

Reflecting on Growth

Lesson Objective:

- Students will learn the importance of reflection for personal growth.
- Students will understand how to use the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to process emotions and experiences.
- Students will engage in journaling as a tool for self-awareness and goal setting.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 7: Reflecting on Growth
- Paper and pencils
- Reflection Journal Sheet
- S.T.A.R. Decision-making Worksheet
- 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 why it's important to think about personal growth - where you've been and where you are going.

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- "Today, we're going to talk about reflection—specifically, how reflecting on our experiences can help us grow. Sometimes, we don't realize how much we've learned or how much progress we've made until we stop and think about it. Keeping a reflection journal is a great way to do that. Mr. Jenkins introduces this idea to the Star Squad in Chapter 7 of our story. Let's see how they use reflection to understand themselves better and keep growing."
- Wait for the children to settle.

2. Discussion Starter

- "Has anyone ever kept a journal before? How did it help you?"
(Encourage a few students to share their experiences or thoughts on journaling.)

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 7 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Children for the Story:

- "Now, let's read *Chapter 7: Reflecting on Growth* from *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures.* Listen closely to how the characters use their reflection journals to think about their emotions, experiences, and goals."
- (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:**
- What does Mr. Jenkins ask the class to do with their reflection journals?
- How does Ollie use his journal to manage his anxiety about assignments?
- What does Harriet realize about her frustrations in soccer practice?
- How does Buzz reflect on his creative projects in his journal?
- Why does Sammy write about feeling stressed when plans change?
- What does Betty learn from reflecting on her experiences in class?
- How does Benny manage his feelings about noise?
- What does Maya notice about herself as she adjusts to the new school?
- How does the group use the S.T.A.R. strategy in their journals?
- Why do the friends find it helpful to look back at their weekly reflections?

Chapter 7: Reflecting On Growth

It was late November, and as the days grew shorter and the air turned colder, Mr. Jenkins introduced a new activity to help the fifth graders develop their self-management skills.

“Starting today,” he said, “I’d like each of you to keep a reflection journal. At the end of each day or week, write about what you experienced, how you felt, and what you learned. This will help you reflect on your growth and recognize patterns in your progress.”

The friends exchanged curious glances. They hadn’t thought much about keeping a journal to track their growth, but they were interested to see how it could help.

As they gathered under their favorite tree during lunch, Ollie spoke up, “It sounds like a good way to understand ourselves better. If we can look back at what happened and how we felt, maybe we’ll see things we didn’t notice at the time.”

Harriet nodded in agreement. “Yeah, and we could use the S.T.A.R. strategy too. When we write about a challenging moment, we can look at how we used Stop, Think, Act, and Reflect to handle it.”

The group decided to start by setting up their journals with sections for daily and weekly reflections. They would write about experiences that stood out, what they learned, and what they wanted to improve.

Daily Reflections

Each day, the friends took time after school to write in their journals. As the days went by, they found that daily reflections helped them notice the little things they might have overlooked.

- Ollie wrote about the moments when he felt anxious about assignments, noting how he could break tasks into smaller steps to stay calm.
- Harrie reflected on her soccer practices, thinking about what went well and how she could handle her frustration when things didn’t go perfectly.
- Buzz wrote about the times he felt stuck on a creative project and how taking a break or asking for help made a difference.
- Sammy noticed that he often felt stressed when plans changed, and he practiced using breathing techniques to stay grounded.
- Betty reflected on the times when she didn’t understand something in class and found that asking questions helped her feel more confident.
- Benny noticed that he felt more focused when he took breaks in quiet places, which helped him stay calm during noisy moments.
- Maya wrote about her experiences adjusting to her new school, recognizing how small moments of bravery made her feel more comfortable.



Weekly Reflections

At the end of each week, the friends used their journals to look back at what they had written. They thought about what they had learned and set goals for the next week.

Ollie noticed a pattern in his entries. “I keep writing about feeling anxious when assignments pile up,” he said. “Maybe if I plan my week better, I won’t feel so overwhelmed.”

Harriet, looking over her reflections, said, “I wrote a lot about getting frustrated during soccer practice. I’m going to focus on staying positive, even if I make mistakes.”

Buzz realized that his entries often talked about being hard on himself when things didn’t go as planned. “I need to remind myself that it’s okay if my projects aren’t perfect. I can still learn from them.”

Sammy found that his weekly reflections helped him see that he was getting better at adapting to change. “Writing about what stressed me out helped me see how I could handle things differently next time.”

Betty, reading through her entries, noticed how much more comfortable she felt in class after she started asking for help. “I guess my reflection journal is helping me feel braver,” she said.

Benny, who often wrote about how noisy situations made him feel uneasy, decided to try wearing noise-canceling headphones when things got too loud.

Maya felt proud as she read over her weekly reflections. “At first, I was nervous about everything,” she said. “But now I can see how much I’ve grown. I’m not as scared to speak up in class.”

Using the S.T.A.R. Strategy to Reflect

As the weeks went by, the group began to use the S.T.A.R. strategy in their journals to reflect on challenging situations.

1. Stop: They would write about a time when they felt a strong emotion and paused to gather their thoughts.
2. Think: They noted what their brains were predicting in that moment. Were they expecting the worst? Did they feel like they had to be perfect?
3. Act: They described what they chose to do in the situation. Did they take a break, use a calming technique, or try a different approach?
4. Reflect: They looked back at what happened and thought about what they had learned. Did they handle the situation well? What would they do differently next time?

The friends found that using the S.T.A.R. strategy in their reflections helped them understand their experiences more deeply. It was a way to see how their emotions influenced their actions and how they could learn from each experience.



Reflecting on Progress

By the end of November, the group felt that their journals had become an important part of their routine. Mr. Jenkins asked the class to share what they had learned from keeping a reflection journal.

Harriet spoke first. “I realized that when I write about my day, I notice things I didn’t see in the moment. It helps me understand why I felt a certain way.”

Ollie added, “And using the S.T.A.R. strategy in our journals is a good way to figure out what worked and what didn’t.”

Betty nodded. “It’s like having a conversation with yourself. You can look back and see how much you’ve grown.”

Mr. Jenkins smiled. “Reflection is one of the best tools for personal growth. By taking time to think about your experiences, you’re learning to understand yourself better. And when you understand yourself, you’re better equipped to handle challenges.”

Moving Forward

The friends left school that day with a renewed sense of purpose. They realized that keeping a reflection journal wasn’t just about writing down what happened; it was about using those reflections to guide their future actions.

As they walked together, Maya said, “I’m going to keep using my journal to remind myself of all the times I’ve been brave. It helps me feel more confident.”

Buzz agreed. “And I’m going to keep writing about my projects, even when they don’t turn out the way I planned. It’s okay to have ups and downs.”

Harriet, ever the optimist, grinned. “And I’m going to keep focusing on the good parts of my day, even if I make mistakes.”

With their journals in hand, the friends felt ready for whatever came next. They knew that each day and week would bring new experiences and challenges, but by reflecting on their growth, they could continue to learn, improve, and become stronger together.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “Well, journaling sure seems to help Ollie and his friends.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

These questions encourage children to think deeply about what they listened to, why reflection is important, and how the S.T.A.R Strategy can help.



- How can reflection help you understand your emotions better?
- What patterns did Ollie notice in his daily reflections?
- How did writing about frustrations help Harriet improve in soccer?
- How did using the S.T.A.R. strategy help Buzz when he felt stuck?
- What did Sammy learn about handling unexpected changes from his journal?
- How does reflecting help Betty feel more confident in class?
- Why is it important to think about what went well during the day, as well as what didn't go as planned?
- How does writing in a journal help Maya feel braver?
- How can reflection help you set goals for the future?
- What is one way you could use a reflection journal in your own life?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will begin their own reflection journals and use the S.T.A.R. strategy to process their emotions and experiences.

Activity: Creating a Reflection Journal (20 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

- "Think about a recent time when you felt a strong

emotion—maybe excitement, frustration, or nervousness. Use your journal to reflect on that moment. Write about what happened, how you felt, and what you learned from the situation. We'll use the S.T.A.R. strategy to help guide your reflection."



2. Reflection Journal Worksheet

Pass out the reflection journal sheet to each student.

- Have students write today's date at the top of the page.
- Ask them to reflect on a recent experience where they felt strong emotions—whether positive or challenging.
- Guide them through the S.T.A.R. strategy as they write:
 1. Stop: Describe the situation and how they felt.
 2. Think: What was their brain predicting? Why were they feeling this way?

3. Act: How did they respond to the situation?
4. Reflect: What did they learn from the experience? What could they do differently next time?

3. Sharing



- After students complete the worksheet, invite a few students to share their reflections if they feel comfortable. Discuss how identifying triggers and using the S.T.A.R. strategy can help in different situations.

4. Wrapping it Up

- “Reflecting on past experiences can be challenging because it can bring up strong emotions. However, giving yourself a chance to have this reflective experience can help you learn a lot about yourself - where you’re going and how you’re getting there.”

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- After students complete their reflections, invite a few to share what they wrote if they feel comfortable. Discuss how reflecting on their emotions helped them understand the situation better.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:



- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”
- “You all did a great job reflecting on your emotions and experiences today. Keeping a reflection journal will help you understand your feelings better, recognize patterns in your behavior, and set goals for the future. Remember, the S.T.A.R. strategy is a tool you can use anytime you want to reflect on a challenge or an achievement.”

- Encourage students to share one key thing they learned about themselves during the reflection activity.

2. Closing

- “Great job on reflecting on your growth.”

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 reflection and how it can help with personal growth.”
- 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, your child learned about the importance of reflection and how it can help with personal growth. We discussed how keeping a reflection journal allows students to understand their emotions, recognize patterns in their experiences, and set goals for the future.

In class, we introduced the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to guide students through their reflections. They practiced using this strategy to think about a recent experience and wrote about how they responded to a situation and what they learned from it.

Encouraging your child to continue writing in their reflection journal at home will help them develop self-awareness and better decision-making skills. Ask them about what they wrote in their journal today and how they plan to use reflection in the future.

Thank you for supporting your child's emotional growth!



Best regards,



S.T.A.R. Strategy



Stop -Take some deep breaths.

Think -What solutions are there?

Act -Pick the best solution.

Reflect -How did it go?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.