

Setting Long-Term Goals and Managing Emotions

Lesson Objective:

- Students will learn how to set long-term goals.
- Students will recognize how emotions impact goal-setting and learn strategies to manage them.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 1: A New Beginning
- Paper and pencils for writing goals
- Markers and poster paper for the activity
- Mindfulness prompts or breathing exercises for emotional regulation
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Briefly discuss what it means to set goals and manage emotions to achieve those goals

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- “Welcome to fifth grade! Today, we’ll read the first chapter of *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures.* It’s all about setting goals for the school year and learning how emotions—like excitement, nervousness, or frustration—can affect how we work toward those goals.”
- Wait for the children to settle.

2. Discussion Starter

- “Today, we’re going to talk about setting goals and the emotions that can sometimes get in the way of us achieving those goals. What sorts of feelings might get in the way of achieving a goal? Have any of you experienced an emotion getting in the way of your goal?”
- Wait for a few children to respond and acknowledge their answers.
- “Today we’ll talk about how to manage our emotions so we can achieve what we set out to do. Let’s dive in and find out what’s happening with Ollie and his friends.”

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read chapter 1 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts in the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Children for the Story:

- "The first chapter in our novel *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures* is called "A New Beginning" (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

2. Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
 - Why does Ollie feel excited and nervous about fifth grade?
 - What is Harriet's goal for the year?
 - How does Buzz react to the news of a new student joining their class?
 - Why does Maya feel nervous on her first day?
 - What is Benny's long-term goal?
 - How does Mr. Jenkins encourage the class to think about their goals?
 - What emotions does Ollie worry might affect his goal of joining the science club?
 - What strategy does Harriet plan to use if she feels frustrated during soccer practice?
 - How does Buzz plan to manage his creative distractions during his science project?
 - What advice does the group offer Maya to help her feel more comfortable?

Chapter 1: A New Beginning

The first day of fifth grade had finally arrived, and the air buzzed with a mix of excitement and nervous energy. Ollie, Harriet, Benny, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty stood together in the schoolyard, feeling a familiar sense of anticipation—but something about this year felt different. They had grown a lot since last year, and as they entered fifth grade, they knew new challenges awaited them.

“Fifth grade already,” Ollie said, adjusting his backpack. “It feels like we were just here, starting fourth grade.”

Harriet, always full of energy, grinned. “I’m ready for it! We’ve got this.”

Buzz looked around the playground. “I heard there’s going to be a new student joining our class this year,” he said. “Her name’s Maya, right?”

“Yeah,” Benny replied calmly. “She’s new to the area, and Sammy and I met her over the summer. She’s really cool.”

Betty, ever the practical one, nodded. “I hope she feels welcome here. Starting a new school can be tough.”

The group made their way into the school building, where a few minutes later, they spotted a girl standing near the door of their classroom, looking a little unsure. It was Maya, the new student they had been talking about. She had long black hair pulled into a neat ponytail, and her expression was a mix of curiosity and nervousness.

“Hey, that’s her,” Sammy whispered.

“Let’s go say hi,” Harriet suggested, leading the way.

The group approached Maya with warm smiles. “Hi, you must be Maya,” Ollie said. “I’m Ollie, and these are my friends—Harriet, Benny, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty.”

Maya smiled shyly. “Yeah, that’s me. Thanks for coming over. I was a little nervous about starting at a new school.”

“Well, you don’t have to be nervous anymore,” Harriet said brightly. “We’re here to help.”

As they walked into the classroom together, Maya felt more at ease. She found herself smiling, grateful to have met such a welcoming group on her first day.

Setting Long-Term Goals

Later that morning, their teacher, Mr. Jenkins, announced that today’s lesson would be about setting long-term goals.

“We’re starting a new chapter in your education, and I want you all to think about what you want to achieve this year,” Mr. Jenkins explained. “Setting goals helps us focus and gives us something to work toward. But remember, our emotions can affect how we approach those goals—so it’s important to stay aware of how we’re feeling and how those feelings might influence the choices we make.”

The group exchanged glances. They had learned a lot about emotions and how to handle them last year, but thinking about how those emotions might affect their long-term goals was something new.

“Think about a goal you’d like to accomplish this year,” Mr. Jenkins continued, “and write it down. Then, think about how you’ll feel as you work toward it. What might get in the way? How can you manage those emotions?”

Ollie thought carefully. He had been thinking about joining the school's science club this year. It was a long-term goal he had set for himself over the summer, but he knew that balancing schoolwork and the club could be a challenge.

As he wrote down his goal, he also thought about the emotions he might experience along the way. "Sometimes I get frustrated when things don't go as planned," he thought. "If I'm feeling stressed, it might be hard to stay focused on my goal."

Harriet, always competitive, set her sights on becoming the captain of the soccer team. But as she considered Mr. Jenkins' words, she realized that sometimes her frustration when things didn't go perfectly in games could affect her performance.

Betty, ever the problem-solver, wanted to improve her math skills this year. But she knew that her tendency to feel anxious before tests might get in the way of her progress.

Buzz, full of creative energy, was determined to build the most amazing science project for the school fair. But he recognized that his habit of getting distracted could derail his progress if he wasn't careful.

Sammy, thoughtful as always, wanted to focus on being more patient this year. He knew that sometimes he let his emotions get the best of him when things didn't go as expected.

Benny, steady and calm, set a goal to help others when they were struggling. He had always been the supportive one, but this year, he wanted to make an even bigger difference in his classmates' lives.

And Maya, new to the school and still figuring out her place, set a simple but important goal: to feel comfortable and confident in her new environment. She knew that feeling nervous was natural, but she also wanted to learn how to manage that nervousness so she could enjoy her time here.

Recognizing Emotions and Their Impact

As the group finished writing down their goals, Mr. Jenkins asked them to think about what might help them when emotions got in the way.

"We all experience emotions like frustration, anxiety, and stress," he said. "But when we recognize those emotions, we can find ways to manage them. That's how we stay focused on our goals."

The friends realized that they had each experienced moments where their emotions had made it hard to move forward. But this time, they were prepared to face those challenges with the skills they had learned.

Ollie, ever the planner, decided that whenever he felt stressed about juggling science club and schoolwork, he would break his tasks into smaller steps. "If I take it one step at a time, I won't get overwhelmed," he thought.

Harriet, with her competitive spirit, promised herself that if she felt frustrated during soccer practice, she would take a deep breath and remind herself that mistakes were part of getting better. “I need to remember that my emotions don’t have to control me,” she realized.

Betty, ever the problem-solver, decided that when she felt anxious before a math test, she would practice deep breathing exercises to calm her nerves. “If I stay calm, I’ll do better on the test,” she told herself.

Buzz knew that his creativity sometimes made it hard to focus, so he promised himself that he would set time limits for each part of his science project. “If I stick to a schedule, I won’t get distracted,” he thought.

Sammy, always focused on emotional awareness, reminded himself that being patient with himself and others was important. “When I feel impatient, I’ll remind myself that it’s okay for things to take time,” he decided.

Benny, ever calm and supportive, planned to help his friends when they were struggling, but he also knew he needed to take care of his own emotions. “I’ll remember to take breaks and relax when I need to,” he thought.

Maya, new to the group but already feeling welcomed, reminded herself that it was okay to feel nervous. “If I get overwhelmed, I’ll talk to my new friends. They’ve already made me feel better, and I know they’ll support me.”

Moving Forward Together

As the bell rang and the class ended, the group gathered outside, excited for what the year would bring. They had all set their long-term goals and were ready to face the challenges ahead.

“I’m glad we’re all in this together,” Maya said, smiling at her new friends. “I was really nervous about starting here, but you’ve made it so much easier.”

Harriet grinned. “We’re a team now, Maya. And we’ve got big goals this year.”

Ollie nodded. “And we’ve learned that emotions can affect how we work toward those goals. But now we know how to manage them.”

As they walked home together, the friends felt confident that they were ready for the adventures of fifth grade. They knew that their emotions would play a role in their journey, but with their personal strengths and each other’s support, they were prepared to take on anything that came their way.

And with that, the new chapter in their lives began—full of new challenges, new friends, and new lessons about themselves and the world around them.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “Well, that was a good start to the new year.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

These questions encourage children to think deeply about what they listened to and how they can manage their emotions that come up as they work towards longer term goals.

- How do the characters’ goals reflect their personalities and strengths?
- Why is it important to recognize how emotions affect our ability to reach goals?
- How might nervousness or excitement get in the way of achieving a goal?
- What steps can we take when we feel emotions like frustration or stress?
- Why is it helpful to break a big goal into smaller tasks, like Ollie plans to do?
- How does working in a supportive group help Maya feel more confident?
- How does Harriet plan to use deep breathing when she feels frustrated?
- Why does Benny set a goal to help others, and how might it help him grow?
- What did Sammy realize about being patient with himself and others?
- How can asking for help from friends, like Maya plans to do, support emotional well-being?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will set their own long-term goals for fifth grade and create emotional “checkpoints” to identify how they feel along the way and what strategies to use when emotions challenge them.

Activity: Goal-Setting and Emotional Checkpoints (20 minutes)



1. Introduce Activity

- “Just like Ollie and his friends, we’re going to set our own goals for this year. We’ll also think about how emotions—like excitement, frustration, or stress—might show up as we work toward those goals. You’ll each create a ‘Goal Map’ with emotional checkpoints along the way.”

2. Goal Map Creation

- Distribute Goal Map worksheet.
- Have students write their long-term goal at the top of their paper (e.g., “Join the school band,” “Improve my math skills,” “Be a better team player in sports”).
- Below the goal, students will draw three “checkpoints”—places on their map where they’ll check in with their emotions. Eg

- Checkpoint 1: "Excited to start, but maybe a little nervous."
- Checkpoint 2: "Feeling frustrated—things aren't going as planned."
- Checkpoint 3: "Success or close to it—how do I stay focused?"

Next to each checkpoint, students will write or draw strategies to manage their emotions (e.g., take deep breaths, ask for help, break tasks into smaller steps).

3. Sharing

- Allow students to share their goals and strategies in small groups or with the whole class.

4. Wrapping it Up

- "We all set goals today and thought about how our emotions might affect us along the way. It's important to remember that feeling excited, frustrated, or nervous is part of the process. By recognizing these emotions, we can manage them and stay focused on what we want to achieve. Just like Ollie and his friends, we'll support each other as we work toward our goals."

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- Review what they learned about setting goals and how their emotions might impact those goals..
- Ask a few children to share what goals they've set and how they're going to combat emotions that might try to derail their goals.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- "Let's all come back together in a circle."
- "I'd like a few of us in the class to share some of their goals and then share what emotions might come up along the way to derail us from our goals. Please share an idea or two on how to deal with those emotions." Listen to a few responses and provide positive reinforcement.

2. Closing

- "Great job on goal setting and making a plan to deal with these intrusive emotions!"

Home Connection Letter

1. Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home to your caregiver. It explains that each student set some long-term goals, identified some emotions that might derail us in achieving those goals and also made a plan to deal with those intrusive emotions.”
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave. “Great job, everyone! I’m so proud of how well you learned this new strategy.”

Parent Letter

Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today in class, we read the first chapter of *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures.* This chapter focused on setting long-term goals and recognizing how emotions can affect our progress. Students reflected on their own goals for the year and created “Goal Maps” to identify emotional checkpoints along the way.

We encourage you to ask your child about their goal and the strategies they’ve identified to manage emotions such as excitement, frustration, or nervousness. Supporting your child as they work through these emotions will help them stay focused and achieve their goals.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to an exciting year ahead!

Best regards,



Goal Map

