

EXCELLENCE & EFFORT

[MUNDRAGON/EXCELDAGON]

The key takeaway from this quest challenge:

Excellence isn't about being perfect. Pursuing excellence means giving your best effort and persevering, even when things are hard or you feel like quitting.

Narrative Scenario

Dragon Master will read aloud or summarize this scenario:

Naomi's class had three weeks to read a book and write a report. She picked a good book and even started it right away. But then she got distracted. She had soccer practice. Then, she started a new video game. And then, she had a weekend trip with her cousins. Before she knew it, the report was due tomorrow. In school, the teacher reminded them, "Your book reports are due tomorrow. Remember, it's not only about the grade. You'll miss the whole point of this assignment if you don't really dive into the book."

Naomi had read the first few chapters but not the whole book. She now faced a choice: quickly write a report on only the first three chapters – which she thinks will be 'good enough' to pass – and then go to her friend's house. Or stay home, finish the book, and do her best on the report. She wasn't sure what to do.

Dragon Master asks: "What do you think Naomi should do?"

*Have the Dragon Slayers take 30-60 seconds to discuss with a partner and share ideas.

Open the Floor

Let the Dragon Slayers share freely. Don't rush to correct wrong or imprecise answers. Encourage deeper reflection. When they share answers, encourage reasoning behind their answers: *Why do you think that's the right choice? Why might she feel tempted to take the shortcut? Would you say she's doing anything wrong if she turns in a book report based only on the first chapters? What might she miss out on if she doesn't read the book herself?*

While you don't want to give students answers, affirm responses such as:

- She should try to finish the book and do her best.
- If she only writes about the first three chapters and happens to pass, it's still not her best. It's when we give our best effort that we can grow.
- School work isn't only about a grade. It's about learning, growing, and becoming our best self.
- She'll feel better about herself if she gives her best effort.

If students give any of the following responses, explore these more deeply to offer guidance and reassessments:

- "As long as she passes, who cares?" →
- Ask: "Do you think the goal of the assignment is just the grade or is there something more?"
- "It's a meaningless book report. Why does it matter if she doesn't give her best?" →
- Ask: "If we cut corners on the small things, what kind of habits are we building for the bigger things in life? And are we becoming the kind of person who gives our best or the kind of person who always looks for shortcuts?"

Deeper Reflection

After discussing the fictional story, help students apply what they learned to real-life.

Dragon Master: "Let's think more about this. What does it really mean to pursue excellence and being your best self (and not just in school, but in life)?"

Follow-Up Prompts:

- "Is it possible to succeed without giving your best?"
- "Even if someone doesn't win or get first place, can they still be giving their best and achieving excellence?"
- "When have you felt really proud of your effort, even if the outcome wasn't perfect?"
- "What kind of person are you becoming when you cut corners? What kind of person are you becoming when you give it your best, even when it is challenging?"