



# INTEGRATING SEL INTO ACADEMICS

Social Emotional Learning to Embed  
Throughout the School Day

# SEL Terms & Concepts

Self Awareness	Self Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Decision Making
IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS	MANAGING EMOTIONS	EMPATHY	CONFLICT RESOLUTION	IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
EXPRESSING EMOTIONS	RESILIENCE	DISCOVERING DIFFERENCES	ACTIVE LISTENING	SOLVING PROBLEMS
MINDFULNESS	STRESS MANAGEMENT	DIVERSITY APPRECIATION	COOPERATION	ANALYZING SITUATIONS
SELF-CONFIDENCE	IMPULSE CONTROL	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	TEAMWORK	GOAL SETTING
RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS	SELF-MOTIVATION	RESPECT FOR OTHERS	COMMUNICATION	LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- **Self-awareness** is the ability to assess one's emotions, thoughts, and values. Self-awareness skills include identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence, and self-efficacy.
- **Self-management** refers to one's ability to manage stress, control impulses, and stay motivated. Self-management skills include impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, and organization skills.
- **Social awareness** includes showing empathy everyone around you, including those with different backgrounds. Social awareness skills include perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others.
- **Relationship skills** consist of maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships with others. Communication is key as students navigate conflict constructively, resist negative influence, and seek help when needed. Other skills include social engagement, relationship-building, and teamwork.
- **Responsible decision-making** consists of making constructive choices based on safety and social norms. Responsible decision-making skills include identifying problems, analyzing solutions, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting, and ethical responsibility.

# Strengthen Core SEL Competencies

## With These Quick Tips

### Self-Awareness

Practice Mindfulness Meditation:

Allow students to sit comfortably, close their eyes if they are comfortable doing so, and focus on their breathing for anywhere between 5 and 30 minutes. Let students know that distractions, both in the classroom and in their mind, will occur. When this does, encourage them to regain focus on their breathing. This will help them become aware of emotions, thoughts, and everything that comes with stress. Remind them that it's mind over matter.

### Self-Management

Create a Task-List:

Delegating work among other students makes the overall task manageable. Having a group leader create a task list for the team (create the list for lower elementary) allows each member to be accountable for a portion of the work. By owning these responsibilities, students will practice their self-management skills by staying motivated and prioritizing their contribution.

### Relationship Skills

Activity: Find Someone In This Class Who...Scavenger Hunt!

This scavenger hunt gets students out of their seats and talking to their peer, trying to find classmates who fill specific categories. This is a great activity to do right after a break, as it will get your students to engage with one another and encourage more communication.

### Responsible Decision-Making

Practice Critical Thinking:

Have your students practice a critical thinking by observing and analyzing a topic or an issue. With them, identify what happened, document internal responses, why it mattered to that student and how they reacted to the situation.



# SEL IN ELA

In English Language Arts classes, social emotional skills can help students be engaged readers and writers. Practicing empathy for the characters they read or write about can help students explore what the world looks like from someone else's viewpoint.

Engaged readers do things like make predictions, compare similarities and differences, and identify cause and effect as they read. Core SEL competencies can help students practice these reading skills. Ask students to describe the ways that characters felt, and the problems they faced, then use those descriptions to make predictions about what the characters might do next. Or, invite students to compare the characters to themselves; would they make similar choices to these characters, or different choices? As students reflect on the characters' social emotional skills, they'll be practicing reading comprehension skills as well.

Thoughtful writers understand how to write clearly and in detail. Social emotional learning helps students get into the minds of their characters and understand their feelings, motivations, and desires so they can improve narrative writing. SEL skills can also help students consider the perspective of their audience to help them include more details and improve descriptive writing. Being able to receive feedback and revise a piece of writing requires a lot of reflection and self-awareness.

There are many ways to use social emotional learning to support English Language Arts!

These conversation starters come from our partner, Chapel Street School, from Stratford Public Schools in Connecticut. They can be used for discussions, or as a writing prompt!

# Cheetah Café

## Conversation Starters

**Would you rather – be an airplane pilot or a racecar driver? Why?**

**If you could only read or listen to one book – what would it be? Why?**

**What is your favorite emoger? Why do you like it? How does it help you?**

**If you could talk to your pet – what would you say?**

**If you could be any age – what age would you be? Why?**

**How has Move This World helped you this school year?**

**If you could only play one outside game – what would it be? Why?**

**If you could be anyone when you grow up – who would you want to be?**

**Would you rather – be invisible or be able to fly? Why?**

**What is one rule you wish our school didn't have? Why would our school be better without it?**

# Reinforce These Skills

## Story Time:

Read a story aloud and prompt students to identify moments when behaviors align to the SEL concepts. With younger students, focus on times a character may have shown concepts such as kindness, empathy, active listening, or resilience. With older students, explore the "How?" within the situation. For example, *how* does a particular character show empathy or resilience? *How* does a character communicate kindness? *How* does the character express who they are as a person?

## Writing Exercise:

Choose one of the SEL concepts or terms on the previous two pages and instruct students to write a story about a character that embodies that concept as a superhero trait. For example, if you choose 'active listening,' students should create a narrative about an individual with superb listening and perception skills.

Prompt students to focus on how this character demonstrates this SEL concept as a superhero trait. How does the superhero trait, active listening, help this character get through challenges? How does this superhero trait support the character's community? What is special about this trait?

# Read Aloud Questions to Spark Discussion

Read aloud questions are not only a great way to teach literacy, but also a way to reinforce social emotional skills. Children can put themselves in the shoes of the characters and identify their emotions, analyze the decisions made and more. Use these questions with any picture book to prompt discussion and further explore social emotional learning, as well as the common language.

## Self Awareness

1. How was the main character feeling at the beginning of the story? In the middle of the story? At the end of the story?
2. How did you know the character was feeling \_\_\_\_?
3. What clues did the author give you to let you know that?
4. How would you feel if you were the main character in this story?
5. Why did the character feel that way?
6. What is one thing the main character could be proud of?
7. Which Emotional Building Blocks did the main characters feel in this chapter? Throughout the entire story?

## Self Management

1. When did the main character have to stop and think about how they are feeling?
2. How did the main character motivate themselves throughout the story?
3. How did the characters react when they were having a hard time?
4. What would you say to the main character to help them work through their challenges?
5. How would you have liked to respond if you were the main character?
6. What Emoger or emotional management strategies could the main character have put into place for themselves?

## Social Awareness

1. How were the characters similar to one another? How were they different?
2. How are you similar to the main character? How are you different?
3. When did you relate to the main character? When have you felt the same emotion as the main character?
4. How did the characters show respect for one another?
5. How did the characters act when they were feeling Angry, Sad, Tired, or Anxious? How did they act when they felt Joyful or Excited? Did the characters express these emotions in different ways?



## Relationship Skills

1. How did the characters communicate with one another? What are other ways the characters could have communicated their needs?
2. What did the main character do when they needed help?
3. When did the characters work with each other well? When did they not?
4. What would you say to the main character if you could speak to them right now?
5. What strategies did the characters use to resolve conflicts? What Emogers were used throughout the story?
6. Think about the Emotional Building Blocks and the relationships in the story. What Building Blocks describe how two characters felt within their relationship? What events made them feel that way?

## Decision Making

1. What was one tough decision the character had to make?
2. Why was this decision difficult? How did the character know they had a difficult problem to deal with?
3. What are some things the character could have done to help them make their decision?
4. How did the characters solve the problem/ make the decision?
5. What else could the character have done to solve the problem?
6. What Emogers could have been used to make better decisions throughout the story?





# SEL IN HISTORY

History often requires high-level thinking skills, like analyzing multiple sources, evaluating cause and effect, or making comparisons between cultures or different time periods. Students can sometimes be intimidated by history because it seems like memorizing facts from a long time ago. Not true!

In fact, history is more like studying a collection of stories and trying to make sense of them. Instead of simply regurgitating facts, students today are asked to analyze historical events and draw their own conclusions. SEL skills like listening, empathy, and considering diverse perspectives can help students better understand history. Ask students to consider the emotions of historical figures, or make comparisons between historical leaders and leaders today. Invite students to consider the perspective of the author of historical documents, or reflect on the challenges people faced throughout history and how they might have felt if they were alive during those challenges.

There are many ways to use social emotional learning to support History classes!

# What if they had social media....

Imagine that social media existed throughout history! How would historical figures talk to each other? Who would they be friends with? What would their favorite hashtags be?

Create a social media account for a famous historical figure. Use your empathy skills as you create their social media profiles! Remember to draw images and include text in your posts!



Create a profile picture

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Bio: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

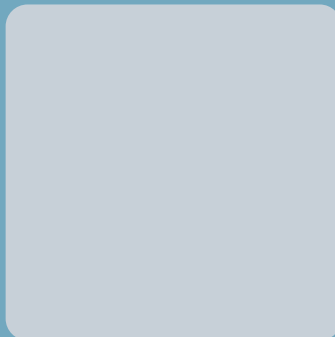


What's on your mind?

Status Update: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Top Friends:



Post:

Comment:

Comment:

Comment:

Post:

Comment:

Comment:

Comment:

# SEL Questions to Spark Discussion or Written Reflection for a Historical Text

Students can put themselves in the shoes of the historical figures and identify their emotions, analyze the decisions made, make connections throughout history and more. Use these questions with any historical text to prompt discussion or written reflection and further explore social emotional learning, as well as the common language.

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## Self Awareness

1. How was the historical figure feeling at the beginning of the event discussed in the text? In the middle? At the end?
2. How did you know the historical figure was feeling \_\_\_\_?
3. What clues did the author give you to let you know that?
4. How would you feel if you were the historical figure in this text?
5. Why did the historical figure feel that way?
6. What is one thing the historical figure could be proud of?
7. What is one challenge the historical figure faced?

## Self Management

1. When did the historical figure have to stop and think about how they are feeling?
2. How did the historical figure motivate themselves throughout the event?
3. How did the historical figure react when they were having a hard time?
4. What would you say to the historical figure to help them work through their challenges?
5. How would you have liked to respond if you were the historical figure?

## Social Awareness

1. How were the different people or groups of people discussed in the text similar to one another? How were they different?
2. How are you similar to them? How are you different?
3. When did you relate to the historical figure? When have you felt the same emotion as them?
4. How did the historical figures show respect for one another?
5. How did the historical figures act when they were feeling Angry, Sad, Tired, or Anxious? How did they act when they felt Joyful or Excited? Did they express these emotions in different ways?

## Relationship Skills

1. How did the people or groups of people mentioned in the text communicate with one another? What are other ways they could have communicated their needs?
2. What did they do when they needed help?
3. When did they work with each other well? When did they not?
4. What would you say to them if you could speak to them right now?
5. What strategies did they use to resolve conflicts?

## Decision Making

1. What was one tough decision the historical figure had to make?
2. Why was this decision difficult? How did they know they had a difficult problem to deal with?
3. What are some things the historical figure did to help them make their decision? What are some things they didn't do but they could have done to help them make their decision?
4. How did they solve the problem/ make the decision?
5. What else could they have done to solve the problem?



**Written Reflection:** \_\_\_\_\_



# SEL IN SCIENCE

Science asks students to use problem solving skills to observe the world around them. While some students may have scientific interests and can easily be curious in science class, other students may feel like science isn't for them. But all students can be engaged scientists!

Scientific thinking requires students to state an idea or hypothesis, design a process to test their idea, and then draw conclusions based on their observations. Social emotional skills can help students improve scientific thinking by supporting decision making skills and goal setting. Often, students can get stuck on "I don't know what to do next," when results aren't what they expected. SEL skills like decision making can help students identify next steps. SEL can even help students identify larger problems in the world around them that they can use science to help solve and impact their communities in positive, far-reaching ways! Reflection is also an important SEL skill that can improve scientific thinking by supporting students to reflect on the process, and not simply the end result.

There are many ways to use social emotional learning to support Science!



# Design Your Own Science Experiment

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

Hypothesis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What's your process? List the steps you'll take to test your hypothesis.

Results: What happened during your experiment? Why do you think this happened?

Conclusion:  
My hypothesis was  
supported/unsupported because.....



# SEL IN MATH

"But what about math?" It's every teacher's favorite question! Social emotional learning is critical in math. Whether students truly struggle with mathematical thinking, or if they just think they are "bad at math," there is often a mental hurdle to math class.

Mathematical thinking requires students to apply numerical skills to understand the world around them and solve problems. There is a process involved in discovering a solution, and students need perseverance to stay motivated towards a solution. There are also often multiple ways to solve an equation, or students may need to try a few different ideas before they reach a solution. For some students, this kind of trial-and-error process can be extremely defeating. Feeling like you don't know what you're doing is not comfortable! Social emotional learning can help students build resilience and confidence in math class.

Most powerfully, it is the application of math in the world around us that provides the best connection for social emotional learning. So many of the world's most innovative solutions are dependent on math! Invite your students to reflect on the challenges they experience in the world around them, and consider how mathematical thinking might help them solve problems. Or, ask your students to explore the ways that math is used by adults in their lives. Your students can interview family members about their attitude about math to help deepen their emotional understanding.

There are many ways to use social emotional learning to support Math!

# Write your Own Math Problem

In this activity, you'll design your own math problem for your classmates! First, create a word problem for your classmate to solve. Then, with your teacher's or parent's help, share the math problem with a classmate or friend! Can they solve it? Use the reflection questions to learn more about how your friend approached the problem.

**My Math Problem:**

**Questions to ask my classmate or friend:**

1. How did you solve the problem?  
Can you show me the process you used?
2. What was the hardest thing about this problem?
3. What advice do you have for someone else who is going to try and solve this problem?

**Self Reflection**

**What surprised you about how your classmate or friend solved the problem?**



# **SEL FOR RELIEVING STRESS & CALMING DOWN**

Students can use these relaxation poses to calm down before and after tests! Encourage students to try these positions if they are experiencing stress or tension in their bodies, and remind them that they can practice these positions anywhere.

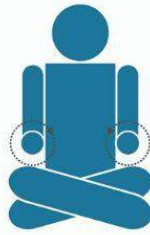
# Embodied Relaxation



1. Take four deep breaths



2. Circle wrists outward four times



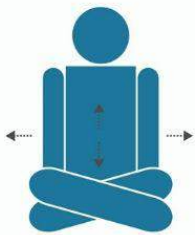
3. Circle wrists inward four times



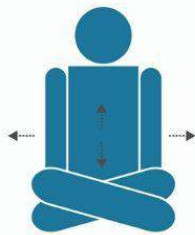
4. Roll head slowly to the left two times



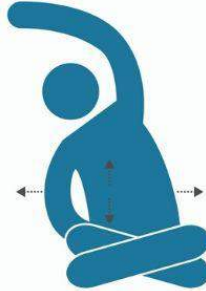
5. Roll head slowly to the right two times



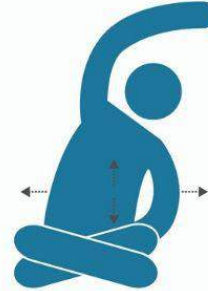
6. Lean torso to the right, forward, to the left, back two times



7. Lean torso to the left, forward, to the right, back two times



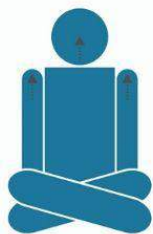
8. Lean torso to the right and reach left arm over head, lean forward, lean to the left and reach right arm over head, and up to center



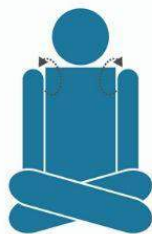
9. Lean torso to the left and reach right arm over head, lean forward, lean to the right and reach left arm over head, and up to center



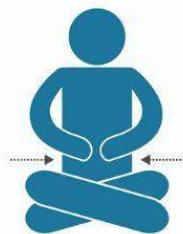
10. Roll head and shoulders down



11. Roll head and shoulders up



12. Roll shoulders back four times



13. Breathe in and tighten and release muscles four times



14. Take four deep breaths



15. Say the MTW mantra

# Breathing Strategies

Choose a student from the class to come to the front of the classroom to lead the group in three deep breaths using these suggested breathing techniques from our closing videos. Choose from one of the strategies below. If you'd like, you can encourage students to come up with their own breathing strategies, either individually or as a class!



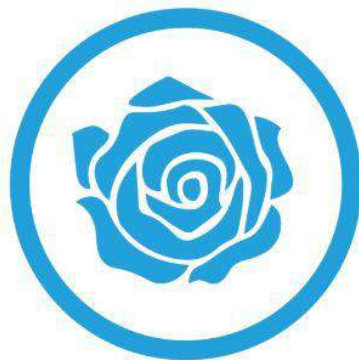
**Grasping for Air**

Inhale deeply grip your hand in a fist. As you exhale, slowly breathe out and count to five using your fingers.



**Ballooning**

Pretend you're holding a balloon between your hands. Pull your hands away from each other as you breathe in and inflate the pretend balloon, and bring them closer together as you exhale and deflate the balloon.



**Smell the Roses**

Inhale and raise your arms overhead like the petals of a rose. Breathe out through your mouth and stretch your arms out in front of you as you exhale.



# LOOKING FOR MORE?

Contact our team to learn more about supporting SEL in your community, or sign up for our newsletter to receive SEL resources, tips, and best practices!

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