

Balancing Responsibilities and Self-Care.

Lesson Objective:

Students will understand the importance of balancing responsibilities and self-care, apply the S.T.A.R. strategy to manage their time and emotions, and reflect on how self-care impacts their well-being.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 17: Balancing Responsibilities and Self-Care
- Paper and pencils
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- S.T.A.R. Self-Care Planning worksheets
- 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 self-care

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- “Today, we’re going to talk about something very important, balancing our responsibilities with self-care. We all have a lot going on, homework, sports, family activities, and sometimes it feels like we don’t have time to relax or take care of ourselves. But did you know that when we don’t take care of ourselves, it actually makes it harder to get everything done? We’re going to learn about how finding a balance can make us feel better and be more productive.”

Discussion Starter

- Discussion Starter Questions:
 - i. Do you ever feel like you have too many things to do and not enough time?
 - ii. What activities do you do for fun or to relax?
 - iii. How do you feel when you take a break versus when you don’t?
 - iv. Why do you think it’s important to rest even when you have a lot to do?
 - v. What are some signs that you might need to take a break?

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 17 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

Prepare the Children for the Story:

- “Now, let’s read Chapter 17 of The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures. As we read, think about how Ollie and his friends are feeling and what choices they make to balance their responsibilities and take care of themselves.”

(Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments.

While reading, pause during key moments.

Ask Questions: 10 questions

- Why does Harriet feel like she never has time for herself?
- How does Bennie feel about not spending time with his cousins?
- What is a "body budget" according to Ollie?
- How does stress affect the friends' energy levels?
- Why does Harriet decide to go to bed earlier?
- What small change does Buzz make to improve his energy?
- How does Sammy's break strategy help him focus on homework?
- Why is spending time with his cousins important to Bennie?
- What happens when the friends improve their routines?
- What lesson do the friends learn about balancing responsibilities?

Chapter 17 : Balancing Responsibilities and Self-Care

It was the end of February, and the school year was in full swing. With homework, extracurricular activities, and upcoming tests, Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya all felt the pressure of juggling multiple responsibilities.

The friends had each noticed that as their schedules got busier, it became harder to find time to relax and take care of themselves. One day after school, they met up at the park to unwind. As they sat in a circle, Harriet sighed, “I feel like I never have time for myself anymore. Between soccer practice, homework, and helping out at home, I’m always doing something.”

“Me too,” Bennie agreed. “I’ve been so focused on schoolwork that I haven’t hung out with my cousins in weeks.”

The friends realized they were all feeling the same way, stretched too thin and struggling to balance their responsibilities with self-care.

Understanding the Need for Balance

Ollie spoke up, remembering a recent lesson in class. “Mr. Jenkins talked about how it’s important to balance our ‘body budget.’ He said our brains are always predicting what we need to feel good, but when we have too many demands, our body budget gets drained.”

“What’s a body budget?” asked Sammy.

“It’s kind of like a bank account, but instead of money, you have energy and well-being,” Ollie explained. “When we rest, eat well, and do things that make us happy, we add to our body budget. But when we stress, don’t sleep enough, or take on too much, we use up that balance.”

The group thought about what Ollie said. It made sense, when they were overworked or stressed, they felt exhausted and less motivated. But when they took breaks or did things they enjoyed, they felt more energized.

Finding a Balance: Using the S.T.A.R. Strategy

The friends decided to use the S.T.A.R. strategy, Stop, Think, Act, Reflect, to figure out how to balance their responsibilities with self-care:

1. Stop: They would pause whenever they felt overwhelmed and acknowledge that they needed a break.
2. Think: They would consider what was using up their energy and think about ways to restore their body budget, like getting more sleep, doing something relaxing, or asking for help.
3. Act: They would take steps to manage their time better or add self-care to their routines. This could mean setting aside time each day to do something enjoyable, even if it was just for a few minutes.
4. Reflect: They would think about how these changes affected their energy levels and mood, and adjust their routines as needed.

Putting It Into Practice

Over the next week, the friends tried different ways to balance their responsibilities with self-care:

Harriet: She realized that going to bed a little earlier helped her feel more focused during soccer practice and less stressed about homework. She made it a habit to turn off her screens an hour before bed.

Bennie: He started setting aside one afternoon each week to spend time with his cousins, making it a regular part of his routine. It gave him something to look forward to, which made the busy days feel less overwhelming.

Sammy: He found that taking short breaks between homework assignments helped him stay more focused. He'd go outside for five minutes or listen to music, which kept him from getting too stressed.

Buzz: Since he was on the basketball team, Buzz had a lot of practices. He started bringing healthier snacks to school and made sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day. It made a big difference in his energy levels.

Reflecting on Their Progress

At the end of the week, the friends gathered again to share how their new routines were working. They each noticed that making small changes had helped them feel less overwhelmed and more in control.

"I never realized how much skipping sleep was affecting me," Harriet admitted. "I thought staying up late to finish homework was helpful, but it just made me more tired the next day."

"I learned that doing things I enjoy, like playing with my cousins, is important, too," Bennie said. "It's not just about finishing tasks."

Maya nodded. "I've started taking time to read for fun, even if it's just for 15 minutes. It helps me relax and clears my mind."

The group realized that finding balance wasn't about doing less, but about making sure they took time to recharge. They also understood that when their body budgets were better managed, they were more productive, happier, and able to handle their responsibilities with more ease.

Moving Forward

The friends decided to continue using the S.T.A.R. strategy to help them balance their responsibilities and self-care. They knew there would still be busy times ahead, but they felt more prepared to manage them.

Ollie summed it up. “Our schedules are important, but so is taking care of ourselves. It’s okay to rest, and sometimes, taking a break is the most responsible thing we can do.”

As they walked home from the park, the friends felt lighter, knowing that they could navigate the demands of school and life while still making time for themselves. And with a little bit of planning, reflection, and support from one another, they were ready to keep growing, learning, and taking care of their body budgets, one day at a time.

Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “This story shows us how important it is to not only take care of our responsibilities, but also to take care of our body budget and take the time to do things that contribute to our happiness.”

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 are some things you do that drain your energy?
- What activities help you recharge?
- How can going to bed earlier improve your day?
- Why is it important to set aside time for things you enjoy?
- What happens when you ignore your need for self-care?
- How can taking small breaks help you be more productive?
- What did Ollie mean by a “body budget”?
- How do you know when you need to stop and recharge?
- What’s one thing you can change in your routine to feel more balanced?
- How can the S.T.A.R. strategy help you manage your time and responsibilities?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will create a personalized self-care plan using the S.T.A.R. strategy.



Activity: S.T.A.R. Self-Care Planning Worksheet

Introduce Activity

- “Today, we’re going to create a self-care planning sheet so that we can ensure that we’re taking care of our body budget and also balance our responsibilities.”

Instructions

- Distribute the S.T.A.R. Self-Care Planning worksheet (template provided).
- Guide students through filling out the worksheet:
 - i. Stop: Identify moments when they feel overwhelmed.
 - ii. Think: List what activities drain and restore your energy.
 - iii. Act: Plan small self-care actions to fit into their daily routine.
 - iv. Reflect: Write down how they will reflect on their self-care progress at the end of each week.
- Wrap-Up and Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Wrapping It Up

- “Great job today, everyone! We learned that balancing our responsibilities with self-care is important, and using the S.T.A.R. strategy can help us make thoughtful decisions about how we spend our time. What is one thing you learned today that you can start doing right away to take better care of yourself?”

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

Review and Reflection Overview:

- Have students reflect on their experiences and what they learned.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

Gather in a Circle for Reflection:



- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”
- What is one thing you learned today that you can start doing right away to take better care of yourself?
- Optional Discussion Question:
- “How can you help a friend who is feeling overwhelmed to take care of themselves?”

Closing

- “Great job today working on a self-care plan and thinking about what you need to be able to balance your body budget and your responsibilities.”

Home Connection Letter

Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. It explains that we learned about managing our body budget by considering our self-care.”
- 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 Chapter 17 of *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures* and learned about the importance of balancing responsibilities with self-care. Your child explored how managing their “body budget” by taking care of their well-being can improve their ability to focus, feel happy, and stay productive.

We also used the S.T.A.R. strategy, Stop, Think, Act, Reflect, to create personalized self-care plans. Please encourage your child to share their plan with you and discuss ways to support them in balancing their schedule.



Here are some questions you can ask your child:

- What activities help you feel recharged?
- What small change can we make to your routine to improve your energy?
- How can we use the S.T.A.R. strategy as a family to manage our time and emotions?

Thank you for your support in helping your child learn to balance responsibilities and self-care.

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. Self-Care Planning

STOP

What signs tell me I need a break?

(Examples: Feeling tired, frustrated, overwhelmed, or distracted)

THINK

What activities drain my energy?

(Examples: Too much homework, arguments, staying up late)

What activities help restore my energy?

(Examples: Playing with friends, reading a book, listening to music)

ACT

What small self-care actions can I add to my routine?

(Examples: Taking a 5-minute break, journaling, getting more sleep)

Who can I ask for help if I need support?

REFLECT

How will I track my progress and reflect on what works?

(Examples: Daily check-ins, using a journal, talking to a friend)

My Personal Goal for This Week:

This week, I will focus on

Reminder:

It's okay to take breaks! Managing your "body budget" means listening to yourself and balancing the things you have to do with things you want to do. Use the S.T.A.R. strategy whenever you need to stop, think, act, and reflect on how you feel.