Most people will tell you that **tenacity** is a great quality to have, especially if you're trying something challenging that takes a while to complete.

Odds are, the people you admire have shown real tenacity in achieving their goals. Anything really worth doing takes persistence, perseverance, and stubborn determination. Being a great baseball player requires real gifts, no doubt, but even the most gifted player won't make it to the big leagues without the tenacity required to make the long, hard journey up from the minors. **Tenacity** is the quality displayed by someone who just won't quit — who keeps trying until they reach their goal.

### DEFINITIONS AND USAGE EXAMPLES

- **(Noun)** Persistent determination
  - the amazing tenacity of rumors
  - testing the tenacity of the old book’s binding
- **(Adj.)** Extremely persistent in adhering to or doing something; stubborn or relentless
  - “tenacious defenders of their harsh and pitiless land”
- **(Adj.)** Characterized by extreme persistence; relentless or enduring
  - tenacious detective work; tenacious superstitions
- **(Adj.)** Holding together firmly; cohesive
  - a tenacious material
- **(Adj.)** Clinging to another object or surface; adhesive
  - tenacious lint
- **(Adj.)** Tending to retain; retentive
  - a tenacious memory

**SYNONYMS:** doggedness, persistence, perseverance, determination,

**Pronunciation:** [tuh-nas-i-tee]
Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my **goal**: my strength lies solely in my tenacity.

*Louis Pasteur*

A lesson in tenacity and a lesson in prepositions!
The history of the world is full of men who rose to leadership, by sheer force of self-confidence, bravery and tenacity.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Patience and tenacity of purpose are worth more than twice their weight in cleverness.

(Thomas Henry Huxley)
Have your students read about a raccoon’s tenacity (below), then remind them of the tenacity shown by the raccoons in the book they read as a child (or the movie they saw): Where the Red Fern Grows

Raccoons have sharp teeth like a dog’s. Bites are usually deep and can be very painful. When it bites, it will often refuse to release its grip. Raccoons have very strong jaws and can cause serious damage. If they get hold of a hand or finger, they can easily crush bones. They are also very tenacious animals and will never give up their fight to get free. They will also strike out with their front feet, which can cause a painful injury.

When held down, a raccoon can generate a variety of blood curdling sounds, from barking to growling to loud screams. Even in extreme distress, however, the raccoon will continue to take advantage of opportunities to bite and scratch.
TENACIOUS is an acronym that is designed to provide you with the system from which to set your goals . . . [and] to do the activities it takes to make the changes you want.

- **T** - time-bound: Your goal must have a start and stop time.
- **E** - energizing: Your goal must be something you are excited about, and you must understand the benefits of achieving the goal.
- **N** - noted and measured: Your goal must be written and you must have milestones to check for progress, so that you’ll know if you’re on track.
- **A** - achievable: Your goal must be realistic.
- **C** - committed: Your goal must be a personal commitment. Creating an affirmation to support your commitment, especially an affirmation that begins with the phrase “I am,” makes achieving your goal more likely.
- **I** - intention and integrity: Your goal must allow you to retain your integrity.
- **O** - opportunity for growth: Your goal must help your personal growth in some way.
- **U** - unstoppable attitude: Your attitude must be unstoppable. When you pause, you must get back on track. Recognize what has stopped you in the past, and then find the structure that will help you get and stay on track this time.
- **S** - specific: Your goal must be specific. Instead of saying you want to lose weight, say that you want to lose ten pounds. Instead of saying that you want to save money, say that you want to save $5000.
(English) Activity Ideas:

- Focused Free-Write: Use the sentences as beginning sentences for original short-stories written by your students.
  - Consider having students focus their stories on the word *tenacity* and setting the context and tone for that word to be the best and most appropriate word to use in their opening sentences.
  - Students get 30-45 minutes to write their stories, and then read them aloud with a small group or for the class.
  - Variation: have the students write small-group stories with each student writing a sentence and then passing the story to the next person in the group for another sentence. When finished, each group then reads its story to the rest of the class.

- And yet, I am awed by my friend, by her *tenacity* for me. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

- Jean had organized his business with the same *tenacity* he had formerly brought to the idea of the chinchillas, but this time with more success. *The House of the Spirits: A Novel* by Isabel Allende

- Her *tenacity* reinforced my personal respect, love and growing affection. *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela

- But Meg, with the dogged *tenacity* that had so often caused her trouble, continued. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle