

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 goals, manage stress, and demonstrate resilience.
- **Social awareness**—including the ability to empathize and take the perspectives of others from similar and diverse backgrounds.
- **Relationship skills**—including establishing and maintaining healthy relationships and collaboratively finding solutions to challenges.
- **Responsible decision making**—including analyzing situations, solving problems, and making decisions that promote collective well-being.

Keep in mind that the “braided” nature of the competencies means that some prompts may tap into multiple competencies at once or resist categorization.

How to use this reflection tool

Educators can implement elements of this tool 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 meeting.
- Have students write first and then **pair/share** to discuss their answers with a partner.
- Include questions within assignments that students may be completing at home.

Developmentally appropriate reflections

While the overarching goals remain the same across grade levels, the types of questions will vary depending on student levels. 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 during online learning or your transition back to school?
- 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 supports.

- 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 you needed help.
- 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.
- 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 related to achieving personal and academic goals.

- What are some goals you have in school or at home?
- What strategies help you reach your goals?
- 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?
- How have conditions or context impacted your ability to achieve a goal? What did you do?
- 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. 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 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?
- Write about a time you misjudged someone who was different than you. What did you learn from the experience?
- How would you describe your personal identity? How is it similar or different than that of people around you?
- Analyze how the media create or reinforce societal expectations of various social and cultural groups.

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 friends 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 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.

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 resisted negative peer pressure.
- Write about a time you saw a conflict de-escalated or defused. What made it possible?



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.

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

- Write about a positive decision you made 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 student 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?

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?
- 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?

