

# ***New Year's Reflections with S.T.A.R.***

Lesson Objective:

Students will reflect on the past year and explore how to use the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to manage challenges in school and personal life.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 12: New Year's Reflections with S.T.A.R.
- Paper and pencils
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- S.T.A.R. Strategy worksheet (one per student)
- 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 that we can sometimes feel more than one emotion at a time and how to handle this.

## **Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script**

### **1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:**

- "Happy almost-New Year, everyone! Today, we'll reflect on the past year and explore how we can set meaningful goals for the new year using the S.T.A.R. strategy. S.T.A.R. helps us manage emotions, make thoughtful decisions, and grow from every experience. We'll read a chapter where Ollie and his friends use this strategy to prepare for the new year, and then we'll practice it ourselves!"

### **2. Discussion Starter**

- "What are some things you're proud of from the past year?"
- "What challenges did you face?"
- "Have you ever felt stuck and not known what to do next? "
- Invite students to share examples

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 12 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### 1. Prepare the Children for the Story:

- "Let's read Chapter 12: New Year's Reflections with S.T.A.R. together. In this chapter, Ollie and his friends learn about setting meaningful goals for the New Year using the S.T.A.R. strategy."
- (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 suggest using the S.T.A.R. strategy on New Year's Eve?
- What does Bennie struggle with in math?
- How does the S.T.A.R. strategy help Bennie think differently about his assignments?
- What emotions does Sammy experience with his siblings?
- Why does Ollie suggest Sammy \*stop\* before reacting?
- What predictions do Harriet and the others think Sammy's brain is making?
- How does the group help Sammy find a better way to manage his siblings?
- What personal challenges does Buzz want to address using S.T.A.R.?
- How do the friends plan to use S.T.A.R. for the new year?
- How do the friends feel as they celebrate the new year with their plan?

## Chapter 12: New Year's Reflections with S.T.A.R.

The end of December had arrived, and the friends were getting ready to celebrate New Year's Eve together. The whole town was buzzing with excitement, and Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya had planned a small get-together at Bennie's house to welcome the new year. As they gathered in Bennie's cozy living room, sipping hot cocoa and snacking on treats, the friends took a moment to reflect on the past year and think about what they wanted to accomplish in the new one.

Before they got too deep into their celebrations, Ollie had an idea. "Since it's almost the new year," he said, "how about we practice using the S.T.A.R. strategy tonight? We could talk about things that happened last year and how we can apply S.T.A.R. in different situations, both at school and at home."

The others nodded, agreeing that it was a great way to start the new year with a plan for handling challenges.

### *Academic Context: Setting New Goals*

The friends started by discussing their goals for school. Bennie shared that he sometimes struggled with staying focused on his math assignments because they could be difficult.

"I think when I get frustrated with math," Bennie said, "my brain is predicting that I'm not going to understand it, and that makes me want to give up."

The group decided to walk through the S.T.A.R. strategy to see how it could help Bennie.

1. Stop: Ollie suggested that the next time Bennie felt frustrated, he should stop working for a moment and take a deep breath. This would give him a chance to reset.
  2. Think: Harriet encouraged Bennie to think about what his brain was predicting. "Just because it's hard doesn't mean you won't get it," she said. "Sometimes, you need to remind yourself that you can take it step by step."
  3. Act: Betty suggested that Bennie try breaking the assignment into smaller tasks. "You could do a few problems, take a break, and then come back to it," she said.
  4. Reflect: Maya reminded him to think about what worked and what didn't after he finished. "If you know what helped you stay calm and focused, you can use that next time."
- Bennie nodded, feeling more confident. "I'm going to give it a try," he said. "I'll remind myself that I don't have to understand everything right away."

### *Personal Context: Managing Emotions with Family*

Next, the friends talked about challenges they faced outside of school. Sammy shared that he sometimes found it hard to stay calm when his younger siblings took his things without asking. "I get really annoyed," he said. "I know they don't mean any harm, but it feels like they're not respecting my space."

The group applied the S.T.A.R. strategy again to see how Sammy could manage his emotions.

1. Stop: Ollie suggested that Sammy pause before reacting when his siblings took something. "You could count to ten or go to another room to cool down," he said.

2. Think: Harriet encouraged Sammy to consider why his siblings might have taken his things. “Maybe they just want to play with you or feel closer to you,” she said. “It doesn’t mean they’re trying to be mean.”
3. Act: Betty suggested that Sammy talk to his siblings about how he felt and explain why it was important to ask before taking things. “You could also set some rules, like which toys they can play with and which ones are off-limits,” she said.
4. Reflect: Maya reminded Sammy to think about how talking with his siblings affected the situation. “Did they understand why you were upset? Did setting some rules help?” she asked. Sammy felt relieved to have a plan. “I’m going to try talking to them instead of getting upset right away,” he said. “Maybe that will help.”

### *Preparing for the New Year*

As the friends continued to talk, they each shared how they planned to use the S.T.A.R. strategy in the new year. Buzz said he wanted to use it when he got stuck on art projects and felt frustrated. Betty said she would use it to help her stay calm when speaking in front of the class. Maya wanted to apply it when adjusting to new situations, like when meeting new people.

Before they knew it, it was almost midnight. Bennie's parents brought out sparkling cider for everyone, and the group gathered around the TV to watch the countdown. As the clock struck twelve, they all cheered and raised their glasses, excited for the year ahead.

“Here’s to using S.T.A.R.,” Harriet said, raising her glass. “And to making this the best year yet.” The friends clinked their glasses together, ready to face the new year with confidence. They knew there would be challenges, but they also knew they had the tools to handle them—both in school and in their personal lives.

And as the fireworks lit up the sky, they felt ready to shine, just like the stars above.

### **3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script**

- **Teacher:** “This story shows us how Ollie and his friends were able to use the S.T.A.R. Strategy in different settings, and I bet we can do it too!”

### **4. Post-Chapter Questions**

These questions encourage children to think deeply about what they listen to and to understand that they can use the S.T.A.R. Strategy in many different situations.

- How does the S.T.A.R. strategy help the group manage challenges?
- What role does reflection play in managing emotions?
- How does naming emotions help the characters understand their responses?
- Why is it important to stop and take a breath when emotions run high?

- What predictions do our brains make that might cause stress or frustration?
- How can thinking differently change the way we respond to situations?
- Why is it helpful to reflect on what worked and what didn't?
- How can goal-setting help us prepare for challenges?
- What did you learn from the way Sammy managed his siblings?
- How can using S.T.A.R. help us grow over time?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will set goals for the New Year..

### Activity: Goal Setting (20 minutes)

#### 1. Introduce Activity

○ "Now that we've read about how Ollie and his friends learned the importance of setting goals and how the S.T.A.R. Strategy is helpful in many different situations, we're going to set some goals for the New Year too."

#### 2. Instructions

- Distribute the S.T.A.R. Strategy worksheets.
- Have students think of one personal goal and one academic goal for the new year.
- Using the worksheet, they will:
  - Identify a potential challenge they might face when working toward each goal.
  - Walk through the S.T.A.R. strategy for that challenge.
  - Give students time to write down their goals and strategies.



Closing Discussion (5 minutes):

#### 3. Sharing

- After students complete the activity, invite a few students to share their goals.



#### 4. Wrapping it Up

- “Today, we’ve practiced setting goals and using the S.T.A.R. Strategy to handle problems that might get in the way of our goals.”

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- Have students reflect on barriers to achieving their stated goals and how to overcome those barriers.

## Review and Reflection Teacher Script



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

- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”
- “Let’s share some of the goals and strategies we’ve come up with.

Remember, using S.T.A.R. helps us stay in control and grow, even when things don’t go as planned.”

- “What are some challenges you expect to face with your goals?”
- “How will using the S.T.A.R. strategy help you?”
- “What did you learn from today’s lesson that you’ll carry into the new year?”
- Encourage students to use the S.T.A.R. Strategy when challenges come up throughout the year.

2. **Closing**

- “Great job today setting some goals for the remainder of the school year! I know that there will be challenges, but with the S.T.A.R. Strategy, I feel confident that we will be able to handle those challenges and achieve our goals!”

## 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 setting goals and how to use the S.T.A.R. Strategy when challenges to those goals arise.”
- 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 participated in a lesson focused on reflection and goal-setting using the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect). Through reading and discussion, students explored how this strategy can help them manage challenges, both academically and personally.

During the lesson, your child:

- Reflected on personal and academic goals for the new year.
- Learned to identify potential challenges and emotions that may arise.
- Practiced using the S.T.A.R. strategy to create thoughtful responses to challenges.

Encourage your child to share their goals and strategies with you. Ask them how they plan to use the S.T.A.R. strategy in their daily life. Together, you can support their growth and development throughout the new year.



I wish you and your family a wonderful New Year!

With Gratitude,



# ***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?



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### ***S.T.A.R. Strategy Worksheet***

**Name:\*\*** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:\*\*** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Goal Setting and Challenge Identification**

**Personal Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What challenges might you face while working toward this goal?**

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Applying the S.T.A.R. Strategy**

**Challenge:**

**Stop: What will you do to pause and reset when emotions rise?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Think: What is your brain predicting that makes this situation feel difficult?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Act: What action will you take to handle the challenge effectively?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflect: How will you evaluate what worked and what you might do differently next time?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Academic Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What challenges might you face while working toward this goal?**

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Applying the S.T.A.R. Strategy**

**Challenge:**

**Stop: What will you do to take a moment before reacting?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Think: What are your brain's predictions about this challenge, and how can you change them?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Act: What steps will you take to stay on track toward your goal?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reflect: How will you reflect on your progress and make adjustments?**

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Final Thoughts**

**What have you learned about yourself by applying the S.T.A.R. strategy?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**How will you continue to use S.T.A.R. to achieve your goals in the new year?**

\_\_\_\_\_