

SEL Reflection Prompts

Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their own development supports self-awareness and prioritizes students' insights into their own strengths and challenges. The following reflection tool is based on [five core social and emotional learning competencies](#):

- **Self-awareness** – including how we identify and process our emotions and reflect on our own strengths and identities.
- **Self-management** – including how we set personal and collective goals, manage stress, cultivate hope, and demonstrate resilience and agency.
- **Social awareness** – including the ability to empathize and take the perspectives of others from similar and diverse backgrounds and co-create equitable and thriving communities.
- **Relationship skills** – including establishing and maintaining healthy relationships and collaboratively finding solutions to challenges while acknowledging the collective rights and responsibilities of citizenship in local, national, and global communities.
- **Responsible decision making** – including using a lens of curiosity and continuous learning about ourselves, others, and the world to analyze situations, solve problems, and make decisions that promote collective well-being.

How to use this reflection tool

Educators can choose prompts from this tool to use with students in-person, virtually, or a blend of both. For example:

- Meet with a student or group of students in-person or online to **talk about selected questions for 5-10 minutes**.
- **Put one of these questions on the board** or post online and have students answer in their journals.
- Use these questions during **circle time or morning meetings**.
- Have students **write first and then discuss** their answers with a partner.
- **Include questions within assignments** that students may be completing at school or at home.
- Post questions on a **class discussion board** online so students can respond and reply to each other.

Developmentally appropriate reflections

While the core SEL competencies remain the same across grade levels, the types of questions will vary depending on students' stage of development. In general, the questions listed for each competency below move from less complex to more complex. Use your knowledge of your students to determine the questions you will share.

Mindset matters

While it is not necessary that students share their reflections every time, providing opportunities to share out answers with peers can strengthen classroom relationships and give insight into your students' lives.

- **Connect.** When you provide opportunities for students to share their reflections, make the conversation warm and informal. This is not a quiz or test.
- **Notice.** Where are your perceptions and students' perceptions different? This provides information that can guide your instruction and help you to better respond to and understand each student.
- **Learn.** Different students express and respond to emotions in different ways depending on culture, personality, or context.

Prompts that support self-awareness and self-management

Identify and respond to emotions.

- What are some things that make you feel mad? Sad? Happy?
- Describe a time you felt the same way a story character felt.
- What strategies have you used to help with difficult emotions?
- Write about a time when you felt confident. What contributed to this feeling?
- Write about a time your emotions impacted your actions.
- Write about a time you used assertive communication to manage stress.

Recognize personal qualities and external support.

- Describe something you like to do for fun.
- What do you like about school? What is challenging?
- How do you help out at home?
- Write about an achievement that makes you feel proud.
- Write about a time you practiced a skill in or out of school and got better.
- Describe a time and situation when you needed help. How did you reach out for help? What was the result?
- What is something you are good at? Something you want to get better at?
- Write about a time you showed leadership or supported a peer at school.
- How can the adults in your school help you to feel connected and supported?
- Describe ways in which you contribute to the school community.
- Who in the school, your family or your neighborhood can you go to if you are having a problem in school-- like with a friend or a math problem?
- What assets do you see in yourself? In your family? In your community? In your culture?
- What internal qualities or external supports have helped you accept new challenges and adjust to change?

Demonstrate skills and mindsets related to achieving personal and collective goals.

- What are some goals you have in school or at home?
- What are some changes you would like to see in your school, neighborhood, or the world?
- What strategies help you reach your goals?
- Describe a time you worked with other people (classmates, family, friends, neighbors) to reach a goal.
- Write about a goal you have and the progress you are making towards it.
- Write about a time you achieved a goal. How did you do it? How did you feel?
- Have you ever felt like giving up at something you wanted to get better at? How did you handle it?
- What are some of your short-term and long-term goals?
- Write about a challenge you see in your community. What is a reasonable goal you can set to learn more about the issue or contribute to a solution?
- How have conditions or context impacted your ability to achieve a goal? What did you do?
- How has your personal identity positively or negatively impacted your ability to achieve your goals?
- Analyze how you might have made better use of available support and overcome obstacles in working on a recent goal.

Prompts that support social awareness and relationship skills

Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.

- Write about a time you disagreed with a friend or family member. How did you handle it?

- What are some things you can do to be an active listener?
- Why is it valuable to learn about the perspectives of others?
- Write about a time that your opinion changed. What caused it to change?
- Write about a current event and analyze the perspectives of different people involved, including how their life experiences/ identity may impact their perspectives.
- Analyze the factors, including your personal identity, that have influenced your perspective on an issue.

Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.

- Write about a friend. How are they similar to you? How are they different?
- What are some ways you are similar to your family? What are some ways you are different?
- How do you like to work when you work in groups? How can you work together with someone who likes to do things differently?
- What are some spaces where you feel accepted and celebrated for who you are?
- Write about a time you misjudged someone who was different from you. What did you learn from the experience?
- How would you describe your personal identity? How is it similar or different from that of people around you?
- What are some of your different identities (cultural, religious, interests)? How have they made you who you are today?
- Analyze how the media create or reinforce societal expectations of various social and cultural groups.
- Write about a time that you defied a societal expectation about who you are. How did you do it? What did you learn?

Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

- Write about a time you wanted to play with a new person or group. What did you do?
- What are some ways you let people in your class know you care about them?
- What are some qualities that you want in a friend? How would you describe a good friend?
- What makes a good team?
- Write about a time you showed leadership. What social skills helped you to lead?
- Write about a time you worked on a group project. What group or personal strengths and challenges did you notice around communication?
- Write about a time that you struggled to give or receive help. What did you learn about yourself?
- Analyze differences in the distribution of power in various relationships and how this affects communication styles.
- What are the rights and responsibilities for participants in your school community? Local community? At a global level?

Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

- What are some conflicts you have seen happening on the playground? How do you think kids could prevent them? Resolve them?
- What are some conflicts that you have seen happening in the classroom? How do you think kids could prevent them? Resolve them?
- Write about a time you had a conflict. How did you feel? How did you resolve it?
- Write about a time you stayed true to yourself and your values despite negative pressure.
- Write about a time you saw a conflict de-escalated or defused. What made it possible?
- Write about a time you ended a relationship or situation that was not healthy for you.

Prompts that support responsible decision-making

Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.

- What kinds of things do you think about when you are making a decision?
- Write about a fictional character or historical figure you admire. How did their choices impact the people and world around them?
- Write about a time that a decision you made was strongly guided by your ethics and beliefs about how the world should be
- How do you notice and collect information about yourself in relation to others and the world around you?

Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.

- Write about a positive decision you made in class or during online learning. How did you make your choice?
- Describe our class decision-making process.
- Describe a time you used the decision-making process we learned in class.
- Provide students with a developmentally appropriate scenario. What are some things you could do in this situation? Analyze what might happen if you made each of these choices.
- Analyze how your past relationships might impact your decisions about future relationships.
- How can focusing on assets rather than deficits affect your decisions?
- Write about a time that you learned something new about someone in the process of making a decision together.

Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.

- What is something you have done this year that you are proud of?
- What are some ways that you help others in your family or community?
- What are some ways that you help others in our classroom?
- Who are some people who make a difference in your life? How do they impact you?
- What is your personal definition of well-being? What does it look like for you?
- Analyze an area of social injustice. How can young people help make a difference? What should institutions do (schools, city government, etc.) to improve the situation?
- How does your understanding of personal and social group status impact the way you make personal and collective decisions?