

CITIZEN POWER

PEOPLE POWER

ATTITUDE POWER

BRAIN POWER

FEELINGS POWER

# SEL KERNELS

**Building Skills for Learning and Life**

EASEL lab

SEL KERNELS



## What are SEL Kernels?

Kernels are activities or strategies used by effective prevention programs that have been shown to effect specific behavior changes. Drawing from a content analysis of 25 leading social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, we pulled strategies and practices common to programs and designed them to fit the Kernels model. These kernels of practice represent a **smaller scale, personalized approach to SEL**, and aim to provide teachers with a menu of needs- and preference-based strategies that are quick, targeted, effective, and easy to integrate into everyday classroom practice.

### CREATED BY

Stephanie M. Jones and the EASEL Lab at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

### ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Willa Peragine

### WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM

Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SEL KERNELS:

Stephanie M. Jones, [stephanie\\_m\\_jones@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:stephanie_m_jones@gse.harvard.edu)

Christine Park, [christine\\_park@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:christine_park@gse.harvard.edu)





# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## ABOUT

In every classroom there are students with diverse learning needs. Accommodations, or task modifications, enable all students to demonstrate their knowledge without changing task content. Accommodations are often made in six areas: **instruction, scheduling, setting, materials, student response, and relationships.**

In response to teachers' requests for additional information, the following cards provide general best practices for all learners as well as specific tips for trauma-affected students, students with learning disabilities and/or developmental delay(s), and emergent bilingual learners.

In addition to the following cards, each individual Kernel card includes specific tips for success for using the Kernel effectively with a variety of learners. These are marked by icons representing learner-specificity. A key for the "Tips for Success" icons is below:

- ★ all learners (general)
- ♥ trauma-affected
- 👤 students with learning disabilities and/or developmental delay(s)
- 🌐 emergent bilingual learners

The following practices were collected from academic publications, parent/teacher resource centers, and child advocacy group websites.

We encourage you to **adapt these Kernels as you see fit** in order to make them relevant for your students and their context. We also encourage you to **check out the resources on the back of this card** for more tips and ideas.

# FOR MORE TIPS...

## RESOURCE LIST

**THE IRIS CENTER** is supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and is located at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, where it develops and disseminates free, engaging online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to support the education of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/iris-resource-locator/>

**ALL KINDS OF MINDS** provides a Learning Library with strategies for helping students with learning challenges overcome obstacles to mastering different skills and tasks, and case studies that illustrate strategies in action: <http://www.allkindsofminds.org/put-it-into-practice>

**WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE** was established by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central, independent, and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

**TeachingLD** is a service of the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children, and provides strategy tutorials and "current alerts" that list best practice strategies and the state of their current evidence base: <http://www.teachingld.org/>

**UC DAVIS STUDENT PROJECT** describes many types of disabilities and provides resource and teaching strategies organized by disability: <https://sites.google.com/a/ucdavis.edu/teaching-students-with-disabilities/home/idea-disabilities/developmental-delay>

**SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDE** provides support and resources for parents and teachers via links to external websites: <https://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/tools-and-research/support-and-resources-for-parents-and-teachers/>



# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR ALL LEARNERS

### INSTRUCTION...

**Model behaviors**, procedures, strategies, and language. Demonstrate thought processes and appropriate responses in a variety of situations and settings.

**Use clear, simple language** to explain the purpose for rules and expectations.

**Incorporate student interests** into activities and examples.

**Include information in instructions** that answers the following questions:

- How much do I need to do?
- What exactly do I need to do?
- When do I need to do it?
- What is the reason for doing it?

**Contextualize** activities by explicitly connecting new concepts to previous learning and students' daily lives:

- Ask students to brainstorm what they already know about a topic.
- Use graphic organizers or visuals (e.g., pictures, charts, objects, timelines, etc.) to connect concepts.
- Use activities that are relevant to students' cultural experiences.

### SETTING...

**Provide a safe physical space** the child can go to calm down or express emotions without needing to ask permission. Encourage activities like drawing or journaling that encourage emotion expression.

**Incorporate group work** into activities to provide opportunities for peer modeling and use of comprehension clues:

- Prepare students for group work by role-playing appropriate behaviors.
- Assign partners with specific tasks, and pair students who struggle with partners who can model positive prosocial and communication skills.

**\*Note:** These are general tips for high quality instruction for all Kernels. They can be applied to Kernels when relevant.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR ALL LEARNERS

### STUDENT RESPONSE...

Provide students with options to **demonstrate their learning**. Offer a variety of methods for students to receive and express information:

- Allow flexible scheduling for students who need more time to complete tasks, practice, etc.
- Allow additional opportunities for questions.

### MATERIALS...

Make learning opportunities **explicit and concrete**. Demonstrate instructions, use visual aids, and prioritize hands-on materials and experiences.



# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR TRAUMA-AFFECTED STUDENTS

### INSTRUCTION...

Keep confidential notes about **students' triggers** and try to avoid putting them in situations that may cause distress. When possible, communicate with students *before* changes that may be triggering.

**Model** social cue interpretation, problem solving, and conflict resolution:

- Make explicit connections between **Kernel**s and their potential uses when demanding situations arise.
- Model self-talk and appropriate reactions (e.g., staying calm, taking deep breaths).

### SCHEDULING...

Strive to make classroom life as **predictable and safe as possible**.

Take measures that help the student know what to expect throughout the day and who they can reach out to for help:

- Create a plan to identify strategies the student can use to cope when they're anxious or stressed, including places in the classroom they can go or calming activities they can do.

### SETTING...

Provide the student with **space** to calm down or express emotion. Designate a safe physical space the child can go to without needing to ask permission. Once there, allow the student to engage in activities that express their feelings, like drawing or journaling-

**Boost positive emotion** during activities by creating a visually and auditorily calming environment (for example, by playing music or calming sounds, dimming the lights, or allowing students to adjust their seating arrangements).

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR TRAUMA-AFFECTED STUDENTS

### RELATIONSHIPS...

**Focus on student strengths**, which can enhance their sense of self-worth, particularly for children who may have experienced adversity.

**Empathize** with the challenges students face, be sensitive to their circumstances, and provide positive affirmation that acknowledges how those circumstances affect their lives. Be aware of students' diverse resources and relationships (e.g., living arrangements) and validate children's responses that may reflect these experiences.

**Plan a short, daily morning meeting** to check-in with (all or certain) students to inquire about how they are feeling that day, as well as sleeping and eating habits. This fosters an empathic relationship, providing the opportunity for the child to talk to a trusted adult and for the adult to support the student appropriately.

### STUDENT RESPONSE...

**Provide students with as much choice as possible** within activities to help them feel comfortable and in control.

**Ask open-ended questions** to encourage students to share their feelings without feeling that assumptions have already been made. For example, "Has something about today been hard for you?" may be more productive than "It looks like you're having a bad day. Is that true?"





# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES\*

### INSTRUCTION...

**Model** behaviors, procedures, and cognitive strategies, such as “thinking aloud.”

**Break newer, more complex tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces.**

**Use clear, simple language** to explain reasons for rules in classroom activities and games.

**Reinforce positive student behaviors** by providing frequent opportunities for success. Utilize familiar activities and praise appropriate behaviors.

**Provide students with immediate feedback** to motivate them to keep trying.

**Encourage self-regulation through student self-monitoring.** Self-monitoring strategies involve identifying problematic behaviors, generating replacement behaviors, and creating tools for the student to assess progress toward goals.

### SETTING...

**Provide the student with one-on-one instruction** either before or after presenting to the whole group, or provide support during group work to ensure they understand the instructions.

### SCHEDULING...

**Diversify the structure of activities** to foster motivation:

- Alternate more- and less-challenging activities.
- Allow the student to take breaks if needed to prevent overstimulation.

\*This section includes best practices for working with **students with learning disabilities and/or developmental delays**. For more information on these terms, see Strategy Guide, page 20.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES\*

### MATERIALS...

Use **visual cues** that guide students through physical spaces and abstract schedules:

- Use signs to mark that a multi-use space is being used for a particular purpose at a specific time (e.g., if a space is used for both snack time and Kernels, display the powers when its being used for Kernels).
- Use graphic organizers to highlight important concepts and diminish the child's focus on minute details.

**Allow children to stand at a table** or use an easel when painting or drawing if preferable. This allows for wider arm movements that originate from the shoulders, which is often easier for students whose smaller hand and wrist muscles have yet to develop.

### RELATIONSHIPS...

Foster **structured, positive social interactions** between students with disabilities and other students in the classroom to give the student opportunities to practice prosocial skills, like how to converse with classmates appropriately, or when to ask the teacher a question.

### STUDENT RESPONSE...

Be **flexible with day-to-day variations in student performance** – when a student's performance on one day doesn't mirror the previous day, recognize that the learning process is non-linear.



# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL LEARNERS

### INSTRUCTION...

**Provide sentence frames.** Sentence and question starters like “Today I feel \_\_\_\_\_” can reduce stress, encourage focus on key parts of a lesson, and help introduce important vocabulary.

**Monitor vocabulary** to help students understand instructions:

- Use high-frequency words (e.g., sit, think, partner).
- Use cognates to connect vocabulary to students’ home languages (e.g., fantastic/fantástico).

**Explain unfamiliar terms** whenever possible.

**Use longer pauses** between sentences and ideas to allow students to process content and language. For example, after asking a question, say, “I’ll call on someone to answer in a few minutes, but first, take some time to think about it.”

**Increase student reading comprehension** by explicitly teaching strategies to help decipher difficult language and content.

**Use multicultural literature** to increase student interest.

### STUDENT RESPONSE...

**Differentiate instruction** by offering students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning:

- Offer a range of choices to express understanding (e.g., write a song or poem, stage a performance).
- Permit the student to work independently or in a group to complete an activity.

### RELATIONSHIPS...

**Be sensitive** to different communication styles and recognize different cultural norms around personal space, touching, and eye contact.

BACK



EASEL  
lab



# FEELINGS CIRCLE



KINDERGARTEN

**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Feelings Face Cards (optional)

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a song the class likes to sing together.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What do feelings feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

»» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use basic emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings?
- Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- Do animals have feelings? How do you know?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...


Kindergarten is a time to build awareness of basic emotions and the words we use to describe them. A learning objective for the kindergarten year is to begin to help kids think about what they feel and why they feel that way (i.e., what causes specific feelings). There are no right or wrong answers; students should explore these ideas in an open-ended way.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Use the Feelings Face Cards to support learning. Focus on the basic emotions first: happy, sad, mad, and scared. Show the Feelings Face cards and discuss how each emotion looks, sounds, and feels.

**As students become familiar with feelings words, begin to encourage students to think about and describe why they feel the way they feel** (i.e., what happened to make you feel that way?).

**When students are ready for more, begin to explore how we respond to feelings.** Add into your circle time a discussion about how we can respond to others' emotions in familiar classroom situations. Have the group brainstorm different ways to respond when others share their feelings (e.g., offer a hug, offer a listening ear, offer to play together, ask for help, etc.).

# FEELINGS CIRCLE



FIRST GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

WHY DO THIS?

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a song the class likes to sing together.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What do feelings feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

»» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use basic emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).

MATERIALS

✂ Feelings Face Cards (optional)

**IF WE...**

talk about feelings...

FEELINGS CIRCLE

**THEN WE...**

can better understand ourselves and others...

**SO WE...**

can regulate and use our emotions to learn and play with others.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings?
- Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- Do animals have feelings? How do you know?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

First grade is a time to continue building awareness of basic emotions and the words we use to describe them. A learning objective for the first grade year is to begin to help kids think about what they feel and why they feel that way (i.e., what causes specific feelings). There are no right or wrong answers; students should explore these ideas in an open-ended way.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Use the Feelings Face Cards to support learning. Focus on the basic emotions first: happy, sad, mad, and scared. Show the Feelings Faces cards and discuss how each emotion looks, sounds, and feels.

**As students become familiar with feelings words, begin to encourage students to think about and describe why they feel the way they feel** (i.e., what happened to make you feel that way?).

**When students are ready for more, begin to explore how we respond to feelings.** Add into your circle time a discussion about how we can respond to others' emotions in familiar classroom situations. Have the group brainstorm different ways to respond when others share their feelings (e.g., offer a hug, offer a listening ear, offer to play together, ask for help, etc.).



# FEELINGS CIRCLE



SECOND GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 None required.

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a song the class likes to sing together.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: "What are feelings? How do you know how you're feeling? What do feelings feel like in your body?"
4. After some discussion, ask, "How are you feeling today?" Ask volunteers to share why.

» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words (e.g., excited, anxious, curious, embarrassed, shy, confused, thrilled).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- Do animals have feelings? How do you know?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling?
- What's the difference between [feeling 1] and [feeling 2] (e.g., sad and worried)? Do they feel the same in your body? What are some other words that describe [feeling 1]? How about [feeling 2]?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Second grade is a time to expand feelings vocabulary and connect emotions to reading and writing. A learning objective for the year is to increase students' emotions vocabulary, and to encourage students to use rich emotion words in their academic writing and discussion.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Create a feelings word wall and add new words to it throughout the year. Refer to it when you're reading and during writing activities. This works best when you use it often and allow students to talk about differences between words (e.g., what's the difference between scared and anxious?) and to explore characters' feelings in books and articles (e.g., what word describes how you think X is feeling?)

**Throughout the year, encourage students to think about and describe why they feel the way they feel** (i.e., what happened to make you feel that way?). This helps students understand the causes and consequences of feelings.

**When students are ready for more, explore how we respond to feelings.** Add a discussion about how we can respond to others' emotions. Have the group brainstorm different ways to respond when others share their feelings (e.g., offer a hug, offer a listening ear, offer to play together, etc.).

# FEELINGS CIRCLE



THIRD GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 None required.

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a mindfulness or visualization activity..
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What does it feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words over the year (e.g., trepidation, shame, uncertainty, glee, enamored, elated).

» **CAN ADAPT:** Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling? Why is it important that you do this?
- What's the difference between [feeling 1] and [feeling 2] (e.g., sad and worried)? Do they feel the same in your body? What are some other words that describe [feeling 1]? How about [feeling 2]?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Third grade is a time to explore the causes and consequences of emotions – for example, how feelings impact behavior. A learning objective for the third grade year is to begin to understand how feelings influence our thoughts, words, and actions, as well as those of others.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Create a feelings word wall and add new words to it throughout the year. Refer to it when you're reading, writing, or solving a problem. This is a way to connect feelings words to other times of the day and build a rich and sophisticated vocabulary. This works best when you use it often throughout the day.

**Throughout the year, encourage students to think about and describe how feelings impact behavior.** Some ideas for discussion topics and activities:

- Invite students to write about a time that feelings seemed “in control” of their thoughts, words or actions. What happened to cause this situation? How did it feel? How did you respond?
- Invite students to write or draw a “cause and effect” diagram for different types of feelings. For example, “When I feel proud/shy/silly, it affects me in this way...”
- Invite students to make a drawing or painting in which they associate specific colors with different feelings. Have each student add multiple describing words to each emotion.

# FEELINGS CIRCLE



FOURTH GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 None required.

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a mindfulness or visualization activity.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What does it feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

»» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words over the year (e.g., trepidation, shame, uncertainty, glee, enamored, elated).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- Can you tell what another person is feeling? How can you tell?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling? Why is it important that you do this?
- What's the difference between [feeling 1] and [feeling 2] (e.g., sad and worried)? Do they feel the same in your body? What are some other words that describe [feeling 1]? How about [feeling 2]?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Fourth grade is a time to continue exploring the causes and consequences of emotions, and link them to problem solving and conflict resolution. A learning objective for the fourth grade year is to understand how feelings influence our thoughts, words and actions, as well as those of others.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Create a feelings word wall and add new words to it throughout the year. Refer to it when you're reading, writing, or solving a problem. This is a way to connect feelings words to other times of the day and build a rich and sophisticated vocabulary. Support students to identify how they are feeling when a conflict arises, for example by giving an "I Message" and using words on the word wall, if needed.

**Throughout the year, encourage students to use feelings words in classroom situations when conflict, disagreement, or challenges arise.** Add into your circle time a discussion about how students can use a rich feelings vocabulary to better understand their own experiences and the experiences, views, perspectives, needs, and wants of others: *"Describing how you feel to your peers helps them understand you better and support you when needed."* Take turns giving "I Messages" and saying it back, to encourage empathy and perspective taking. Then take turns coming up with possible "win-win" solutions that work for everyone involved.

# FEELINGS CIRCLE



FIFTH GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 None required.

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a mindfulness or visualization activity.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What does it feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words over the year (e.g., trepidation, shame, uncertainty, glee, enamored, elated).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling? Why is this important?
- Do your feelings affect your behavior? What can they make you do?
- Did [historical figure] have feelings? How do you think he/she/they felt during [historical event]? What did those feelings cause him/her/them do?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Fifth grade is a time to weave emotions into other learning activities and broader conversations about the world – for example, how emotions motivate social, political, civic, and historical events.

**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Have students write feelings poems:

1. Using a metaphor, have them describe their feeling, comparing it to a person, place, or thing that is meaningful to them. Give a few examples (e.g., \_ is a train; \_ is a pillow; \_ is a lion on the prowl, etc.).
2. Then, list characteristics of the second noun, place or thing. Example: "Excitement is a train (fast, moving, destination, track)."
3. Then, extend the metaphor by answering the questions: Who? What? Where? And Why? Or How? About the comparison. Example: "Excitement is a train / Moving fast along the track / Its destination anticipated / Quickly reaching impact."

**As students expand their feelings vocabulary, encourage students to think about why they feel the way they feel** (i.e., what are the causes and consequences?).

**Explore how emotions provide fuel or motivation for behavior and events.** Add into your circle time a discussion about how feelings influence words and actions. Have the group brainstorm different examples of how emotions motivate social, political, civic, and historical events.



# FEELINGS CIRCLE



SIXTH GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A group meeting to share feelings.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Building feelings vocabulary and emotion knowledge.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 None required.

## THE BIG IDEA

**Coming together to talk about our feelings helps us learn about emotions and build our feelings vocabulary. Talking about feelings helps us to better understand ourselves and build stronger relationships.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a time to do this 15-minute routine (suggested: morning meeting, pre-academics, after recess).
2. Gather students to sit or stand in a circle and greet them as they join. You might begin the circle with a mindfulness or visualization activity.
3. Start by saying **THE BIG IDEA** and then take a few minutes to discuss the following: “What are feelings? How do you know how you’re feeling? What does it feel like in your body?”
4. After some discussion, ask, “How are you feeling today?” Ask volunteers to share why.

» **MUST DO:** Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to share. Expand feelings vocabulary by introducing more complex feelings words over the year (e.g., trepidation, shame, uncertainty, glee, enamored, elated).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, scared, mad), or metaphoric expressions (e.g., weather metaphor: sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, etc.), or rate your mood on your fingers (5 fingers = excellent mood; 1 finger = terrible mood).



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- What was it like to share your feelings? Are there times you don't want to share your feelings?
- What times at school or home do you need to share how you're feeling? Why is this important?
- Do your feelings affect your behavior? What can they make you do?
- Did [historical figure] have feelings? How do you think he/she/they felt during [historical event]? What did those feelings cause him/her/them do?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage responses in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, share the prompt ahead of time so they can think about their answer.



Allow students to share or pass on their turn depending on their level of comfort.


## OVER THE YEAR...

Sixth grade is a time to continue to weave emotions into other learning activities and understand their links to broader conversations about the world and events.


**To start, focus on building familiarity with different feelings words.** Have students write feelings poems:

1. Using a metaphor, have them describe their feeling, comparing it to a person, place, or thing that is meaningful to them. Give a few examples (e.g., \_ is a train; \_ is a pillow; \_ is a lion on the prowl, etc.).
2. Then, list characteristics of the second noun, place or thing. Example: "Excitement is a train (fast, moving, destination, track)."
3. Then, extend the metaphor by answering the questions: Who? What? Where? And Why? Or How? About the comparison. Example: "Excitement is a train / Moving fast along the track / Its destination anticipated / Quickly reaching impact."

**Explore how emotions provide fuel or motivation for individual behavior and group events.** Add into your circle time a discussion about how feelings influence words and actions. Have the group brainstorm different examples of how emotions motivate social, political, civic, and historical events. For example, when learning about history, science, or social studies, ask how individuals might have been feeling in moments of discovery, change, revolution, tragedy, etc. Ask about the feelings of different characters at different moments in the story/narrative – and how those feelings were tied to behavior or action.



# COOL KID



KINDERGARTEN

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

IF WE...

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

COOL KID

THEN WE...

will know our strengths and use them often...

SO WE...

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.


### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

»» **MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

 Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Kindergarten is a time to build awareness of others – to see positive things in others and their behavior. It is also a time to build a positive self-concept – an awareness of one’s strengths.


**Start by modeling giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**As students become familiar with the process of compliment giving,** challenge them to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I like how you offer to share with me” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Explain that Cool Kid is about celebrating *who you are*, not what you have.

**Depending on student preferences,** create a Cool Kid crown or hat instead of awarding a certificate so that the student can wear this on Friday (or throughout the week).

**Lastly,** have students share the compliments they remember being given from the year.

# COOL KID



FIRST GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

**IF WE...**

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

**COOL KID**

**THEN WE...**

will know our strengths and use them often...

**SO WE...**

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

**»» MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

**↪ CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...


First grade is a time to continue building awareness of others and build the language to give and receive compliments (e.g., I like how you... I appreciate that you... Thank you, etc.).

**Start by modeling giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*


**As students become familiar with the process of compliment giving,** challenge them to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I like how you offer to share with me” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Explain that Cool Kid is about celebrating *who you are*, not what you have.

**Depending on student preferences,** create a Cool Kid crown or hat instead of awarding a certificate so that the student can wear this on Friday (or throughout the week).

**Lastly,** have students share the compliments they remember being given from the year.



# COOL KID



SECOND GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

**IF WE...**

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

**COOL KID**

**THEN WE...**

will know our strengths and use them often...

**SO WE...**

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.


### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

**»» MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

**↪ CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

 Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Second grade is a time to expand compliment vocabulary and connect the process of complimenting to reading and writing activities. For example, use sentence strips such as “I notice you...” or “I appreciate that...” and put them in places where students see them daily.


**Model giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out often when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**As students become familiar with the process of compliment giving,** challenge them to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I appreciate that you invite me to play at recess” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Explain that Cool Kid is about celebrating *who you are*, not what you have. Students can practice this in small groups, giving compliments to each person in their group.

**Throughout the year,** create a space in the classroom where students can share compliments and praise for each other. For example, a bulletin board, post-its, a white board, or compliment box. Students can also use a journal to capture the compliments they receive from others.



# COOL KID



**THIRD GRADE**

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

**IF WE...**

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

**COOL KID**

**THEN WE...**

will know our strengths and use them often...

**SO WE...**

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.


### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.) .
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

**»» MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

**↪ CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

 Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Third grade is a time to begin exploring how complimenting and affirming others can impact feelings and behavior – for the compliment giver as well as the receiver.

**Model giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out often when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**As students become familiar with the process of compliment giving,** challenge them to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I appreciate that you invite me to play at recess” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Explain that Cool Kid is about celebrating *who you are*, not what you have. Students can practice this in small groups, giving compliments to each person in their group.

**Throughout the year,** create a space in the classroom where students can share compliments and praise for each other. For example, a bulletin board, stack of post-its, a white board, or a compliment box. Invite students to journal about the compliments they receive from others, and to write about how it makes them feel when they give or receive meaningful compliments.

# COOL KID



FOURTH GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Cool Kid Certificate

## THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

» **MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...


Fourth grade is a time to continue exploring how affirming one another leads to improved behavior, relationships, and can help in conflict resolution.

**Model giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out often when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**As students become familiar with the process of compliment giving,** challenge them to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I appreciate that you invite me to play at recess” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Explain that Cool Kid is about celebrating *who you are*, not what you have. Students can practice this in small groups, giving compliments to each person in their group.

**Throughout the year,** create a space in the classroom where students can share compliments and praise for each other. For example, a bulletin board, stack of post-its, a white board, or a compliment box. Invite students to journal about the compliments they receive from others, and to write about how giving compliments help build relationships with one another.

# COOL KID



FIFTH GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

**IF WE...**

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

**COOL KID**

**THEN WE...**

will know our strengths and use them often...

**SO WE...**

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

»» **MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

✂ Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...


Fifth grade is a time to connect compliments to other academic activities, such as giving constructive feedback on others' work.

**Model giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out often when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**Over the year,** challenge students to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I notice that you always put 110% into everything you do” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Create a space in the classroom where students can share compliments and praise for each other. For example, a bulletin board, stack of post-its, a white board, or a compliment box.

**Help students connect compliments to giving constructive feedback on academic and other activities.** For example, when giving feedback on essays or math work, ask students to give two compliments (identify at least two specific things the other person did well) before offering advice for improvement.

# COOL KID



SIXTH GRADE

**WHAT IS IT?** A routine to celebrate each student in the class.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Giving compliments and effective praise to each person.

### WHY DO THIS?

**IF WE...**

notice and call out each others' positive actions and attributes...

**COOL KID**

**THEN WE...**

will know our strengths and use them often...

**SO WE...**

can have a strong and cooperative classroom community for all.

### THE BIG IDEA

Everyone gets a chance to be the Cool Kid. When you are the Cool Kid we will all look for things you do well and gather compliments to share at the end of the day/week. When we notice and share each others' positive actions and attributes, then we build each other up and create a stronger classroom community.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Randomly select a Cool Kid at the start of each day (e.g., pull names from a bag). Once everyone has had a chance to be Cool Kid, select a Cool Kid once a week.
2. Let the class know who the Cool Kid is for the day/week and say **THE BIG IDEA**. Have a way to identify who the Cool Kid is (e.g., button, cape, hat). You may choose special jobs or privileges for the Cool Kid (e.g., door holder, line leader, etc.).
3. Explain that all day/throughout the week, everyone will look for compliments to give the Cool Kid (e.g., helping, following directions, being kind, being a good friend). Even minor things are worth noticing and calling out.
4. Make a space in the room where you can gather or post compliments throughout the day/week. At the end of the day/week, share compliments out loud. Choose the three most meaningful to put on the certificate. Then, send the certificate home with the Cool Kid.

»» **MUST DO:** Has to be random and all children must be Cool Kid the same number of times. Should not be contingent on behavior, grades, or anything else. Some kids don't receive much positive affirmation, and this is about affirming the value or worth of every child.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How you gather, post, and celebrate compliments. When and how you celebrate.

### MATERIALS

✂ Cool Kid Certificate



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- **Cool Kid** – How did it feel to receive compliments? What did you notice? What did your peers notice that you might not have realized about yourself?
- **Everyone else** – How did it feel to give compliments to the Cool Kid? What did you pay attention to in order to compliment the Cool Kid? When are some other times we can say encouraging words to each other? At home? At school? On the playground? Can you think of a specific compliment someone gave to you that made you feel especially good? Why did it make you feel this way?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Allow or encourage students to give compliments in home languages.



For those who might need extra time, give them more time to think of compliments and support them in noticing compliments as needed.



Allow students to be celebrated as a class or in private depending on their level of comfort.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Sixth grade is a time to continue connecting compliments to academic activities and broader role in the community, such as giving feedback on work, sports, music, etc.

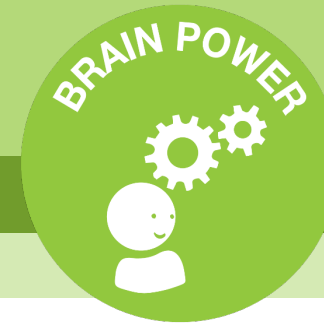
**Model giving compliments to students in the class.** Notice and call out often when students are showing positive behavior, as a way to affirm all students and to show what compliments look, sound, and feel like. *Give each child at least one specific compliment per day.*

**Over the year,** challenge students to give more meaningful compliments to each other (e.g., “I notice that you always put 110% into everything you do” vs. “I like your t-shirt”). Create a space in the classroom where students can share compliments and praise for each other. For example, a bulletin board, stack of post-its, a white board, or a compliment box.

**Help students connect compliments to giving constructive feedback on academic, art, sport, and other activities.** For example, when giving feedback on essays or math work, ask students to give two compliments (identify at least two specific things the other person did well) before offering advice for improvement.



# BRAIN GAMES (general info)



ALL GRADES

**WHAT ARE THEY?** Whole-group or whole-class games.

**WHAT ARE THEY ABOUT?** Practicing and building executive function (EF) skills.

## WHY DO THESE?



## MATERIALS

 Brain Games pack

## THE BIG IDEA

Playing Brain Games helps us to build our “brain powers,” or EF skills.

## THREE “BRAIN POWERS”:



**FOCUS** - The ability to sustain attention and ignore distractions when needed.



**REMEMBER** - The ability to keep track of, update, and use information over short periods of time.



**STOP & THINK** - The ability to control impulses and to “think before you act”.

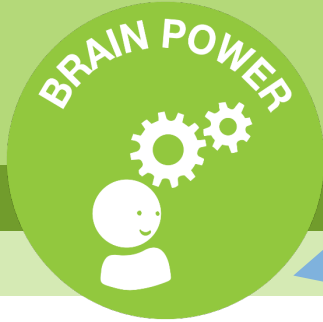
**Executive function (EF) skills** are the mental processes required to focus, plan, and control behavioral responses in order to reach a goal.

### They’re important because...

They help students to listen carefully, follow directions, use self-control, and think flexibly. These basic skills are foundational for academic achievement, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and critical thinking.

## WHERE CAN I FIND THE BRAIN GAMES?

Brain Games instructions can be found in the Brain Games pack and/or Strategy Guide, pages 107-142. **The following three cards introduce each “brain power” and an accompanying hand signal** that you can use as a nonverbal cue/reminder to your students to use their Focus, Remember, and Stop & Think powers throughout the school day, without interrupting instruction.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

(more specific questions on each game card)

- What was hard or easy about this game?
- What skills did you use to play this game?
- Did you use any strategies to play this game?
- When are other times during the day that we need to use these skills and strategies? At home? At school? On the playground?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ★ Before playing, take time to introduce the three powers and discuss why they're important. Practice the hand signals together, and brainstorm when they can be used at school/home.
- ★ Model with a small group first. Try out the game with a group of 2-3 students while the rest watch.
- ★ During and after the game, talk about feelings that arise. Help students recognize feelings are a normal part of school and life.
- ★ Celebrate Brain Powers all day. Talk about them and how they're used throughout the day, and notice and celebrate when students use them!

### OVER THE YEAR...

- Ask deeper and more meaningful follow up questions in your debrief. Ask students to share why it might be hard or easy to focus, remember, or stop and think in the context of real life situations.
- Have students volunteer to lead the games.
- Ask students to create their own adaptations and share them with the class.
- Break students into teams to play games and develop cooperation skills where possible.
- Incorporate more academic content into game play.
- Adapt the hand signals to fit the interests and age group of your students (e.g., turn fist next to temple as if switching on a part of the brain = Focus Power for older students).

#### FOCUS POWER GAMES:

- I Spy
- Catch That Sound
- My Hat Has Three Corners
- Who Stole the Honey Pot?
- Zip, Zap, Zop
- Hocus, Pocus, Everybody Focus

#### REMEMBER POWER GAMES:

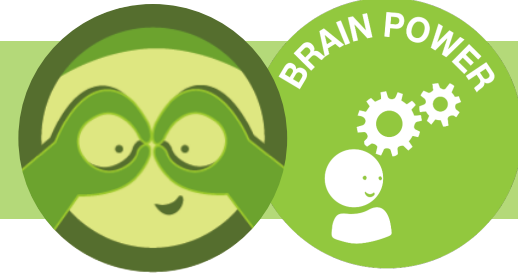
- Name Game
- What is Missing?
- Wiggle Cool Down
- Hot Potato
- Shipwreck

#### STOP & THINK GAMES:

- Simon Says
- Silly Stories
- Singing with Style
- Freeze Feelings
- Wait For It



# FOCUS POWER



## WHAT IS FOCUS?

**The ability to sustain attention and ignore distractions when needed.**

## WHY FOCUS IS IMPORTANT:

It helps students to listen and follow instructions, stay engaged in classroom activities, and persist even when interrupted or when facing challenges. Students also use focus power to pay attention to others and have engaging conversations with peers.

## THINGS THAT HELP US FOCUS:

- **Covering my ears** to keep out distracting noises.
- **Putting on my Focus Binoculars** and pointing them in the direction of what I'm supposed to be learning or doing.
- **Noticing when I am distracted** and reminding myself to focus.
- **Going to a quiet spot** to finish my work.
- **Using my active listening skills** to sit still and keep my eyes on the speaker so I can listen carefully to what is being said.

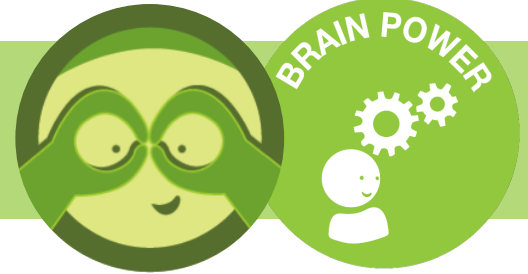
## INTRODUCE THE HAND SIGNAL

Use **Focus Binoculars** (make circles around your eyes with your hands) when you want students to pay careful attention to something new or important.

Binoculars point your eyes at something you want to see more clearly, and they can block out distractions.



# FOCUS POWER



## WHEN DO WE USE FOCUS?

- When I want to listen carefully to a story or learn the words of a new song.
- When I am tying my shoes and I must focus carefully in order to do each step in the right way.
- When I am finishing an activity or project, and I need to ignore other sounds or distractions.
- When I am feeling tired or frustrated, and I have to work extra hard to pay attention to what I am doing in order to finish my task.

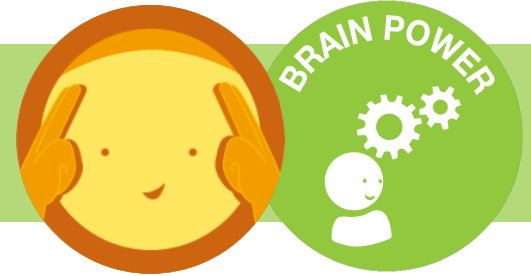
## FOCUS POWER GAMES:

- I Spy
- Catch That Sound
- My Hat Has Three Corners
- Who Stole the Honey Pot?
- Zip, Zap, Zop





# REMEMBER POWER



## WHAT IS WORKING MEMORY?

The ability to keep track of, update, and use information over short periods of time.

## WHY REMEMBER IS IMPORTANT:

It helps students to remember directions, follow steps in the correct order, and keep track of multiple things at the same time. It helps students to plan and work towards goals over time. Remember power also helps students (and adults) to multi-task and keep track of multiple goals, tasks, or items at once.

## THINGS THAT HELP US REMEMBER:

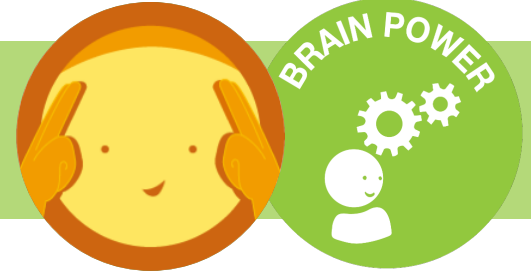
- **Repeating the information aloud** after I hear it.
- **Picturing something in my mind** (e.g., imagine the things I need to bring to school, imagine what I need to do when I first get to my classroom in the morning, imagine the steps to accomplish a goal).
- **Making up a song** about what I need to remember and singing it many times (aloud or silently in my mind).
- **Drawing a picture or making a list** of things I need to do.

## INTRODUCE THE HAND SIGNAL

Rub your temples (sides of forehead) to let students know when you want them to remember something important.



# REMEMBER POWER



## WHEN DO WE USE REMEMBER POWER?

- When I am getting ready for school and I need to remember a list of things to bring with me.
- When I take a break from reading, or get interrupted from something, and I want to remember my place (in a song, or recipe.)
- When I need to remember a set of instructions from the teacher, like during clean up or getting ready for the next activity.

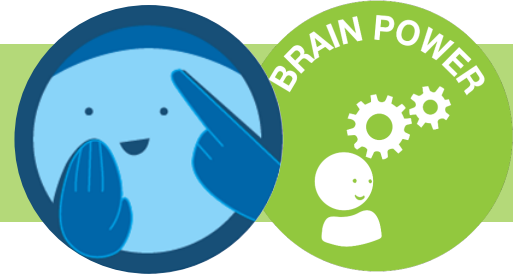
## REMEMBER POWER GAMES:

- Name Game
- What is Missing?
- Wiggle Cool Down
- Hot Potato
- Shipwreck





# STOP & THINK POWER



## WHAT IS STOP & THINK?

The ability to control impulses and to “think before you act.”

## WHY STOP & THINK IS IMPORTANT:

It helps students to wait patiently, to resist temptations, and to think carefully before making important decisions. Students also use stop and think to self-monitor and to reflect.

## THINGS THAT HELP US STOP & THINK:

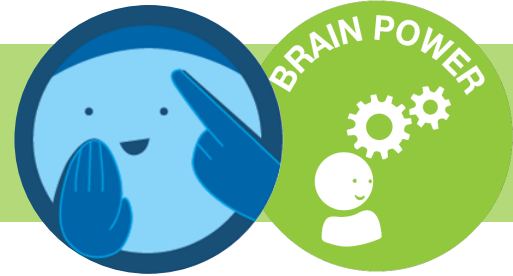
- **Taking deep slow breaths** can help you focus even when you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, or confused.
- **Counting quietly or singing to myself** when I need to wait.
- **Thinking aloud to notice and describe how I am thinking or feeling** – this helps me to consider what I should do next.
- **Telling myself to “stop and think”** – first I pause and give myself time to think, then I decide what to do.

## INTRODUCE THE HAND SIGNAL

Hold one hand with palm facing out, and with the other hand point to your head, when you want students to think before they act.



# STOP & THINK POWER



## WHEN DO WE USE STOP & THINK POWER?

- When I have an idea to share, instead of shouting I can raise my hand and wait until the tutor calls on me.
- When I need to wait my turn, I can tell myself to be patient: in line at the doctor's clinic, at the grocery store, or when playing a game.
- When I want to do something difficult, I can tell myself to move slowly and carefully.
- When my ball rolls into the street, I can tell myself to "stop" before running after it.
- When my friend is upset, I can stop and think about whether I need to apologize or ask how I can help.

## STOP & THINK GAMES:

- Simon Says
- Silly Stories
- Singing with Style
- Freeze Feelings
- Wait For It

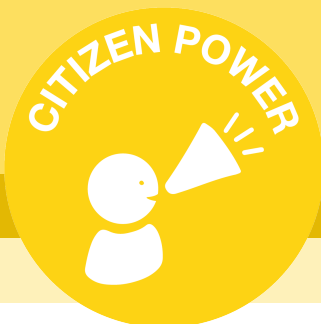




# DEAR ABBY...

**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.



KINDERGARTEN

## WHY DO THIS?

IF WE...

imagine  
and talk about  
decision-making  
when faced with  
different kinds of  
dilemmas...

DEAR ABBY...

THEN WE...

will have  
strategies  
and ideas for  
what to do...

SO WE...

are equipped  
to handle  
real-life  
situations.

## THE BIG IDEA

**We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

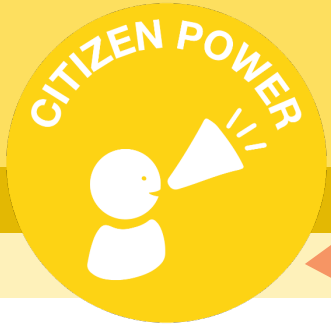
1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Turn and Talk, Role-Play, Flip the Switch, Write a Letter, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
3. Say **THE BIG IDEA** and read the dilemma to the class.
4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
  - b. Brainstorm some options and their outcomes.
  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

**>>> MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

**↪ CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.

## MATERIALS

Dear Abby Library



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different choices the character could make? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What advice would you give someone who's facing a dilemma?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

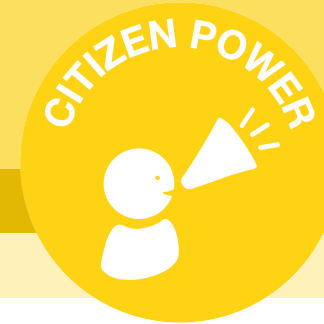
Kindergarten is a time to build awareness of common dilemmas. At this age, children may have strong views of right and wrong (i.e., black and white thinking), and that's OK. Help students to brainstorm 1 or 2 possible responses and discuss what they like or don't like about each.

- **Turn and Talk:** Ask students to pair up and discuss the dilemma with a partner. Ask them to either generate a couple of solutions or find one solution that they both agree on. Then, ask volunteers to share the solutions they discussed.
- **Role-Play:** Role play the different dilemmas with puppets or with another adult in the room. During the role play, have explicit conversations with children about the different choices the characters could make and what might happen as a result. Later in the year, ask for volunteers to lead the role plays.
- **Flip the Switch:** Tell students that you're going to play a game where they brainstorm many different solutions to the dilemma. First, ask them to share positive choices the character could make. Go around the circle and share, or ask them to participate "popcorn style." Then, when you call out "Flip the Switch!" have them share negative choices the character could make. Then lead a discussion to reflect on their suggestions.
- **Write a Letter/Draw a Picture:** Ask students to write a letter or draw a picture of a choice the character in the dilemma could make. Students can then share with the class, turn their work in to you, or keep them private.

# DEAR ABBY...

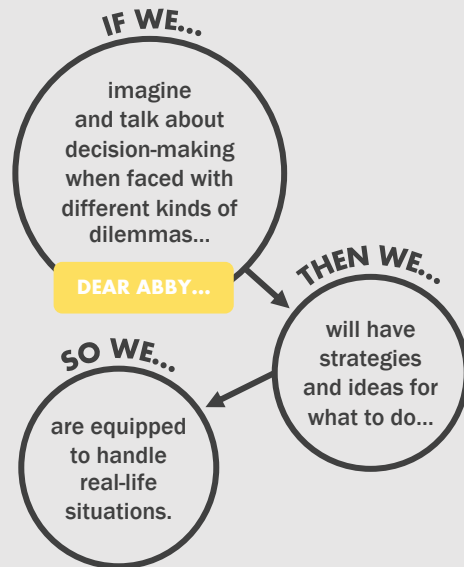
**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.



FIRST GRADE

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

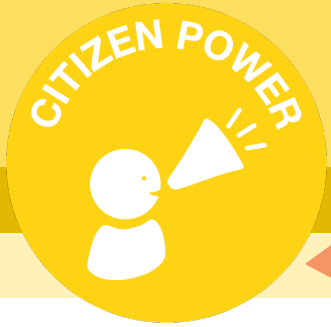
We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Turn and Talk, Role-Play, Flip the Switch, Write a Letter, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
3. Say **THE BIG IDEA** and read the dilemma to the class.
4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
  - b. Brainstorm some options and their outcomes.
  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different choices the character could make? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What advice would you give someone who's facing a dilemma?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

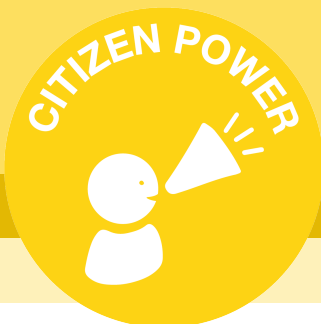
First grade is a time to continue to build awareness of common dilemmas and possible solutions. The goal is to get children talking and listening to one another and begin to expand their thinking of possible solutions.

- **Turn and Talk:** Ask students to pair up and discuss the dilemma with a partner. Ask them to either generate a couple of solutions or find one solution that they both agree on. Then, ask volunteers to share the solutions they discussed.
- **Role-Play:** Role play the different dilemmas with puppets or with another adult in the room. During the role play, have explicit conversations with children about the different choices the characters could make and what might happen as a result. Later in the year, ask for volunteers to lead the role plays.
- **Flip the Switch:** Tell students that you're going to play a game where they brainstorm many different solutions to the dilemma. First, ask them to share positive choices the character could make. Go around the circle and share, or ask them to participate "popcorn style." Then, when you call out "Flip the Switch!" have them share negative choices the character could make. Then lead a discussion to reflect on their suggestions.
- **Write a Letter/Draw a Picture:** Ask students to write a letter or draw a picture of a choice the character in the dilemma could make. Students can then share with the class, turn their work in to you, or keep them private.

# DEAR ABBY...

**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.



SECOND GRADE

### WHY DO THIS?

IF WE...

imagine and talk about decision-making when faced with different kinds of dilemmas...

DEAR ABBY...

THEN WE...

will have strategies and ideas for what to do...

SO WE...

are equipped to handle real-life situations.

### MATERIALS

Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

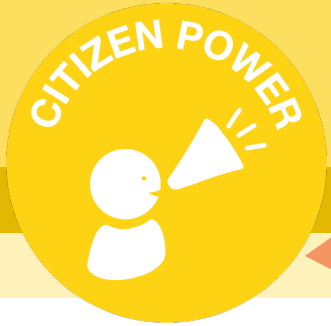
**We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Turn and Talk, Role-Play, Flip the Switch, Write a Letter, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
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  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
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  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different choices the character could make? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What advice would you give someone who's facing a dilemma?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

## ACTIVITY OPTIONS

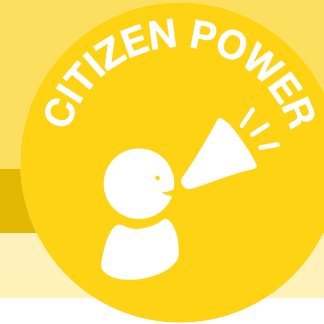
Second grade is a time to connect thinking about dilemmas with reading and writing (i.e., discuss the dilemmas faced by characters in the books you are reading, brainstorm solutions in a journal, use sentence starters such as “The dilemma XX is facing is...” and “This is tricky because...”).

- **Turn and Talk:** Ask students to pair up and discuss the dilemma with a partner. Ask them to either generate a couple of solutions or find one solution that they both agree on. Then, ask volunteers to share the solutions they discussed.
- **Role-Play:** Role play the different dilemmas with puppets or with another adult in the room. During the role play, have explicit conversations with children about the different choices the characters could make and what might happen as a result. Later in the year, ask for volunteers to lead the role plays.
- **Flip the Switch:** Tell students that you're going to play a game where they brainstorm many different solutions to the dilemma. First, ask them to share positive choices the character could make. Go around the circle and share, or ask them to participate “popcorn style.” Then, when you call out “Flip the Switch!” have them share negative choices the character could make. Then lead a discussion to reflect on their suggestions.
- **Write a Letter/Draw a Picture:** Ask students to write a letter or draw a picture of a choice the character in the dilemma could make. Students can then share with the class, turn their work in to you, or keep them private.

# DEAR ABBY...

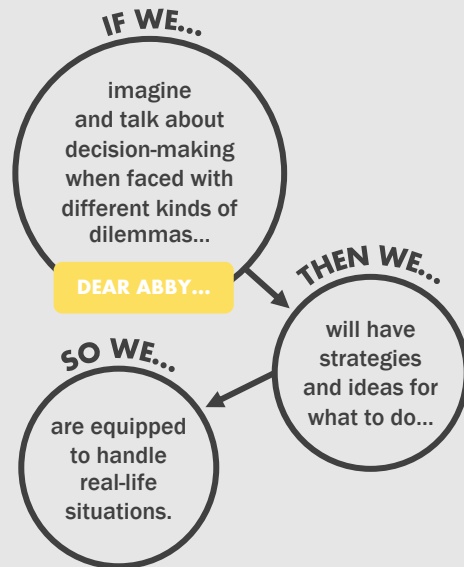
**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.




THIRD GRADE

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

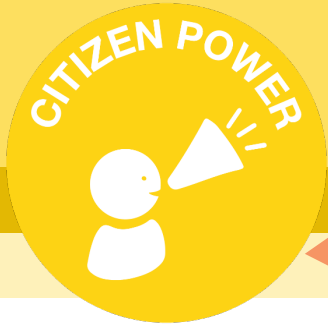
We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Turn and Talk, Role-Play, Flip the Switch, Write a Letter, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
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4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
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»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different choices the character could make? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What advice would you give someone who's facing a dilemma?
- What are the different factors you considered when thinking about solutions?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Third grade is a time to build deeper understanding of the many choices that are possible in a given situation, and begin to think more flexibly about what is right/wrong (or comfortable/uncomfortable; healthy/unhealthy; responsible/irresponsible) about each. Listing pros and cons for each possible choice can help students consider the complexities of decision-making. Use graphic organizers to help students visualize many options.

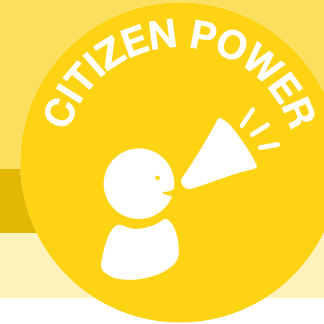
- **Turn and Talk:** Ask students to pair up and discuss the dilemma with a partner. Ask them to either generate a couple of solutions or find one solution that they both agree on. Then, ask volunteers to share the solutions they discussed.
- **Role-Play:** Role play the different dilemmas with puppets or with another adult in the room. During the role play, have explicit conversations with children about the different choices the characters could make and what might happen as a result. Later in the year, ask for volunteers to lead the role plays.
- **Flip the Switch:** Tell students that you're going to play a game where they brainstorm many different solutions to the dilemma. First, ask them to share positive choices the character could make. Go around the circle and share, or ask them to participate "popcorn style." Then, when you call out "Flip the Switch!" have them share negative choices the character could make. Then lead a discussion to reflect on their suggestions.
- **Write a Letter/Draw a Picture:** Ask students to write a letter or draw a picture of a choice the character in the dilemma could make. Students can then share with the class, turn their work in to you, or keep them private.



# DEAR ABBY...

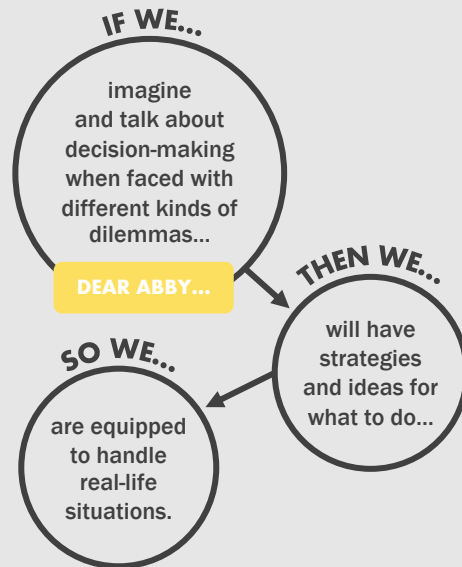
**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.



FOURTH GRADE

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

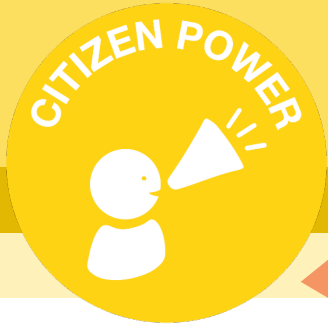
We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Small Group Discussion, Role-Play, Agreement Continuum, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
3. Say **THE BIG IDEA** and read the dilemma to the class.
4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
  - b. Brainstorm some options and their outcomes.
  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think about different choices the character could make? Why?
- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What advice would you give someone who's facing a dilemma?
- What are the different factors you considered when thinking about solutions?
- What other information might you need to better understand the dilemma and the solutions that are possible?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

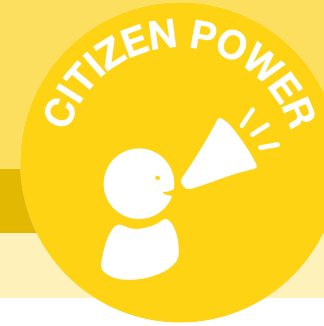
Fourth grade is a time to explore how one's values and experiences can impact what it means to act responsibly or ethically in a given situation. Provide examples of how decision making can be shaped by time, place, beliefs, family, individual preference, etc. You can use classroom texts to explore these ideas further.

- **Small Group Discussion:** Ask groups of 3 – 4 students to discuss the dilemma and potential solutions in a group. Feel free to assign roles to them, such as *discussion leader* (who makes sure everyone participates and that the group stays on track); the *questioner* (who asks questions to help the group think of the different ways to approach the dilemma); the *recorder* (who writes down potential solutions); and the *speaker* (who shares the group's solution with the class during the whole group discussion). As time allows, ask groups to share their solutions with the class.
- **Role-Play:** Ask students to pair up and role play what the different dilemmas and solutions might look like. As time allows, have a few pairs perform for the class.
- **Agreement Continuum:** Create a space in your room for an Agreement Continuum. This can either be represented using different points along the front or back wall or by a line on the floor (e.g., using a long piece of colored tape) with one end representing "Strongly Agree" and the other end representing "Strongly Disagree." Before you play, have a whole group discussion about potential solutions. Choose one solution, and have students stand at a point along the line that shows how strongly they agree with that solution. Ask them to share why they feel that way.

# DEAR ABBY...

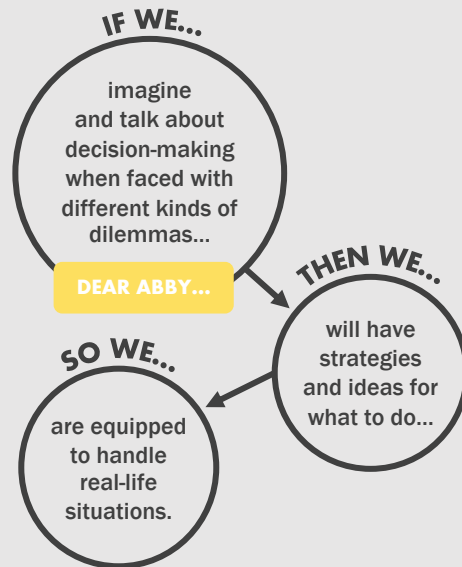
**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.




FIFTH GRADE

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

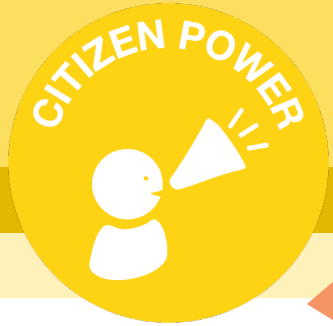
We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Small Group Discussion, Role-Play, Agreement Continuum, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
3. Say **THE BIG IDEA** and read the dilemma to the class.
4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
  - b. Brainstorm some options and their outcomes.
  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↻ **CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What are the different factors you considered when thinking about solutions?
- What other information might you need to better understand the dilemma and the solutions that are possible?
- How do you think other characters in the scenario see the situation? Would they see it the same way or differently? Why?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

## ACTIVITY OPTIONS

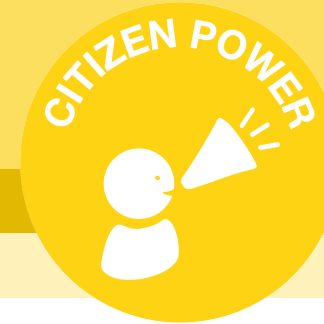
Fifth grade is a time to explore others' perspectives on the dilemma and to be able to incorporate multiple perspectives into an understanding of the dilemma. Help students to consider how choices can vary based on experience and context. Use current events, news stories, and podcasts to bring relevant examples into the classroom.

- **Small Group Discussion:** Ask groups of 3 – 4 students to discuss the dilemma and potential solutions in a group. Feel free to assign roles to them, such as *discussion leader* (who makes sure everyone participates and that the group stays on track); the *questioner* (who asks questions to help the group think of the different ways to approach the dilemma); the *recorder* (who writes down potential solutions); and the *speaker* (who shares the group's solution with the class during the whole group discussion). As time allows, ask groups to share their solutions with the class.
- **Role-Play:** Ask students to pair up and role play what the different dilemmas and solutions might look like. As time allows, have a few pairs perform for the class.
- **Agreement Continuum:** Create a space in your room for an Agreement Continuum. This can either be represented using different points along the front or back wall or by a line on the floor (e.g., using a long piece of colored tape) with one end representing "Strongly Agree" and the other end representing "Strongly Disagree." Before you play, have a whole group discussion about potential solutions. Choose one solution, and have students stand at a point along the line that shows how strongly they agree with that solution. Ask them to share why they feel that way.

# DEAR ABBY...

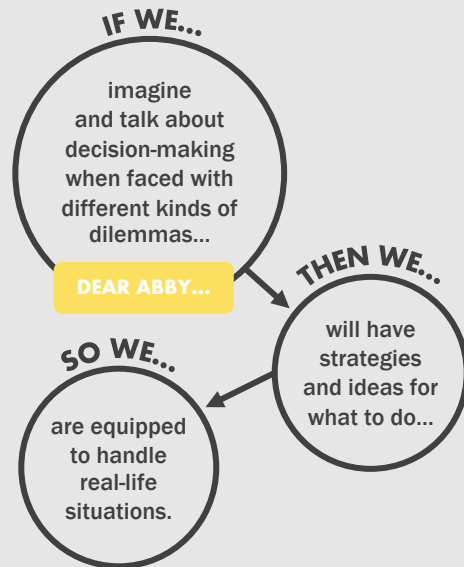
**WHAT IS IT?** A discussion that uses scenarios to explore character and citizenship.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Making responsible/ethical/healthy choices in difficult situations.



SIXTH GRADE

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

Dear Abby Library

## THE BIG IDEA

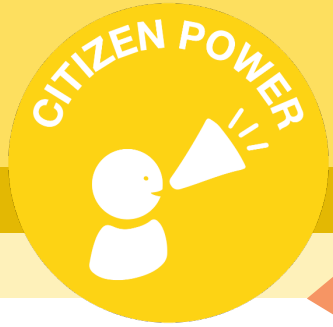
We all have different ideas about how to solve problems, and that's okay—there are many effective ways to solve a problem. We're going to imagine situations, brainstorm what the options are, and identify what we like or don't like about them. Talking about these choices will help us make decisions in the future when problems arise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose a dilemma from the Dear Abby Library (or see Strategy Guide, pages 165-174).
2. Choose one of these activities: Small Group Discussion, Role-Play, Agreement Continuum, or create your own. (See back of card for more information.)
3. Say **THE BIG IDEA** and read the dilemma to the class.
4. Follow these prompts to have a discussion:
  - a. Describe the dilemma and why it's a dilemma. Ask, "What makes this tricky?"
  - b. Brainstorm some options and their outcomes.
  - c. Ask, "What do you like and not like about these options? Why?"
  - d. Finish with a discussion of good solutions that have been brought up. Talk about why some options might be better for some than others.

»» **MUST DO:** Ensure everyone has a chance to participate. Keep questions and conversations open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

**CAN ADAPT:** Use stories from books, a dilemma that arises in the classroom, or other academic materials.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- Have you been in a similar situation before? What did you do? How did you feel about the choice you made?
- What's the difference between imagining choices for a character and facing a dilemma in real life?
- What are the different factors you considered when thinking about solutions?
- What other information might you need to better understand the dilemma and the solutions that are possible?
- How do you think other characters in the scenario see the situation? Would they see it the same way or differently? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Use pictures or role play to support emergent bilingual learners. Allow students who speak the same language to brainstorm together before sharing with the class.



Consider whether the scenario you choose might be uncomfortable or difficult for any of the students. Talk with the student in advance or choose a different scenario.

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Sixth grade is a time to continue to explore multiple perspectives about what it means to make a “good” decision, and be a “good” citizen/friend/community member, etc. Use current and historical events as relevant examples of dilemmas.

- **Small Group Discussion:** Ask groups of 3 – 4 students to discuss the dilemma and potential solutions in a group. Feel free to assign roles to them, such as *discussion leader* (who makes sure everyone participates and that the group stays on track); the *questioner* (who asks questions to help the group think of the different ways to approach the dilemma); the *recorder* (who writes down potential solutions); and the *speaker* (who shares the group’s solution with the class during the whole group discussion). As time allows, ask groups to share their solutions with the class.
- **Role-Play:** Ask students to pair up and role play what the different dilemmas and solutions might look like. As time allows, have a few pairs perform for the class.
- **Agreement Continuum:** Present the scenario, and ask students to generate three or four solutions. Then, create different spaces in the room (e.g., each corner of the room) for each solution. Ask the children to gather with peers who feel the same way in the designated space and discuss their solution.

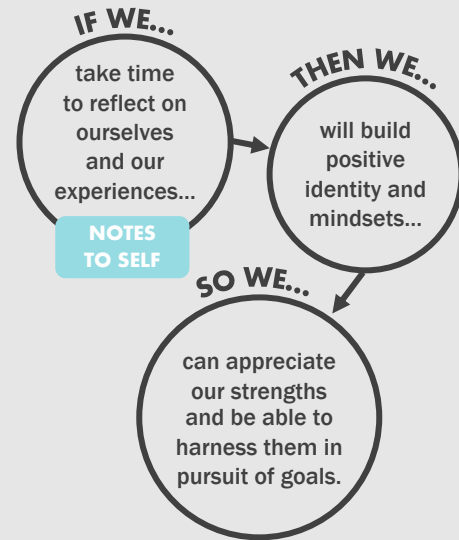
# NOTES TO SELF




**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Journals (optional)  
Music

## THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw a picture in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
  - **Draw three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
  - **Draw your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw.
4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.

»» **MUST DO:** Keep it open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented. The key idea here is that the child has an opportunity to look inward and reflect. If students need support, don't give them an answer, focus on helping them think about themselves (e.g., their memories, feelings, etc.).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you care about, or what you like about yourself?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

Kindergarten is a time to build a beginning sense of self – who one is, how one is distinct from others, what is unique and valuable about oneself. Young children's feelings about themselves are highly variable – they can change from day to day, moment to moment, and that's OK. Young children believe that who they are can change; they have many different ideas about who they can be and what they can do. This reflects their open sense of possibility and their ability to imagine. It's a thing to celebrate!

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity and culture that make them who they are.** For kindergartners, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style. Allow students to practice reflection more routinely, as regular or daily practice (e.g., carve out the last 15 minutes or the school day as “drawing/reflecting” time).


**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.**

Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.




# NOTES TO SELF



**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

### WHY DO THIS?



### THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**


### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw or write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
  - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
  - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.

»» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented. The key idea here is that the child has an opportunity to look inward and reflect. If students need support, don't give them an answer, focus on helping them think about themselves (e.g., their memories, feelings, etc.).

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.

### MATERIALS

 Journals (optional).  
Music

FIRST GRADE



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you care about, or what you like about yourself?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

First grade is a time to continue building a positive sense of self – who one is, how one is distinct from others, what is unique and valuable about oneself. As kids get older, they tend to have increasingly fixed ideas about themselves and their capacities. This activity is an opportunity to celebrate unique individual strengths and beliefs, and also an opportunity to talk about how things can change (i.e., we can learn new things, grow in new ways, can get better at things that are difficult).

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For first graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.

# NOTES TO SELF



SECOND GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Journals (optional).  
Music

## THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
  2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw or write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
    - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
    - **I believe...** Write a list of words or draw the top three most important beliefs you have and why they matter to you (e.g., I believe telling the truth is important). You can use magazines and have students cut out words or pictures that represent their beliefs.
    - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
  3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
  4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.
- »» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented.
- ↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you believe in? Where do beliefs come from?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

Second grade is a time to connect one's self-concept and one's beliefs to reading and writing activities, and to other times of the day. Have students reflect on themselves in different types of reading, writing, and art activities – for example, make a vision board, create a collage of images, or make a list of words that reflect one's beliefs, etc.

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For second graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.

# NOTES TO SELF

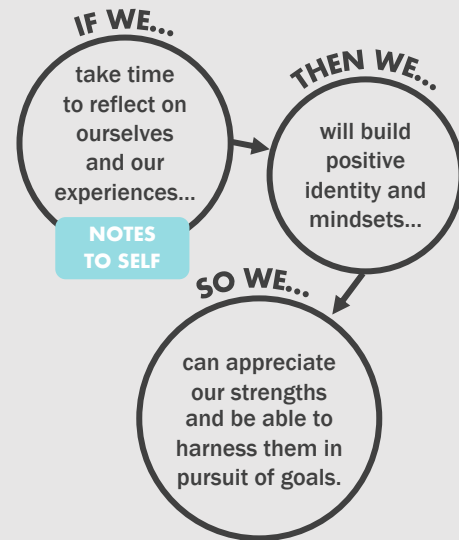


THIRD GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Journals (optional).  
Music

## THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
  2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw or write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
    - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
    - **I believe...** Write a list of words or draw the top three most important beliefs you have and why they matter to you (e.g., I believe telling the truth is important). You can use magazines and have students cut out words or pictures that represent their beliefs.
    - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
  3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
  4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.
- »» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented.
- ↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you believe in? Where do beliefs come from?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

Third grade is a time that children's sense of self is increasingly influenced by relationships and social interactions. Students are aware of how peer groups and others think about them. This can contribute to a fixed sense of self and one's abilities. Talk about growth mindset – that effort can lead to new abilities and to growth and change. Encourage students to celebrate their own strengths and positive beliefs about themselves, and use visioning exercises to expand their idea of what is possible.

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For third graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.

# NOTES TO SELF



FOURTH GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Journals (optional).  
Music

## THE BIG IDEA

When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
  2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw or write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
    - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
    - **I believe...** Write a list of words or draw the top three most important beliefs you have and why they matter to you (e.g., I believe telling the truth is important). You can use magazines and have students cut out words or pictures that represent their beliefs.
    - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
  3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
  4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.
- »» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented.
- ↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you believe in? Where do beliefs come from?
- Are you still the same person if your beliefs change?
- When else could you reflect on your beliefs and who you are?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by "thinking aloud" to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

## OVER THE YEAR...

Fourth grade is a time to reflect on how one's beliefs can change over time. Encourage students to explore whether any of their beliefs about themselves have changed (e.g., since kindergarten, since the beginning of the year, since learning to play a new instrument or sport, or since developing a new interest or liking a new song, etc.) and why. Encourage students to celebrate specific things about themselves – aspects of their personal identity, groups they identify with, things they believe, etc.

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For fourth graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.



# NOTES TO SELF



FIFTH GRADE


**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

 Journals (optional).  
Music

## THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw or write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
  - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking? How were you feeling? What did you do?
  - **I believe...** Write a list of words or draw the top three most important beliefs you have and why they matter to you (e.g., I believe telling the truth is important). You can use magazines and have students cut out words or pictures that represent their beliefs.
  - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What will you do? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you?
3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.

»» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer. Ensure that this is positively oriented.

↪ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you believe in? Where do beliefs come from?
- Can you think of a time when your beliefs were different? Are you still the same person if your beliefs change? What makes you, you?
- When else could you reflect on your beliefs and who you are?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

Fifth grade is a time to begin grappling with changing and expanding identities – that one's sense of self and one's beliefs can change, expand, and incorporate new aspects.

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For fifth graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color, or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.

# NOTES TO SELF




**WHAT IS IT?** A time to reflect and draw/write about yourself.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT?** Reflecting on positive experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

## WHY DO THIS?



## MATERIALS

-  Journals (optional).
- Music

## THE BIG IDEA

**When we take time to reflect on who we are, how we're growing, and what is special to us, we build an awareness of our strengths and beliefs that we can go back to when we need it.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Say **THE BIG IDEA**.
2. Ask students to take out their journals (or a piece of paper) and draw/write in response to the prompt (additional prompts available in Strategy Guide, pages 197-198). Sample prompts include:
  - **Draw or write about three things that went well today.** What were you thinking/feeling? What did you do?
  - **I believe...** Write a list of words or draw the top three most important beliefs you have and why they matter to you (e.g., I believe telling the truth is important). You can use magazines and have students cut out words or pictures that represent their beliefs.
  - **Draw or write about your best possible future self.** Who will you be when you grow up? What do you like about that future person? Why are those things important to you? Encourage students to consider how beliefs might change across settings and time. Students can map different possible selves/beliefs on a grid or circle.
3. Turn on calming music and give students 5-10 minutes to draw or write.
4. *Optional:* Give students the option to share their drawing with you privately or with the class. Write an affirming note back to the student with a smiley face, sticker, or stamp.

»» **MUST DO:** Keep open-ended, there does not need to be a right answer.

↻ **CAN ADAPT:** How they reflect – instead of writing or drawing, they can share out loud to the classroom or a partner, or act out through a role play.



## AFTER THE ACTIVITY, DEBRIEF:

- How did your reflection go? Was it easy or hard to reflect and think about yourself?
- How do you know what you believe in? Where do beliefs come from?
- Can you think of a time when your beliefs were different? Are you still the same person if your beliefs change? What makes you, you?
- When else could you reflect on your beliefs and who you are?
- How do you think about your thoughts? Can you see other people's thinking?
- When do you feel your best? Why?

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS



If possible, have the prompts translated into the native languages of emergent bilingual learners. Provide them with the opportunity to respond in their home languages, as well.



Provide scaffolding for children who may need extra support by providing your own example. Model your thinking for students by “thinking aloud” to show how you generated your ideas and to show how you chose what to record in your journal.

### OVER THE YEAR...

Sixth grade is a time to grapple with multiple identities – that each of us is a complex person made of different beliefs, different facets, different possibilities, etc., and that these can vary depending on the context or situation. Young people entering adolescence may experience tensions about their personal and social identities, how they complement or conflict with each other. This tension is normal; support students to explore and celebrate the different facets of their self-hood.

**To start, allow students to decorate the cover of their journals to represent aspects of their identity, heritage, and culture that make them who they are.** For sixth graders, this could be their favorite foods/songs/dances, who is in their family and where they are from, where they live, what they are good at, etc. Students can draw and color or cut and paste collage-style.

**As the year progresses, use a variety of different prompts that give students an opportunity to reflect on aspects of who they are, how experiences make them feel, and things that are important to them.** Encourage students to draw with more and more detail as their skills develop throughout the year and to begin labeling their pictures with words, as they are able.

**Lastly, give students time to go back into their journals to review what they've drawn and written throughout the year.** Choose prompts that allow students to reflect on the best parts of their year, challenges they've overcome, things they've learned, and their goals for the future.