

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.

FIRST GRADE



WHY DO THIS?

IF WE... take time to reflect on ourselves and our experiences... **NOTES TO SELF** THEN WE... will build positive identity and mindsets... SO WE... can appreciate our strengths and be able to harness them in pursuit of goals.

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?
 - 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.



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.