evidence
- ODC 8.8 – Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when appropriate.
- RC 8.2. – Regularly engage in a volume of reading, independently, with peers, or with modest support related to the topics and themes being studied to build knowledge and vocabulary.

Social Studies

- 8.SS.1.2 – Analyze multiple perspectives
- 8.SS.2.1 – Examine civic and cultural identity

Health

- HS.S.3.1.3 – Locate reliable and valid health products and services and determine accessibility.
- HS.S.4.8.1 – Demonstrate behaviors that promote responsibility, integrity, and respect for self and others.
- HS.S.5.8.1 – Demonstrate effective coping, stress-management, and emotional regulation strategies.
- HS.S.5.8.3 –Apply effective communication skills to reduce conflict and enhance relationships.
- 6-8.H.6.1.3 – Apply effective strategies and skills needed to attain a personal health goal (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goal setting strategy).
- 6-8.H.7.1.2 – Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Culminating Performance Assessment Alignment

Assessment	Standards Addressed	Description
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<p>The Man I Am Becoming Portfolio</p>	<p>HS.S.4.8.1, HS.S.5.8.1, SL.8.4, SL.8.6, W.8.4</p>	<p>Students synthesize learning through a mission statement, values code, evidence of leadership and service, and oral presentation reflecting growth and responsibility</p>
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Weekly Overview – Quarter 4

Week 28: Emotional Awareness

Objectives

- Students will identify emotional triggers and responses.
- Students will distinguish between reactive and controlled behavior.

Activities

- Emotion identification exercises
- Scenario discussions involving frustration and stress
- Journal reflection: “What pushes my buttons?”
- Continue with workout plan.

Assessment

- Reflection journal
- Exit ticket on emotional regulation strategies

Week 29: Stress, Discomfort, and Mental Toughness

Objectives

- Students will practice healthy stress-management strategies.
- Students will recognize discomfort as a normal part of growth.

Activities

- Stress inventory
- Breathing, grounding, and focus techniques
- Discussion: “The difference between pain and harm”
- Continue with workout plan.

Assessment

- Personal stress-management plan

Week 30: Conflict Resolution Under Pressure

Objectives

- Students will apply conflict-resolution strategies.
- Students will practice respectful communication during disagreement.

Activities

- Role-play conflict scenarios
- Group debriefs on escalation vs. de-escalation
- Continue with workout plan.

Assessment

- Role-play performance rubric

Week 31: Accountability and Integrity

Objectives

- Students will examine the importance of owning mistakes.
- Students will connect integrity to trust and leadership.

Activities

- Case studies involving accountability
- Reflection: “A time I avoided or accepted responsibility”
- Guest speaker (community leader or counselor)
- Continue with workout plan

Assessment

- Written reflection

Week 32: Preparing for the Challenge (Pre-Excursion Week)

Objectives

- Students will prepare mentally, emotionally, and practically for challenges.
- Students will practice teamwork and shared responsibility.

Activities

- Overview of camping excursion expectations
- Gear planning and group roles
- Discussion: “Why we choose challenge instead of comfort”

Assessment

- Preparedness checklist
- Team planning document

Week 33: Camping Excursion — Rite of Passage Experience

Experience Overview

Students participate in a supervised outing. Either for a day, overnight, or multi-day camping excursion focused on:

- Physical effort (hiking, setup, shared tasks)
- Cooperation and shared responsibility
- Managing discomfort (weather, fatigue, uncertainty)
- Problem-solving under real conditions

The excursion is intentionally framed as a rite of passage, emphasizing:

- Endurance over dominance
- Cooperation over competition
- Responsibility over entitlement

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate perseverance through difficulty.
- Practice emotional regulation in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations.
- Support peers through shared challenge.

Assessment

- Teacher observation rubric (effort, teamwork, attitude)
- Daily reflection prompts (written or audio)

Week 34: Processing Challenge and Meaning

Objectives

- Students will reflect on the camping experience.
- Students will identify personal growth through adversity.
- Identify core values.
- Connect values to behavior.

Activities

- Guided group debrief
- Written reflection: “What I learned about myself”
- Discussion on translating resilience to daily life

Assessment

- Reflection essay

Week 35: Capstone Development

Objectives

- Students will synthesize learning from the entire course.
- Students will articulate a personal code for manhood.

Activities

- Draft personal mission statement
- Draft personal code of values
- Final portfolio work time
- Peer review

Assessment

- Draft portfolio check

Week 36: Final Presentations & Closure

Objectives

- Students will present personal growth and future goals.
- Students will reflect on the rite of passage experience.

Activities

- Student presentations
- Closing circle discussion
- Written final reflection

Culminating Performance Assessment – “The Man/Woman I Am Becoming” Portfolio

Students present:

- A personal mission statement
 - Evidence of service and leadership
 - Reflections on growth, challenge, and responsibility
 - A plan for future contribution
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Quarter 4 Outcome

By the end of this quarter, students will have:

- Experienced structured challenge in a safe, supervised environment
- Practiced perseverance through discomfort
- Demonstrated emotional control under pressure
- Completed a meaningful rite of passage rooted in responsibility and resilience