

Using the S.T.A.R. Strategy in Tough Situations

Lesson Objective:

- Understand how to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to solve challenging social situations.
- Reflect on personal emotions and those of others in group settings.
- Develop empathy and strategies to address difficult situations, such as feeling left out.
- Create positive group solutions for inclusion.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 12: Using the S.T.A.R. Strategy in Tough Situations
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Pencils and markers
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Reflection worksheet
- 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 making hard decisions.

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- "Today, we're going to talk about handling tough situations, like when someone feels left out. We all know it can be hard when our friends are invited to something and we aren't, or when something happens that makes us feel upset. But we have a strategy to help us—the S.T.A.R. strategy."

2. Discussion Starter

- "Does anyone remember what the S.T.A.R. strategy stands for?"
- Discuss S.T.A.R.: Write on the whiteboard:
- S: Stop
- T: Think
- A: Act
- R: Reflect
- Ask students to share examples of times they've used the strategy.



Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 12 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:

- "Now, we'll read about Ollie and his friends facing a tough situation and how they use the S.T.A.R. strategy to work through it."
- (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:**
 - How do Sammy and Bennie feel when they realize they haven't been invited to the party?
 - What emotions might Harriet and Buzz feel when they realize Sammy and Bennie are left out?
 - Why do you think Ollie suggested using the S.T.A.R. strategy to handle this situation?
 - How does stopping to think help everyone understand their feelings better?
 - What emotions are Buzz and Harriet feeling as they talk about the party?
 - What could happen if they didn't stop to think before acting?
 - Why is it important to listen to how everyone feels?
 - How do the friends use their personal strengths to help each other?
 - What does Ollie's suggestion to act show about his character?
 - Why do you think reflecting is an important part of handling tough situations?

Chapter 12: Using the S.T.A.R. Strategy in Tough Situations

It was the middle of December, and the school year was in full swing. Snow blanketed the ground, holiday decorations lit up the town, and the excitement of the season filled the air. The friends—Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty—were looking forward to winter break, but they were about to face an unexpected challenge.

One chilly afternoon, after school, the group gathered at their favorite spot in the park to hang out and talk. They had been chatting excitedly about the upcoming holiday break when Harriet pulled out a colorful invitation from her backpack.

“Guess what?” Harriet said, grinning. “I got invited to Jordan’s holiday party this weekend! It’s going to be so fun—there’s going to be games, food, and even a gift exchange!”

Buzz buzzed with excitement. “I got invited too! I can’t wait for the gift exchange. I’ve already got some ideas for the coolest gift.”

Ollie, who was usually excited about social events, smiled. “Yeah, I got one too. I’m thinking of bringing a game for the gift exchange.”

As they continued to talk, Sammy and Bennie exchanged glances, feeling a bit left out. Neither of them had received an invitation to the party, and they weren’t sure how to bring it up.

Sammy, ever the empathetic one, shifted uncomfortably. “I didn’t get an invitation,” he said quietly.

Bennie nodded, looking a little disappointed. “Me neither.”

The conversation fell silent for a moment, the festive excitement dampened by the awkwardness. The friends didn’t know what to say.

Harriet, realizing the situation, looked apologetic. “Oh no, I didn’t know. I’m sorry, guys.”

Buzz, sensing the tension, fidgeted with his coat zipper. “That’s not fair. You should’ve been invited too.”

Ollie, always the planner, could feel the emotions bubbling up in the group—disappointment, confusion, and even frustration. He knew this was one of those tough situations where the S.T.A.R. strategy could help them work through their feelings and decide what to do next.

“Let’s use the S.T.A.R. strategy to think this through,” Ollie suggested. “It’s a tricky situation, and we want to make sure we handle it in a way that feels right.”

The group nodded, grateful for a way to process their emotions.

S: Stop

First, they all paused for a moment to calm down. Harriet took a deep breath, and Buzz stopped fidgeting. Sammy and Bennie took a moment to collect their thoughts. Stopping helped them feel more grounded, and it gave them a chance to focus.

“We’re all feeling a lot right now,” Ollie said, looking around. “Let’s take a second to recognize what’s going on before we jump to any conclusions.”

T: Think

Next, they moved on to the “Think” step. Ollie asked them to think about what they were feeling and what they could do in this situation.

"I think I'm mostly feeling left out," Sammy said honestly. "It's not like I'm mad at anyone, but it hurts to know I wasn't invited."

Bennie nodded. "Yeah, me too. It's like, I get that maybe not everyone can be invited, but it still feels bad when you're the one who isn't."

Harriet, always full of energy, looked guilty. "I didn't mean to make you feel left out by talking about the party. I was just excited, but I didn't realize how it would feel for you guys."

Buzz added, "It's tough, because we want to be excited about the party, but we don't want to make Sammy and Bennie feel worse."

The friends thought for a moment. They realized that this wasn't just about the party—it was about how they were feeling and how they could make sure everyone felt heard and respected.

A: Act

Ollie leaned forward, ready to move to the "Act" step. "So what can we do to make sure we're handling this situation the right way?"

Harriet, always one to take action, suggested, "Maybe we can do something together that includes everyone. Even if Sammy and Bennie aren't going to the party, we could plan another fun activity for us as a group."

Betty, ever the problem-solver, nodded. "Yeah! We could do a movie night or a game night together. That way, no one feels left out, and we can still have fun as a group."

Sammy, feeling a little better, smiled. "I'd like that. It's not about the party—I just don't want to feel left out of what we do together."

Bennie agreed. "Yeah, it would be nice to have something to look forward to with all of us."

Buzz, always buzzing with ideas, added, "And maybe we can make sure that next time something like this happens, we talk about it sooner. It helps to know we're all in this together."

R: Reflect

Finally, the group reflected on what they had learned from this experience.

"I think we learned that sometimes people get left out, even when it's not on purpose," Harriet said. "But what matters is how we handle it afterward."

Ollie nodded. "Yeah, and by stopping to think and reflect, we can make sure we're being thoughtful about each other's feelings. This way, we're not just reacting—we're really trying to make things better."

Betty, always ready with solutions, added, "And we've learned that planning something else as a group can help make sure no one feels left out."

Sammy smiled. "I'm glad we talked about it. I feel a lot better now."

Bennie, who had been quiet, added, "Me too. It helps to know that we're all thinking about how to include each other."

As they wrapped up their conversation, the group felt closer and more connected. The S.T.A.R. strategy had helped them work through a tough situation and come up with a solution that felt fair to everyone.

In the end, they decided to plan a movie night at Ollie's house the following weekend, where they could all hang out together. And while some of them would still go to the holiday party, they knew that their friendship was what mattered most.

As the snow began to fall outside, the friends headed home, feeling lighter and more at peace. They had learned an important lesson about handling difficult situations with kindness and understanding—something they knew would help them in the future.

And with their personal strengths—Harriet's energy, Ollie's planning, Buzz's creativity, Betty's problem-solving, Sammy's empathy, and Bennie's steady presence—they were ready to face whatever challenges the rest of fourth grade would bring.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “Handling difficult situations is something that we can find ourselves having to do from time to time, but using the S.T.A.R. Strategy to deal with these difficult situations is very helpful.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

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

- How would you feel if you were in Sammy's or Bennie's shoes?
- What are some ways to include friends when they feel left out?
- How does using the S.T.A.R. strategy help everyone make better decisions?
- What could Harriet have done if she didn't know about Sammy and Bennie's feelings?
- How does reflecting on your feelings help you understand others better?
- Why is it important to talk about your feelings when facing tough situations?
- Can you think of a time when you felt left out? How did you handle it?
- What could have happened if they hadn't stopped to think and rushed into decisions?
- How can you help a friend who is feeling upset or left out?
- How can the S.T.A.R. strategy help in other situations besides friendship challenges?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice working through the S.T.A.R. strategy in difficult situations.

Activity: Personal Coping Plan (20 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

"Now that we've seen how Ollie and his friends used the S.T.A.R. strategy, let's work together to think of situations where we might need to use it."

"In groups, you're going to come up with one tough situation that you or someone you know might face, and then work together to create a solution using the S.T.A.R. strategy."

2. Activity Instructions

- Divide students into small groups.
- Give each group a piece of chart paper and markers.
- Have them write out a situation where someone might feel left out, upset, or face peer pressure.
- Guide them to work through the S.T.A.R. strategy for that situation: Stop, Think, Act, and Reflect.
- Each group presents its solution to the class.

Examples (to help get them started):

- A friend wasn't invited to a sleepover, and they feel sad.
- Two friends argue over who gets to choose the game at recess.
- A classmate feels embarrassed after making a mistake in front of the class.

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 using the S.T.A.R. strategy when they face difficult situations.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- "Let's all come back together in a circle."

2. Closing

- "We've learned that tough situations can happen to everyone, but using the S.T.A.R. strategy helps us work through them. It helps us slow down, think about how we're feeling, and make choices that are kind and thoughtful."



- "Can anyone share one thing they learned about handling tough situations today?"

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 using the S.T.A.R. Strategy when you face tough situations."
- 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, we read a chapter from *Ollie's Superpower Squad: Fourth Grade Challenges* and learned about using the S.T.A.R. strategy to handle tough situations. The S.T.A.R. strategy helps children stop, think, act, and reflect when they're faced with challenges like peer pressure, feeling left out, or making decisions in difficult moments.



Your child practiced using this strategy by working through scenarios with their classmates. They learned how to pause before reacting, think about their feelings, make thoughtful decisions, and reflect on their choices.

Encourage your child to use the S.T.A.R. strategy at home when they face challenges or big decisions. It's a great way to help them navigate their emotions and build strong, supportive relationships with others.

Thank you for supporting your child's growth!

With Gratitude,

S.T.A.R. Strategy Reflection in Difficult Situations



Describe a difficult situation

S

Stop and calm down.

T

Think about what you are feeling and what you can do.

A

Choose the best solution and try it out.

R

Reflect on how things went. Would you do anything differently?