

# ***Understanding Fairness and Justice***

Lesson Objective:

Students will explore the concepts of fairness and justice, understand the difference between fairness and equality, and learn how to apply the S.T.A.R. strategy through an interactive game and reflective discussion.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 28: Understanding Fairness and Justice
- Paper and pencils
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Fair or Just cards
- 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 fairness and justice

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

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

- "Today, we're going to dive into the concepts of fairness and justice. We'll talk about how they show up in everyday life and play a game that will help us understand the difference between the two. Let's start by thinking: What does it mean to be fair? Is it always the same as being just?"

### **Discussion Starter**

- "What is fairness? Can you give an example of a time when something was fair?"
- "What is justice? How is it different from fairness?"

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 28 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### Prepare the Children for the Story:

- “Now let’s read a chapter from \*The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures\* where the squad learns about fairness and what it means to be just.”

(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:

- Why did the students feel the relay race wasn’t fair?
- How did fairness and justice come up during the group’s project about ecosystems?
- What does Maya say about the difference between fairness and equality?
- How did Ollie and Maya act when they saw a student being excluded at recess?
- How can speaking up for fairness create change?
- What is the role of fairness in games, sports, and group work?
- How does the S.T.A.R. strategy help the friends promote fairness?
- What was the outcome of Maya and Ollie’s actions during recess?
- How can we tell when someone needs extra support to succeed?
- What lessons about fairness and justice do the friends plan to carry with them?

## Chapter 28: Understanding Fairness and Justice

With the end of the school year drawing closer, the friends were looking forward to field day, a school-wide event full of games and competitions. It was one of the highlights of the year, but something happened in the weeks leading up to it that made the friends think more deeply about fairness and justice.

In gym class, Mr. Richards was organizing the teams for one of the relay races, and some of the students began to argue about how the teams were divided. “It’s not fair,” one student complained. “All the fastest runners are on one team. That’s not going to be a fair race!” Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya were paying attention and realized that the idea of fairness wasn’t just about following the rules, it was also about making sure that everyone had an equal chance to succeed.

### Exploring Fairness and Justice

After gym class, the group gathered under a tree on the playground to talk about what they had just seen. “I guess I didn’t really think about how important fairness is until I saw that race setup,” Ollie said. “It wouldn’t be fun if one team was way stronger than the other.”

Betty agreed. “Fairness means giving everyone a chance to participate equally. It’s not fair if one team has all the best players, just like it’s not fair when people aren’t treated equally because of things they can’t control.”

Harriet added, “It’s kind of like justice. Justice is about making sure everyone is treated fairly, no matter who they are or where they come from.”

The friends realized that fairness and justice were important not just in sports but in every part of life, from the classroom to their relationships with others.

### Understanding the Difference Between Fairness and Equality

The group talked about how fairness and equality weren’t always the same thing. “Sometimes, being fair means giving people different things based on what they need,” Maya explained. “Like if someone needs extra time to finish a test, it’s fair to give it to them, even if not everyone gets that extra time.”

Buzz nodded. “Yeah, because everyone has different challenges. Treating everyone the exact same way might not always be fair.”

The friends agreed that fairness wasn’t just about making everything equal, it was about making sure everyone had what they needed to succeed.

### The S.T.A.R. Strategy for Fairness

The group decided to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to help them think more about fairness and justice:

Stop: They would pause to notice situations where things didn't seem fair or just.

Think: They would consider whether everyone involved had an equal chance to participate or succeed. Did anyone need something extra to make it fair?

Act: They would find ways to make the situation more fair, either by speaking up or by making changes.

Reflect: Afterward, they would reflect on whether their actions helped bring more fairness to the situation.

### Putting Fairness Into Practice

The friends had a chance to put their ideas about fairness into practice during a group assignment in class. Mr. Jenkins asked them to work on a project about ecosystems, and they quickly realized that some students had more experience with the topic than others.

"Not everyone knows as much about ecosystems," Bennie said. "Maybe we can divide the work so that everyone gets a chance to learn something new, instead of just letting the people who already know a lot do all the talking."

The friends agreed and made sure that each person in the group had a chance to contribute. They explained things to classmates who were less familiar with the topic and made sure everyone's voice was heard.

### Speaking Up for Justice

A few days later, Maya noticed that during recess, a group of students was excluding one of her classmates from a game. The student looked upset, and Maya remembered what they had talked about, how justice meant standing up for fairness, even when it was hard.

"I feel like I should say something," Maya said to her friends. "It's not fair to leave someone out just because they're different."

Ollie nodded. "I'll go with you. Let's make sure they know it's not right to exclude someone."

Maya and Ollie approached the group and suggested that everyone be included in the game. The students were a little hesitant at first, but after seeing that Maya and Ollie were willing to stand up for their classmate, they agreed to let the student join.

### Reflecting on What They Learned

At the end of the week, the friends reflected on what they had learned about fairness and justice. "Sometimes it's easy to notice when things aren't fair," Harriet said, "but it can be harder to figure out what to do about it."

Betty agreed. "That's why we need to be willing to speak up when we see something wrong.

Justice isn't just about noticing, it's about taking action to make things better."

Buzz added, “And we need to remember that fairness doesn’t always mean treating everyone the same. It’s about making sure everyone has what they need to succeed.”

The friends felt proud of the ways they had worked to bring more fairness and justice to their school. They knew that standing up for what was right wasn’t always easy, but it was an important part of building a strong and supportive community.

### Moving Forward

As the school year drew closer to its end, Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya carried with them the lessons they had learned about fairness and justice. They knew that being fair wasn’t always simple, but by using the S.T.A.R. strategy and thinking carefully about how their actions affected others, they could help create a world where everyone had an equal chance to succeed.

With their understanding of fairness and justice, the friends felt more confident in their ability to make a positive difference, not just for themselves, but for everyone around them.

### Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “This story shows us that fairness isn’t always the same for everyone. What one person needs might not be the same for another.”

### 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.

- Can you think of a time when you experienced or saw something unfair?
- How did it feel to be treated unfairly or see someone treated unfairly?
- What is the difference between treating everyone the same and being fair?
- Why might someone need extra support to have a fair chance at success?
- What does it mean to act justly?
- How can fairness and justice improve our school community?
- How does fairness apply to friendships and group work?
- How does the S.T.A.R. strategy help us act fairly?
- Why is it important to reflect on our actions after making decisions?
- How can small actions make a big difference in promoting fairness?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will learn to identify the difference between fairness (giving everyone the same thing) and justice (giving people what they need to succeed) through role-play scenarios.



### Activity: Fair or Just? Game

#### Introduce Activity

“Today we’re going to play a game called **‘Fair or Just?’**, but it’s more than just a game. It’s a way to think about how fairness and justice show up in real-life situations.

Let’s start with this:

**Fair** usually means everyone gets the same thing.

**Just** means everyone gets what they need to be successful, even if it’s not the same.

That means something can be fair but not just, or just but not exactly fair. Understanding the difference helps us become more thoughtful and respectful toward others.

Here’s how it will work:

- You’ll get into small groups of 3–4 students.
- Each group will draw a scenario card and read it out loud.
- You’ll talk together and decide: Is the situation fair, just, or neither?
- Then, one person from your group will share your decision with the class and explain your thinking.

You’ll get points for thoughtful answers *and* for participating respectfully in the discussion. Are you ready to explore what fairness and justice look like in real life?”

#### Instructions

- Divide students into small groups (3-4 students per group).
- -Provide each group with a set of “Fair or Just?” scenario cards (examples below).

- Use a visible scoreboard to keep track of points for correct answers and thoughtful reflections.
- How to Play:  
 Draw a Card: One student in each group draws a “Fair or Just?” scenario card.  
 Read and Discuss: The group reads the scenario and discusses whether the solution described is fair, just, or neither.  
 Present: One student presents the group’s decision to the class, explaining their reasoning.  
 Class Discussion: After the presentation, the teacher invites other students to share whether they agree or disagree.  
 Score: Groups earn a point for thoughtful answers and another point for respectful class discussion.

Closing Discussion (5 minutes):

### Sharing



- “Let’s hear what your group decided!

When it’s your group’s turn, tell us the scenario you discussed and whether you thought it was fair, just, or neither, and most importantly, *why*.

After your explanation, we’ll open it up to the rest of the class to see if others agree or have different thoughts.

Let’s be sure to listen respectfully, even if we don’t all agree.”

*Encourage students to use sentence starters like:*

- “We think this is just because...”
- “It might seem fair, but...”
- “This could be unfair to some students because...”

## Wrapping It Up

- “Today, we practiced looking at situations from more than one point of view.
- Sometimes fairness and justice look different depending on what someone needs, not just what everyone gets.
- When we slow down and think about how our actions affect others, we become more thoughtful, caring, and respectful, whether in the classroom, on the playground, or out in the world.
- You all did a wonderful job thinking deeply and working together.”

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 sit in a circle to reflect together. When we sit in a circle, it reminds us that every voice matters.

I’d like each of you to finish this sentence:

**‘One thing I learned about fairness or justice today is...’**

You might share something your group talked about, something that surprised you, or a new way of thinking.

If you want to pass, that’s okay too. Let’s take turns and show each other kindness as we listen.”

## Closing

- “You now have the power to notice fairness and justice in your everyday life.
- Whether someone needs extra time, extra help, or a different approach, it doesn’t mean things are unfair. It might mean we’re working toward what’s truly right for *everyone*.
- Keep asking questions, keep showing empathy, and remember: Fair isn’t always equal, and equal isn’t always fair.”



## Home Connection Letter

### **Sending Information Home:**

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. It explains that students participated in an activity called *“Fair or Just?”* where they explored real-world scenarios and practiced identifying the difference between fairness and justice. In small groups, students discussed whether each situation was fair (everyone gets the same), just (everyone gets what they need), or neither, and reflected on how different perspectives affect how we experience fairness.
- 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 an interactive lesson about fairness and justice. Through discussions, reading, and a game, students explored the difference between fairness (giving everyone the same) and justice (giving people what they need to succeed). They also practiced using the S.T.A.R. strategy to reflect on fairness in different situations.



You can continue the conversation at home by:

- Asking your child to explain the difference between fairness and justice.
- Discussing ways your family can promote fairness at home or in your community.
- Encouraging your child to notice and act when they see unfair situations.

Thank you for supporting your child's growth and learning!

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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At the school bake sale, each student is given the same amount of money to spend, even though some students brought in more baked goods to sell.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

A teacher gives more attention to students who are struggling in class and less to those who are excelling.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

A student with difficulty participating in group activities is allowed to work alone, while other students must work in groups.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

During a group project, the teacher allows one student to work alone because they find group work overwhelming and need space to focus.  
Is this fair, just, or neither?

Only students who raise their hands frequently are chosen to be line leaders or helpers, even though some students are shy or take longer to speak up.  
Is this fair, just, or neither?

A student who misses a homework assignment due to family responsibilities is given another chance to complete it, while another student who forgot is not.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

Everyone gets the same amount of recess time, even though some students finish their classwork faster than others.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

Two students arrive late to school. One overslept, and the other had to care for a younger sibling before coming to school. They both get the same consequence for being tardy.  
Is this fair, just, or neither?

At a classroom celebration, every student receives the same snack—even though one student has a food allergy and can't eat it.  
Is this fair, just, or neither?

All students are required to complete a science project at home, even though some don't have access to supplies or internet outside of school.  
Is this fair, just, or neither?

<p>A group project is graded equally, even though not everyone contributed the same amount of work.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>Everyone in the class receives the same participation award, regardless of their effort or involvement.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>During a class raffle, each student gets one ticket, even though some students donated extra items to the class supply drive.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>All students are required to complete the same number of chores during a school trip, even though some students have physical limitations.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>A student who works hard but struggles academically receives extra encouragement from the teacher, while the top-performing student does not.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>

<p>The school provides free lunch only for students who meet certain financial criteria.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>A student who consistently arrives late to class loses points from their participation grade, but another student who has transportation challenges does not.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>A student with difficulty focusing gets to take their test in a quieter room.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>During a talent show, all performers are judged using the same criteria, even though they are showcasing different types of talents (like singing, juggling, and magic).</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>
<p>All students are expected to stay silent during quiet reading time, even though one student has trouble sitting still and staying quiet for long periods.</p> <p>- Is this fair, just, or neither?</p>

Everyone in the class gets the same amount of homework, even though some students need more time to finish.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

Everyone in the class gets the same amount of time to complete a math test, even though some students have learning accommodations.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

During field day, students with physical disabilities are given different activities to participate in instead of the same ones as everyone else.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

A teacher offers a bonus question on a test that only students who finished early have time to answer.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

All students are assigned to read the same book for a class project, even though some students are at different reading levels.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

A student with a broken leg gets extra time to finish a race.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

During recess, a group decides to let every student take a turn playing, even if they aren't very good at the game.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

The teacher gives extra help to students who struggle with reading, even though not all students receive extra help.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

A student brings snacks for only their closest friends, leaving others out.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?

: A classmate who missed school due to illness is given extra time to finish an assignment.  
- Is this fair, just, or neither?