

Navigating Complex Decisions with S.T.A.R.

Lesson Objective:

Students will practice responsible decision-making by evaluating options, considering emotional influences, and reflecting on outcomes using the S.T.A.R. strategy.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 15: Navigating Complex Decisions with S.T.A.R.
- Paper and pencils
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- 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 the concept of navigating complex decisions

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- “Today, we’ll explore a topic that helps us make good decisions, especially when we have several options to choose from. Have you ever felt stuck between two good choices, like whether to hang out with friends or finish your homework? That’s what we call a ****complex decision****. These decisions can be tricky, especially when our emotions play a role. Today, we’ll learn how to handle them thoughtfully.

2. Discussion Starter

- “We’re going to follow a process called the S.T.A.R. strategy to guide our decisions. Does anyone remember what the S.T.A.R. strategy stands for?”
- (*Pause for students to answer.*)
- Teacher Writes on the Board:
- 1.*Stop – Take a moment to pause.
- 2. Think – Consider your options and emotions.
- 3. Act – Choose a course of action.
- 4. Reflect – Look back and learn from the decision.

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 15 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Children for the Story:

- “Now let’s read a chapter from *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures* where Ollie and his friends have to make a big decision together. As we read, think about how each character’s emotions influence their ideas.”

(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 Mr. Jenkins assign a real-world scenario for the project?
- What emotions come up when the friends discuss their ideas for the fundraiser?
- Why does Harriet like the bake sale idea?
- What makes Buzz think a charity run could be successful?
- What concerns does Ollie have about the charity run?
- How does the group feel about selling crafts or doing a car wash?
- How do emotions influence each friend’s opinion on the options?
- How does Maya encourage the group to take a step back and reflect?
- What decision does the group make, and how do they compromise?
- Why is it important to reflect on a decision after it’s made?

Chapter 14: Navigating Complex Decisions with S.T.A.R.

As winter turned to early February, the friends found themselves faced with new challenges that tested their decision-making skills in real-life situations. Mr. Jenkins had assigned a project that encouraged the students to think critically about real-world scenarios and make thoughtful choices. The goal was to practice responsible decision-making by considering various perspectives, possible outcomes, and the emotions that influenced their choices. The project required the students to choose from several scenarios. Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya decided to work together, selecting one that felt both challenging and relevant: planning a fundraiser to help a local animal shelter.

Considering the Options

The friends brainstormed different ideas for how they could raise money for the shelter. They had a lot of options: hosting a bake sale, organizing a charity run, selling handmade crafts, or setting up a car wash. Each idea had its pros and cons.

“I think a bake sale would be easy to organize,” Harriet said. “Everyone loves cookies and brownies.”

“But we’d need to make sure we had enough items to sell,” Betty added. “What if we don’t bake enough and we don’t raise much money?”

“I like the idea of a charity run,” Buzz suggested. “It could be fun, and more people might participate because it’s an activity, not just buying something.”

“But a run would be hard to organize,” Ollie pointed out. “We’d need permission from the city, and we’d have to make sure it’s safe.”

The friends realized they needed a way to evaluate their options and make a decision that would maximize the fundraiser’s impact while also considering the resources and time they had.

Using a Decision-Making Framework

Mr. Jenkins had taught the class about a decision-making framework that could help them weigh their options:

1. Define the Problem: The problem was finding the best way to raise money for the animal shelter.
2. List the Options: The friends wrote down the choices they had brainstormed: bake sale, charity run, selling crafts, or a car wash.
3. Evaluate the Pros and Cons For each option, they considered the advantages and disadvantages. For example, a bake sale would be easy to set up, but they might not raise as much money. A charity run could attract more participants, but it would take a lot of planning.
4. Consider the Consequences: They thought about the possible outcomes of each choice. Would people show up for a charity run on a cold day? Would enough people buy baked goods?

5. Make a Decision: After evaluating their options, they would choose the one that seemed most promising.

6. Reflect on the Decision Later: After the event, they would reflect on what worked well and what didn't and consider how they could improve in the future.

Emotions and Decision-Making

As they went through the decision-making process, Ollie reminded the group about the role of emotions. "Our brains make predictions based on past experiences," he said. "If we've had a positive experience with something before, we might feel more confident choosing it. But we need to be careful not to let our feelings override what's practical."

Harriet agreed. "I love the idea of a bake sale because I enjoy baking," she said. "But that doesn't necessarily mean it's the best choice for raising the most money."

Maya added, "It's important to think about how people might feel about each option, too. If we can find something that makes people excited to participate, that could help us raise more money."

Making the Decision

After evaluating their options using the framework, the group decided to combine two ideas: they would host a bake sale with homemade treats, while also organizing a mini obstacle course for pets and their owners. The event would take place at a local park, allowing people to bring their dogs to participate in the obstacle course while enjoying some baked goods.

"We'll need to split up the tasks," Bennie said. "Some of us can bake, and others can set up the course and get the word out."

"I'll make some flyers to let people know about the event," Sammy volunteered. "We should put them up at the park and in pet stores."

Betty added, "And we can make sure the course is safe and fun for both the pets and their owners."

The Day of the Event

The friends worked hard to prepare for the fundraiser. On the day of the event, the park buzzed with excitement. People came with their pets, ready to try the obstacle course and enjoy the delicious treats the friends had baked. The combination of the bake sale and the obstacle course turned out to be a hit. The event raised more money than they had expected, and the local animal shelter was thrilled to receive the support.

Reflecting on Their Decision

After the fundraiser, the friends gathered to reflect on the experience. They used the decision-making framework to evaluate how well things had gone:

What Worked Well: Combining the bake sale with the obstacle course had attracted a larger crowd. The event was fun and different, which made it more appealing to people in the community.

What Could Be Improved: They realized that they could have started promoting the event earlier to attract even more participants. Also, they ran out of baked goods faster than they expected, so they would need to make more next time.

Emotional Insights: Harriet admitted that while she had initially pushed for the bake sale because she enjoyed baking, she realized that the obstacle course had been the highlight of the event. The friends learned that considering different perspectives and evaluating options helped them make a decision that worked for everyone.

Ollie summed it up. “Making decisions isn’t just about picking what you like best. It’s about thinking through the consequences and considering how your choices affect others.”

Betty nodded. “And even if you feel strongly about something, it’s important to be open to other ideas. That’s how you make the best choice.”

As the friends left the park, they felt proud of what they had accomplished and knew that their experience with the fundraiser had taught them valuable lessons about decision-making and the impact of their choices. They felt ready to take on the next challenge, whatever it might be, armed with the tools to navigate complex decisions thoughtfully and responsibly.

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 to help them navigate complex decisions.

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.

- What emotions affected the characters’ ideas for the fundraiser?
- How did the decision-making framework help the group?
- Why is it important to think about the consequences of each choice?
- What role did compromise play in making the final decision?
- How did the S.T.A.R. strategy help them manage disagreements?
- What was the outcome of the fundraiser?
- How could they have prepared better for the event?
- What did Harriet learn about balancing her love for baking with the group’s goals?
- How can emotions sometimes mislead us during decisions?
- What lessons can we take from this story for our own decision-making?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice navigating complex decisions using the S.T.A.R. Strategy.



Activity: Decision-making Workshop (20 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

- “Now, it’s your turn to practice making a decision together as a group. Here’s a fun challenge: ****Your class needs to choose a theme for the end-of-year party.**** Your options are: Sports Day, Movie Marathon, Talent Show, or Art Fair.
- Use the ****decision-making framework**** we learned to guide your discussion. Remember to evaluate the pros and cons of each idea, and try to keep emotions in check.”

2. Instructions

- Divide students into small groups of 4-5.
- Distribute Decision-Making Worksheets: Each group will list their options, the pros/cons, and the consequences of each choice.
- Group Discussion: Encourage students to discuss each option and make a group decision.
- Use S.T.A.R.: Ask students to walk through the S.T.A.R. strategy to evaluate how their emotions influenced the process.
- Present Decisions: Each group will present its final decision and share how it used the S.T.A.R. strategy.

Closing Discussion (5 minutes):

3. Sharing

- After role-playing, discuss what students noticed about navigating complex decisions and how the S.T.A.R. strategy helped them.



4. Wrapping it Up

- “Great job, everyone!”

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- Have students reflect on their experiences in the role-plays and what they learned.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script



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

- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”
- “Let’s take a moment to reflect. What challenges did your group face? How did the S.T.A.R. strategy help you work through those challenges?”
- What emotions came up during your discussions?
- Was it easy or hard to compromise?
- How did you make sure everyone’s voice was heard?
- What will you do differently next time you face a complex decision?
- Encourage students to use the S.T.A.R. Strategy when big decisions arise throughout the year.

2. **Closing**

- “Great job today practicing navigating complex decisions. I think if we use the S.T.A.R. Strategy when these choices arise, we might find that we deal with these situations more effectively.”

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 navigating complex decisions and how to use the S.T.A.R. Strategy to help us make the best decision.”
- 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 on ****navigating complex decisions****. In class, students read about how the characters in **The Star Squad** worked through a tough decision by evaluating options and balancing emotions. They learned to use the ****S.T.A.R. strategy**** (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to make thoughtful choices.

We encourage you to talk with your child about the story and ask how they used the S.T.A.R. strategy in class. Consider using this strategy at home to help your child practice responsible decision-making in real life.



Thank you for your support in developing these essential life skills!

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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Pros

Cons

Pros

Cons

Potential Outcome:

Pros

Cons

Potential Outcome:

Pros

Cons

Potential Outcome:

Potential Outcome:



Which option did you choose? Why

How did emotions influence your decision?

What would you do differently next time?