

Understanding Our Emotions

Lesson Objective:

Students will explore emotional granularity and understand the importance of having a broad emotional vocabulary to accurately describe and manage emotions. They will use the S.T.A.R. strategy to reflect on emotions and how it helps improve decision-making.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 11: Understanding Our Emotions
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Pencils and markers
- Emotion and Situation cards
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Begin with a brief discussion on the importance of understanding our emotions.

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- “Today, we’re going to explore a really important topic: emotions. We all feel different emotions every day, but sometimes, we don’t have the right words to describe exactly how we feel. Having more words to describe our feelings helps us understand ourselves and others better. This is called emotional granularity—having lots of words for emotions so we can explain them more accurately.”

2. Discussion Starter

- How many different feelings can you name right now?
- Why do you think it’s important to know more than just words like ‘happy,’ ‘mad,’ or ‘sad’?
- Have you ever felt an emotion but didn’t know how to describe it?

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 11 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "We're going to read a chapter from *Ollie's Superpower Squad* where the characters learn that using more accurate ways to describe their feelings helps them to understand themselves better."
- (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 is Harriet frustrated with the project?
 - How does Buzz describe his feelings at first?
 - What does Ollie notice about everyone's emotions?
 - What does Betty suggest about having more words for emotions?
 - What is emotional granularity?
 - How does Ollie use emotional granularity to understand Harriet's feelings?
 - What is the difference between frustration and anger?
 - How does understanding their emotions help the group solve the problem?
 - What does Grandma say about having more control over feelings when you can describe them better?
 - How does the group use its strengths to finish the project?

Chapter 11: Understanding Our Emotions

It was the beginning of December, and the first hints of winter were in the air. Snowflakes had started to drift down from the sky, and the holiday season was just around the corner. Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty had been busy with school projects, preparing for winter events, and adjusting to the changing weather. But with the excitement of the season also came new challenges, especially when it came to dealing with their emotions.

One afternoon, the friends gathered in the school library to work on a group project. They were supposed to create a poster about how different emotions can affect decision-making. But as they worked, tensions began to rise.

“I’m getting so frustrated!” Harriet exclaimed, crumpling up her paper. “This project isn’t turning out the way I thought it would.”

Buzz, sitting next to her, sighed. “Yeah, I know what you mean. I wanted to try something more creative, but we keep getting stuck on the same idea. It’s making me angry.”

Bennie, who had been listening quietly, looked thoughtful. “I think I’m frustrated, too, but it doesn’t feel like anger. It’s more like I’m stuck, and I don’t know how to move forward.”

Ollie, always the planner, noticed the different emotions brewing in the group. “It sounds like we’re all feeling something, but maybe we’re not all feeling the same thing. Harriet, you said you’re frustrated, but Buzz, you said you’re angry. And Bennie, you’re frustrated too, but not angry.”

Betty, ever the problem-solver, chimed in. “Maybe we’re mixing up our emotions. There’s a difference between frustration and anger, but it can be hard to tell the difference if we don’t have the right words for it.”

Sammy nodded, thinking about what they had learned about emotions. “That’s emotional granularity, right? Having a bigger vocabulary for emotions helps us understand them better. If we only know words like ‘mad’ or ‘sad,’ we might miss what’s really going on.”

Ollie leaned forward, excited. “Exactly! Lisa Feldman Barrett’s theory of constructed emotion explains that our brains use concepts, like emotion words, to make sense of what we’re feeling. The more words we have, the better we can understand our emotions.”

Harriet raised an eyebrow. “So you’re saying I might think I’m angry when I’m really just frustrated?”

“Maybe,” Ollie said. “Let’s think about it. What does frustration feel like compared to anger?”

Betty jumped in, eager to explain. “Frustration is when something isn’t going the way you want, and it’s more about feeling stuck or blocked. Anger is usually stronger and comes when you feel like something unfair is happening to you.”

Harriet thought for a moment. “I guess I am frustrated. I feel like the project isn’t working out, but it’s not like I’m mad at anyone.”

Buzz, always creative, added, “Yeah, I get it. I think I was frustrated, too, but I called it anger because that was the first word that came to mind.”

Sammy smiled. “See? We just needed more words to explain what we’re feeling.” Bennie, who had been quiet, spoke up. “I think this is really helpful. I’ve felt stuck before, but didn’t know what to call it. Now I realize that’s frustration, and it’s not the same as anger.” The group fell silent for a moment, reflecting on what they had learned. They realized that by using more specific emotion words, they could better understand how they were feeling, and that would help them figure out what to do next.

Grandma, who had been shelving books in the library, overheard their conversation and smiled. “You kids are learning something very important today,” she said, walking over to join them. Understanding the difference between emotions like frustration and anger can make a big difference in how you handle them. The more words you have to describe your feelings, the more control you have over those feelings.”

Harriet looked up at her, intrigued. “So if I know the difference between frustration and anger, I can figure out what to do about it?”

“Exactly,” Grandma said. “When you realize you’re frustrated, you might decide to take a break or try a different approach. But if you’re angry, you might need to calm down before you act. Knowing the difference helps you respond in the right way.”

Betty nodded. “That’s why emotional granularity is so important. If we only use a few basic words, we can’t really understand what we’re feeling—or why.”

Bennie, always the steady one, added, “And when we understand our emotions better, we can make better decisions. It helps with everything—like solving problems or talking to each other.”

Ollie, ever the planner, smiled. “So maybe for this project, we can use what we’ve learned. We can create a poster that shows the difference between frustration and anger, and why it’s important to know both.”

The friends all agreed, feeling more confident now that they had a clearer understanding of their emotions. As they worked together, they used their personal strengths to guide the project. Harriet’s energy kept them motivated, Ollie’s planning helped organize their ideas, Buzz’s creativity made the poster design exciting, Betty’s problem-solving helped with the content, Sammy’s empathy made sure everyone’s feelings were heard, and Bennie’s steady presence kept everything balanced.

As they wrapped up their project, Grandma looked at them with pride. “You’ve all come so far. Learning to identify your emotions with more precision is a big step toward understanding yourself and others. And it will help you in everything you do.”

The friends smiled, feeling proud of what they had accomplished—not just the project, but the deeper understanding of their emotions. They knew that this new skill, emotional granularity, would help them navigate the ups and downs of school, friendships, and life.

And as they left the library, ready to face whatever challenges December might bring, they felt more connected to themselves and each other, ready to use their growing emotional vocabulary to handle anything that came their way.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “In the story, Harriet thought she was angry, but really she was frustrated. Buzz felt frustrated, too, but called it anger because that was the first word that came to mind. When they realized there were more ways to describe their feelings, they were able to understand themselves better. Let’s think about the feelings you might have and how having the right words helps.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- Have you ever felt frustrated but called it something else, like anger?
- Why do you think it’s important to tell the difference between frustration and anger?
- What other emotions might get confused with each other?
- How can knowing more emotion words help you in school or with friends?
- What do you do when you feel frustrated?
- How can you use emotional granularity in difficult situations?
- Why is it important to talk about your emotions with friends or family?
- How do you think the S.T.A.R. strategy can help when you’re feeling frustrated?
- How does reflecting on your emotions help you make better choices?
- What did you learn today that you can use when you feel upset or frustrated?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice identifying situations where certain emotions might be experienced..

Activity: Emotion Matching Game (20 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

"Now that we've read about Ollie and his friends learning that it's important to accurately identify how we are feeling because it helps us understand ourselves better, let's practice this skill."

2. Activity Instructions

a. Divide students into small groups. Provide each group with a set of cards. Half the cards have different emotion words (e.g., frustrated, anxious, excited, calm), and the other half have situations (e.g., "You studied hard, but you didn't get a good grade," "You're about to perform in front of a large group").

b. Students must match the emotions to the situations. Once matched, each group will explain their choices to the class, discussing why that emotion fits the situation.

Here's a set of cards for the ****Emotion Matching Game****:

Emotion Cards:

Frustrated

Excited

Nervous

Proud

Disappointed

Anxious

Angry

Confident

Curious

Embarrassed

Situation Cards:

1. You studied really hard for a test, but when you got your grade, it was lower than you expected.
2. You're about to go on stage to perform in front of the whole school.
3. You finished your art project and everyone in class says they like it.
4. You and your friends made plans to hang out, but at the last minute, they canceled.
5. You're getting ready to try something new, and you're not sure how it will turn out.
6. You've been working on a puzzle for hours, but you can't figure out the last piece.
7. Someone cuts in front of you in line after you've been waiting for a long time.
8. You've been practicing a new skill, and today you did it perfectly.
9. You see a new animal at the zoo, and you want to learn more about it.
10. You accidentally dropped your lunch tray in front of everyone in the cafeteria.

Instructions for Use:

- Print the cards and cut them out. You will need a set for each group of students.
- Mix them up and give each group both sets of cards.
- Have students match the Emotion Cards with the appropriate Situation Cards.
- After matching, ask the group to explain why they matched the specific emotion to the situation.

This will help students practice identifying emotions and linking them to real-life situations, enhancing their emotional granularity.



Wrapping it Up

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- After students complete their reflections, invite volunteers to share what they learned from their reflections.
- Encourage students to continue adding to their list of emotions that they know and understand to improve their emotional granularity.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script



1. **Gather in a Circle for Reflection:**

- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”

2. **Closing**

- “Today, we learned that understanding our emotions better—by having more words to describe them—helps us make good choices, work with others, and solve problems. Emotional granularity gives us the power to know exactly how we feel and what to do about it.”

Home Connection Letter

1. **Sending Information Home:**

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. It explains that we learned about the importance of accurately identifying our emotions helps us make better choices.”
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

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, your child learned about the importance of understanding their emotions through a concept called ****emotional granularity****. Emotional granularity means having lots of words to describe different emotions so we can understand how we feel more clearly. We read a chapter from **Ollie's Superpower Squad: Fourth Grade Challenges** where the characters realized that by having more words to describe their emotions, they could solve problems better and make better decisions.

We discussed how emotions like frustration and anger are different, and how knowing the right words for what they're feeling can help your child respond to challenges in a healthy way. Ask your child about what they learned today, and encourage them to talk about their feelings with more specific emotion words.

Thank you for supporting your child's growth!

With Gratitude,

Frustrated

Anxious

Excited

Angry

Nervous

Confident

Proud

Curious

Disappointed

Embarrassed

