

Driven to Distraction



Objective: To emphasize the importance of focusing on an objective when completing a task and when working towards a goal; To analyze ways to cope with distractions.

Materials needed: 2 pennies for each person, One copy of “The Wright Twins’ Vacation” worksheet (S30) for each student.

Process:

1. Have your students sit in a circle. Each person should be close to the two around them.
2. Give each student two pennies. Have them hold one penny in their left hand and one penny in their right hand.
3. Issue the following instructions:
 - I am going to read a short story to you. When you hear the word “right” in the story, pass the penny in your right hand to the person on your right and shift the penny in your left hand into your right hand. When you hear the word “left” in the story, pass the penny in your left hand to the person on your left and shift the penny in your right hand into your left hand.
4. Have them practice shifting the penny by prompting them to pass the pennies right and left until they are reasonably comfortable with the process.
5. After the class is well practiced, give them the additional directions for the activity:
 - As I read this story you will need to focus on hearing the words “right” and “left” and shifting your pennies. You will also need to focus on the story itself. After I finish reading the story, each of you will complete a worksheet about the story testing you on your retention of the details of the story. So it will be important to pay attention to the story.
6. Begin reading “The Wright Twins’ Vacation” story that follows this exercise. Read slowly at first and gradually speed up. Do not stop

- reading or pause long enough so that the students can talk with each other about the penny passing.
7. After you finish reading the story, have everyone hold out their hands. Remind them that they should each have one penny in each hand. Give them time to evaluate their success as a group at the penny passing portion of the exercise.
 8. Pass out one copy of “The Wright Twins’ Vacation” worksheet to each student. Tell the class they have ten minutes to answer all of the questions about the story, and then the class will evaluate everyone’s answers.
 9. After ten minutes, have the students trade worksheets with one of their neighbors, making sure no one has their own worksheet. Go over the answers for each question. Ask for a show of hands indicating that the worksheet the student is checking got the right answer. On the board keep track of how many right answers were given for each question.

Discussion:

- How hard was it to answer the questions about the story?
- What made it difficult?
- How hard was it to pass the penny every time I said right or left?
- What made the task difficult?
- As a group, were you highly successful or accurate with either task?
- What kind of lesson does this teach you about trying to complete multiple tasks at the same time?
- Is it ever possible to only be working on one thing at a time? (Make sure that you emphasize that it is rarely possible for a person to completely focus on a single objective for an extended period of time. Therefore it is essential to leaders and all people to develop skills that help them to deal with the distractions of life and still accomplish their objectives.)
- What kind of strategies can you use to make you more successful at focusing on multiple things at once?
- Why is it important for a leader to be able to handle multiple tasks at the same time without being distracted by non-essential tasks?

Journal Topic:

- Write about a time you had a goal or an objective to complete and you became distracted by other events, tasks or people. Were you able to accomplish your goal or objective? How did you deal with the distractions? If you were not able to accomplish your goal or objective, what could you have done to handle the distractions better? Think about a goal or major objective you have right now. Write about any distractions you think may become obstacles to your accomplishing that goal or objective. What is a possible strategy for dealing with each of these distractions? (A51)

Possible Test Questions:

- What are two likely problems that you will encounter when you try to complete multiple tasks at once?
- What can you do to overcome these obstacles?

TEKS Incorporated:

- Social Studies 113.32 (19A), (24B), (25B), (26A); 113.35 (21C), (23A); 113.36 (15A); 113.37 (14B), (16A).
- English Language Arts 110.42 (3A), (16F); 110.43 (3A), (16F); 110.44 (3A); 110.45 (3A), (16F).

The Wright Twins' Vacation

Twelve years ago, the Wright Family, Bob Wright, his wife Lisa Wright and their ten-year-old little girl, Sally Wright, added twins to their family. Before the family left the hospital, they knew their hands would be full with the new babies, Tommy and Tammy Wright. The family left the hospital with one twin cradled in Lisa Wright's left arm. Tammy Wright was held in Bob Wright's left arm and little Sally Wright was clutching her father's right hand. From that moment on, Tammy Wright was her father's pet and Tommy Wright rarely left his mother's side.

Now that the twins are older, the Wright family has to make a decision about what the twins should do during their spring break. Lisa Wright left her job when the twins were born but returned to work in February. She will not be able to be with the twins. Sally Wright left home the previous August to go to college in North Carolina. Sally Wright will not be at home to watch the twins either. Bob Wright wants to stay with his little Tammy Wright, but he has an important meeting with the manufacturer of left-handed scissors that week in Pennsylvania. Bob Wright can not watch the twins. Tommy and Tammy Wright feel that they are old enough to be left at home alone, but no one else in the Wright family agrees.



The Wright family has been researching places that will watch the Wright twins for a week. The Wright twins can be left at a daycare center, but the other kids left at the center are much younger than the Wright twins. Tommy Wright does not want to be left with a bunch of small children, and Lisa Wright doesn't want her baby to be unhappy. The Wright twins can be left with their grandmother, Peggy Wright, who lives in the house to the left of the county court house. However, Grandmother Wright does not have very many toys and objects to having a bunch of toys left with the twins. Tammy Wright gets bored easily and doesn't want to go anywhere without her Barbie dolls, and Bob Wright won't let his baby be left with Grandmother Wright while leaving behind her dolls.

Just when it seems that the Wright family is left with no option for the Wright twins' vacation, Sally Wright writes her family a letter. Sally Wright has just learned about the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp. Tommy and

Tammy Wright can leave Boston and go to the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp in North Carolina. The Wright Twins are fascinated by airplanes and want to leave right now. The only thing left for the Wright family to do is to fill out the right forms and send in the right fees, and the Wright twins will be set to go to the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp. Tommy and Tammy Wright are excited about being left at camp. Lisa Wright is excited about being left with an empty house for a week. The whole Wright family is happy that the Wright twins are going to the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp, and it is only right that they thank Sally Wright for finding the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp.

The Wright Twins' Vacation

Test your auditory comprehension by answering the following questions about the short story "The Wright Twins' Vacation."



1. Why didn't the twins want to stay at Grandmother Wright's house?

2. Which Wright twin had the biggest objection to staying at Grandmother Wright's house?

3. How old were the twins when their family began worrying about their vacation plans? _____

4. How old was their sister when the twins were born?

5. Why was the twins' sister not able to watch them over the vacation?



6. Which vacation were the twins about to have from school?

7. What was Bob Wright going to do during the vacation? What state will he be in?

8. How old is the twins' sister at the time of the vacation? What is her name? _____

9. Why did the twins object to being at the daycare center?

10. Who first had the idea of sending the twins to the Wright Brothers' Flying Camp? _____