

I N S T R U C T I O N A L S U P P O R T

LESSON PLANS, STRATEGIES, AND ASSESSMENTS

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SELF-AWARENESS

TOPIC OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHER

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.” —Aristotle

DESCRIPTION

Self-awareness is the ability to reflect on our own thoughts, feelings, behavior, preferences, and skills. This knowledge opens the door to making positive changes in the way we treat ourselves and others. Emotional states provide powerful information that can indicate a need to address problems, take a new approach, or care for ourselves differently. Identifying emotions before acting on them allows us to stop, think, and plan instead of behaving impulsively. Self-aware people observe patterns in the way emotions, such as anger, frustration, or insecurity, often lead to predictable reactions. This gives them more control over their behavior and relationships. For many early adolescents, emotions are in a heightened state as they deal with the onset of puberty and hormonal changes. Increased self-awareness can give tweens a sense of control over their behavior as well as boost the confidence that comes from knowing themselves well and feeling comfortable in their own skin. The purpose of the Self-Awareness book pair is to show tweens what self-awareness looks like in practice and how it can lead to positive changes in their lives.

NONFICTION SYNOPSIS

Self-Awareness examines how thoughts, feelings, and motivations shape behavior. It also explores how paying attention to inner states can give people more control over their actions. Readers are introduced to practical tips for becoming more self-aware. One is to listen to their thoughts and feelings, noting that negative thoughts may indicate areas of worry they need to address. Another tip is to notice patterns in how they react to certain emotions—e.g., a surge of anger causing them to lash out or frustration leading them to give up on a task too soon. By becoming aware of the emotional and physical signs that often accompany impulsive behavior, readers can learn to stop and think before acting. This helps them engage in constructive activities instead. Finally, the book explores getting to know personal strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, leading to a respect for individual differences and an appreciation of what makes each person unique. Overall, the book shows how self-awareness not only gives people greater knowledge and acceptance of themselves but also the power to change.



FICTION SYNOPSIS

In *Camping Disaster*, Tien is invited to go camping with Mia Cortez, one of the most popular girls in sixth grade. Tien hopes it will be the start of a new friendship. Camping, however, ends up being far outside her comfort zone. After a difficult night trying to sleep through a thunderstorm and a visit from a frog, Tien wakes up so cranky that she begins snapping at Mia and Mr. Cortez. Then, embarrassed over being unable to roll her sleeping bag properly, Tien takes her bad feelings out on Mia by insulting her. Tempers flare, and Mia tells Tien to leave. Tien arrives home to find her older sister Hoa baking cookies. As the sisters talk, Hoa helps Tien realize that she is more comfortable doing indoor activities and that going camping probably overwhelmed her, leading her to behave rudely. When Tien reveals that her true motivation for going camping was to befriend Mia, Hoa suggests a plan to win Mia back. Tien takes Mia a tin of cookies and invites her over to decorate them. By choosing an activity in her comfort zone, Tien is finally able to relax and have fun with Mia. That gives their friendship a real chance to grow.



SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Use these resources at any time during the unit to extend students' understanding of self-awareness and its benefits.

- ACT for Youth, a partnership of Cornell University and the University of Rochester, has provided a collection of free self-awareness resources teachers can use to help students identify and build on their strengths as well as their unique thinking and learning styles. These resources may be found at http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/self-awareness.cfm.
- The following learning apps can help make exploring self-awareness a fun daily habit for kids:
 - The Zones of Regulation — <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/the-zones-of-regulation-app.html>
 - Me: A Kid's Diary — <https://tinybop.com/apps/me>
 - YouHue — <https://www.youhue.com/>
- The movie *Inside Out* is an entertaining look at self-awareness. Written with the help of psychologists and designed for all age groups, the movie follows a young girl's internal emotions as they try to guide her through a difficult, life-changing event.
- Learning Works for Kids offers resources to encourage kids who are deeply immersed in video games to incorporate self-awareness into their play. This resource may be found at <https://learningworksforkids.com/educators/self-awareness/>.
- Invite various staff members from school to participate in a “self-awareness interview.” Help students prepare several questions related to the topic of self-awareness to ask each person. For example: *Do you always feel like getting up and coming to school? What makes you happiest during the school day? What is the hardest thing about your job?* Invite each interviewee to answer the questions by video, in person, or in writing.
- Take the class outside to a school garden or field. Tell students to spend a few minutes sitting quietly, observing the nature around them and focusing on their five senses. When the time is up, ask questions to help students become aware of their reactions. Here are some questions you might ask:
 - How did the activity make you feel?
 - Were you bored or did you have trouble sitting still?
 - What did you notice around you?
 - Was your mind quiet or did thoughts fill your head?

SELF-AWARENESS SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

Read the following story to the students or arrange for volunteers to act it out in front of the class.

Football tryouts were coming up. Heath was worried. It was not about his football skills. He was one of the best athletes at school. The problem was his citizenship grade. His last progress report was not good. A low grade would make him ineligible for the team.

continued on next page

Every day he tried to stay out of trouble. But his name always ended up on the board. Today there were two tally marks next to it. If he got one more, he would have to go to after-school detention.

Heath tried to stare straight ahead at the teacher. This was hard because the student in front of him, Josh, kept turning around. He was really getting on Heath's nerves. The day before, Josh had beaten Heath in a one-on-one basketball game. Today he kept tapping his fingers on Heath's desk. Heath's eyes wandered down to look. Josh was spelling out a word with his finger on the desk: L-O-S-E-R. Heath reached out and loudly smacked the back of Josh's chair. Josh yelped. Everyone looked at them. Just then, the bell rang.

The teacher asked Heath to stay behind. Heath told her what Josh had done. "That doesn't mean you should lose your cool," the teacher said. "What did you think smacking his chair would accomplish?"

Heath hadn't been thinking. His whole body had just reacted in the moment. His face had gotten hot. His heart had pounded. Then he had just felt like hitting something. "I guess I was mad," he said.

"I have an idea," the teacher said. "Next time, pay attention when you feel that anger in your body. Then count to ten before you react."

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Ask students to turn to nearby classmates and discuss what they think caused Heath's behavior. Then have them talk about how Heath might have handled the situation differently.

Once students have finished talking, ask the class as a whole to answer the following questions:

1. Why did Heath smack Josh's chair even though it could hurt his citizenship grade? (He reacted before he had time to think about the consequences.)
2. What signs in his body showed that Heath was angry? (His face got hot; his heart pounded.)
3. How might counting to ten change the way Heath reacts when he feels angry? (With time to cool down, he might decide not to take an action that could get him in trouble.) How could this help him in the long term? (Responses will vary.)
4. Describe a situation in your own life when you reacted too fast and later regretted it. What could you have done differently? (Responses will vary.)

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

Write the word *Self-Awareness* on the board. Underline the first part of the word and ask students what it means (e.g., your own mind and body). Then underline the second part of the word and ask students what it means (e.g., noticing or paying attention). Explain that self-awareness means paying attention to what goes on in your own mind and body. This includes thoughts, feelings, and motivations, as well as physical sensations (such as a pounding heart or sweaty palms) that signal strong emotions. Being able to identify feelings right away gives people the power to decide whether or not to act on them. As a result, self-aware people have more control over their behavior and how they come across to other people. Ask volunteers to share some examples of self-awareness in everyday interactions.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC

The following activities are suggestions to help students better understand self-awareness.

- **Whole Class Activity:** Gather several photographs that might evoke a range of emotions (e.g., an amusement park thrill ride with a vertical drop; fans cheering at a game; someone fishing at a lake; a bee on someone's face; a group of puppies; a student giving an oral presentation). Have each student take out a sheet of paper. Then display the first image. Ask students to write down their immediate reactions to the photo, paying attention to any feelings, emotions, or thoughts they experience. Model thinking aloud as you react to the photo, pointing out that some physical sensations may be instant. For example, you might say, "The second I saw the photo of this amusement park ride, it made me remember how I got sick the last time I went on a ride. First, I noticed my stomach did a somersault. I felt nauseous. My heart also started to pound. I'm going to write these things immediately so I don't forget. The ride looks scary, so I'll write down *scary*. I'm not sure I ever want to go on a ride like that again." Invite students to record and share their own reactions to the photo, pointing out that it is normal for people to have different feelings. Display the other images in the series and have students write and discuss their reactions to each one.
- **Small Group Activity:** Pass out a set of blank index cards to each group. Have groups brainstorm several emotion words, such as *happy*, *sad*, *afraid*, and *angry*, writing one on each card. Tell students to choose words everyone in their group is familiar with. Next, have each group shuffle the cards and place them facedown. Have one student draw a card, keeping it hidden from the others. The student should give several clues about the emotion without naming it. For example, a student might say, "Tears stream down my cheeks. I walk slowly with my head down." The rest of the group should remain silent until the presenter is done. Then have them discuss which emotion they think is being presented and why. Students should take turns presenting.
- **Partner Activity:** Have partners work together to write a short skit with two characters and two different endings. Choose some of the emotions that can be felt strongly from the emotion vocabulary cards (e.g., *embarrassment*, *fear*, *furious*, *hurt*, *jealous*, *sad*). Give each pair one of these cards. Their skit should illustrate a situation where someone might feel that emotion strongly. Then have them write two alternate endings. These should show two different ways the character could react to this feeling. Have partners perform their skits in front of the class. Lead the class in a discussion of which reaction they think was more self-aware and how they might have behaved differently in that situation.

PREPARE TO READ

Show students the covers of the two books for this topic. Ask them what they notice on the covers. Read them the following previews:

Self-Awareness Preview: Do you ever wonder what makes you "you"? Why do you act like yourself and not like someone else? Self-awareness can help you understand all the ways you are unique. It can also give you the power to choose who you want to become.

Camping Disaster Preview: Mia, a popular girl at school, invites Tien on a camping trip. Tien is excited for the chance to become good friends with Mia. There is just one problem: Tien hates camping. Will the trip be a bonding experience—or a big mistake?

Ask students to turn to a partner and talk about the topic of self-awareness and what they think will happen in *Camping Disaster*. Then have volunteers share their predictions with the class.

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

FEATURED EMOTION WORDS

Point out that each of the books students just previewed includes five emotion words that are highlighted in the text. These words are emotions that people feel and exhibit. Learning the meaning and visual cues for these emotions helps students become more self-aware. Introduce the emotions and their definitions below using the emotion vocabulary cards in the *GO! SEL Literacy Library* box.

- confident** feeling sure of oneself
- discouraged** losing hope that something will succeed
- excitement** an eager, energetic feeling
- fear** worry that something will cause harm or pain
- uncomfortable** feeling slightly bad or uneasy in a situation

EMOTION VOCABULARY CARD ACTIVITIES

Display the photo side of each of the five emotion vocabulary cards for this topic. Have students name the emotion represented by each photo and then brainstorm situations where someone might feel that emotion.

Display the word and definition side of each vocabulary card. Have students copy each word on an index card and then trace the letters as they say the word. Emphasize proper pronunciation.

Have students work with partners. Instruct each pair to choose two emotions from the list of five. Have partners draw cartoon strips to represent someone experiencing each emotion. Ask students to share their cartoon strips with the class.

EMOTI-CARD ACTIVITIES

Introduce the Emoti-Cards for the five emotion vocabulary words for this topic. First show the illustration and point out the facial cues noted. Ask students to name the emotion depicted, and then turn the card to reveal if they were correct. Then turn the card back to the illustration side. Write the facial cues on the board and model each one. Have students practice each modeled facial cue while saying the emotion out loud. For example, for *fear*, model opening your eyes wide while drawing in your breath suddenly, and have students mimic you as they say “fear.”

Display the illustration side of the Emoti-Cards. Have students update their emotion vocabulary index cards by adding a drawing of the emotion, using the facial cues listed on the Emoti-Card.

Provide students with small mirrors. Have students practice displaying each emotion in the mirror by using the facial cues listed on the illustration side of the Emoti-Cards.

MATCH THE CARDS

Display the photo side of the emotion vocabulary cards and the illustration side of the Emoti-Cards. Ask for volunteers to come up to the front of the room to make a match and have them explain their reasoning. Then instruct them to turn the cards over to confirm the match. Set up a station in the classroom where individual students or pairs can practice matching the emotion vocabulary cards to the Emoti-Cards as time permits.

MODEL THE EMOTIONS

The following activities are suggestions to help students make further connections between the emotions and unspoken clues.

- **Whole Class Activity:** Ask volunteers to come to the front of the classroom and model any of the five emotions without using verbal clues. Have the class guess which emotion it is and identify what in the volunteer's facial expression and body language communicates that emotion. Display the Emoti-Card for that emotion and compare the facial cues listed on the card to the clues provided by the volunteer.
- **Partner Practice:** Assign pairs and have them sit facing each other. Instruct students to take turns modeling any of the five emotions for this topic while their partners guess what the emotion is and explain what facial and body language clues tipped them off. Continue until all five emotions have been modeled by each partner.

EMOTION ROLE-PLAY

Use the following scripts or have students develop their own to help the class understand how the five emotions may be expressed in everyday life.

- **Confident:** [scene is a community pool where two friends are swimming]
Friend 1: I'm going off the high dive. Watch me!
Friend 2: Whoa. You've never done it before. Are you sure you're ready?
Friend 1: Yes! I've practiced a million times on the low dive, and I'm a strong swimmer.
Friend 2: That's true. Go for it!
- **Discouraged:** [scene is a science classroom where two classmates are looking at a pot of dirt]
Classmate 1: Our science project is a disaster! None of our seeds sprouted. They were supposed to be three inches tall by now. All that's here is dirt.
Classmate 2: Maybe we should move the pot somewhere else.
Classmate 1: We already tried moving it to the windowsill. Nothing happened. Then we tried watering it more. That didn't help either. Next we used fertilizer. Nothing is working. Our project is going to fail.
Classmate 2: Don't give up. Let's talk to the teacher. Maybe our project can be about why some plants *don't* grow.
- **Excitement:** [scene is early morning in the bedroom of two siblings]
Sibling 1: Wake up! Do you remember what today is?
Sibling 2: Yes! It's Field Day. That means no classes. We get to play sports all day.
Sibling 1: Today is the best day of the year. I'm going to wear my new sneakers. Do you think I can win?
Sibling 2: You'll have to beat me first. Let's get dressed. I'll race you to breakfast!

- **Fear:** [scene is a dentist's office where a patient is getting a filling]

Patient: Uh-oh, what is that? Is it going to hurt?

Dentist: Don't worry. This is just a dental drill. It's how I remove the decay from your tooth. Since we numbed your mouth, you won't feel a thing.

Patient: What if my tooth breaks? Could I choke?

Dentist: I promise nothing bad will happen. Please hold still.

- **Uncomfortable:** [scene is a classroom where a student is at the teacher's desk]

Student: Mrs. Diaz, can we skip my turn? I don't want to do this. My singing voice is embarrassing.

Teacher: Everyone has to sing one line of the anthem. It's a good way to memorize it.

Student: Ugh. "*O say can you see . . .*" This is so awkward.

Teacher: Just keep going. You're doing great.

ROLE-PLAY FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Talk about each emotion role-play as a class. Use the following questions as guides for each discussion:

1. What clues helped you pick up on the emotion the main character felt?
2. Should the main character have handled the situation any differently? If so, how?
3. How do you express this emotion in your daily life?
4. What are some good ways to react if you see someone experiencing this emotion?

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS (NONFICTION)

SELF-AWARENESS

PAGES 4–7 What is one example of someone being self-aware in the opening scenes? (Responses will vary.) How would you define self-awareness? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 8–11 How is listening to your instincts different from using logic? (With instincts, you sense something but can't explain why.)

PAGES 12 AND 13 Why might it be useful to know what motivates you to work hard? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 14–17 How does self-awareness give you power? (It helps you reflect on your actions so you can make changes for the better.)

PAGES 18 AND 19 Why might taking a break from devices force you to be more self-aware? (It removes distractions so you can pay attention to your thoughts.)

PAGES 20 AND 21 How do you move when you are excited? (fast, energetically) How might excitement show in your tone of voice? (You might speak loudly, quickly, and cheerfully.) Based on the context clues, what does the word *excitement* mean? (an eager, energetic feeling)

PAGES 22–29 Why might it be useful to identify the cause of a bad mood? (Then you can try to fix the problem or talk to someone about it.)

PAGES 30–33 What was a time you reacted quickly to something? How did you feel about your reaction later? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 34 AND 35 What happens to your body when you feel fear? (Responses will vary.) Based on the context clues, what does the word *fear* mean? (worry that something will cause harm or pain)

PAGES 36 AND 37 Why might you make better choices after you have had time to calm down? (You can think through what is best for you instead of doing something you later regret.)

PAGES 38–41 What are some positive ways to deal with negative feelings? (focusing on something good, helping others, staying active, and talking with others)

PAGES 42 AND 43 How do people act when they feel discouraged? (They might complain, give up, and look sad or angry.) What choices do people have when they get discouraged? (quit, try harder, or try something new) Based on the context clues, what does the word *discouraged* mean? (losing hope that something will succeed)

PAGES 44–51 Think about activities you really like. What do they have in common? (Responses will vary.) Now think of activities you do not like. What do those have in common? (Responses will vary.)

PAGES 52–55 Based on the context clues, what does the word *uncomfortable* mean? (feeling slightly bad or uneasy in a situation) What are some reasons an activity might feel uncomfortable? (It might be new to you; you might not be good at it; you might not like it.)

PAGES 56–61 How do confident people act? (Responses will vary.) Based on the context clues, what does the word *confident* mean? (feeling sure of oneself)

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS (FICTION)

CAMPING DISASTER

PAGES 3–7 What details show Tien’s fear? (She froze, wanted to scream, and imagined the creature jumping into her mouth.) How did Mia show that she was confident? (She caught the frog, gave facts about it, and calmly set it outside.)

PAGES 8–13 What clues show that Tien was in a bad mood? (Everything she said to Mr. Cortez was a complaint.) Why might she have been in a bad mood? (She did not sleep well in the tent.)

PAGES 14 AND 15 What are some reasons Mia might have been angry? (Tien was being rude by complaining; she might have felt hurt that her friend was not having fun.)

PAGES 16 AND 17 Why did Tien feel discouraged? (She could not roll her sleeping bag as neatly as Mia did.)

PAGES 18 AND 19 Why was Tien uncomfortable being watched? (She was embarrassed about not doing a good job.) Why did Tien start thinking about all the things Mia was good at? (She was comparing herself to Mia.)

PAGES 20 AND 21 Why do you think Tien insulted Mia? (Tien felt inadequate and putting Mia down made her feel better.)

PAGES 22 AND 23 How did Mia’s mood change? (She became very angry.) What caused Mia’s mood to change? (Tien was rude to her.)

PAGES 24 AND 25 What are some clues that the ride back home was uncomfortable? (No one spoke; Mia did not respond when Tien said goodbye; Mr. Cortez raised an eyebrow; Mia rolled her eyes.)

PAGES 26 AND 27 How did Tien’s mood change when she got home? (She felt better.) Hoa said, “I like to be comfy indoors.” How does this comment show self-awareness? (Hoa recognizes what kind of setting makes her feel good.)

PAGES 28 AND 29 What does it feel like to be excited about something? (Responses will vary.) What was Tien’s motivation for saying yes to the camping trip? (She wanted Mia to like her.)

PAGES 30–33 What were some signs that Tien had self-awareness about how she behaved? (She told Hoa that she got mad because she felt dumb, and she asked if she was a rude person.) Why did Hoa think Tien behaved rudely? (Camping was outside her comfort zone, so Tien felt overwhelmed.)

PAGES 34 AND 35 How could listening to her feelings have helped Tien avoid this situation? (She could have realized that camping would make her uncomfortable and suggested a different activity instead.)

PAGES 36 AND 37 How did Tien show self-awareness when she talked to Mia? (She apologized and explained that feeling bad in an uncomfortable setting caused her to lose her cool.)

PAGES 38 AND 39 What steps did Tien take to repair her friendship with Mia? (She gave Mia a gift and suggested they do something else together next time.)

PAGES 40–45 What clues show that Tien was more comfortable with baking than Mia? (Tien called baking her “favorite indoor sport” and knew how to make frosting roses; Mia was clumsy and messy at first.) Why do you think Mia laughed instead of getting mad when she messed up the frosting roses? (Responses will vary.)

Name _____

Date _____

Self-Awareness: Quiz

DIRECTIONS: Read the question. Then fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Which is an example of self-awareness?

- A. reacting instantly
- B. not caring about others
- C. noticing your feelings
- D. ignoring your weaknesses

2. What does *motivation* mean?

- A. what causes a person to act
- B. a quick action
- C. something felt in the body
- D. giving up too soon

3. What can help you deal with negative thoughts?

- A. noticing what is bothering you
- B. talking with an adult
- C. taking action to fix a problem
- D. all of the above

4. When something makes you angry, how can you avoid reacting in a negative way?

- A. Pretend you are not angry.
- B. Take your feelings out on someone.
- C. Take time to calm down.
- D. Listen to your gut.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the question below. Use complete sentences.

5. How can self-awareness be helpful at school?

Self-Awareness: Quiz

DIRECTIONS: Read the emotions and definitions. Write each emotion next to its definition.

confident	discouraged	excitement	fear	uncomfortable
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- 6. _____ losing hope that something will succeed
- 7. _____ feeling slightly bad or uneasy in a situation
- 8. _____ an eager, energetic feeling
- 9. _____ feeling sure of oneself
- 10. _____ worry that something will cause harm or pain

DIRECTIONS: Look at each set of pictures. Write the emotion being shown on the line beside the pictures.

11.			_____
12.			_____
13.			_____
14.			_____
15.			_____