

# Staying on Task/Self-Talk

## Social Emotional Learning

**Project and Purpose:** Students will practice self-talk to complete simple art tasks.

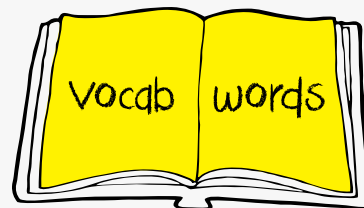
**Note:** Before class, set up at least three stations, preferably art stations such as: coloring station, cutting station, collage station, stencil station, etc. An alternative is to use any other stations you typically use in the classroom to complete certain tasks other than silent reading. Stations with a visual art focus are highly recommended as they offer the opportunity to practice an art skill as well as apply the lessons learned to other curricular areas.

### Essential Question:

How can we use self-talk to help stay on task?



- Coloring pages
- Crayons
- Paper Tape
- Scissors
- Paper
- Glue
- Stencils



task

focus

**Room Set up:** Chairs, tables and desks pushed back to create an open space to move and interact.

## Introduction

1. Announce that your main task today is to talk about what it means to stay on task. Define task as a job that requires our complete attention-it's like focus to finish a job. Talk about tasks and working even when there are distractions.
2. Comment on how to talk to yourself so you can stay on task:
  - a. State the task in a quiet voice or quietly in your head. Locate the instructions.
  - b. Give yourself a pep talk in a quiet voice. Tell yourself you can do this.
  - c. Quietly ask friends or the teacher to help you stay on task – ask friends to quiet their voices a bit or encourage them to work with you or ask the teacher for silencing headphones or extra instructions.
  - d. Compliment yourself when you finish.

Notes:

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## Direct Instruction (I do)

1. Tell students you will demonstrate what staying on task looks like. Choose a simple activity such as reading a book or coloring a picture, and begin the task by stating what the task is and what your goal is (e.g., to finish up to page 4, to color all the sky orange). Self-narrate how you help yourself stay on task.
  - a. State your task in a quiet voice: I need to color this entire sky orange.
  - b. Give yourself a pep talk in a quiet voice: That means I need an orange crayon. Hmm... I have to remember what orange looks like... I know the first letter is O. Here it is! I can do this. I just need to stay in the lines. Oops, I went out of the lines in this little corner. That's okay, though, it's only a little bit. The rest of it looks great.
  - c. Quietly ask friends or the teacher for support if you need it: Hey, (name of child next to your drawing hand), can you move over a little bit so my coloring hand doesn't bump into you? Thank you.
  - d. Compliment yourself when you finish: I did a good job! I made a mistake but I like it anyway!
2. Debrief the experience with the students. Give attention to the time you colored outside of the lines. Ask students about your reaction: did you get upset? Did you throw away the picture? How did you handle it? What did you say to yourself to keep going and stay on task?
3. Collect other things students can say to themselves to stay on task or when they finish the task. Especially when things go a little wrong. These ideas might include:
  - a. I know exactly what I have to do.
  - b. I can do this.
  - c. I am trying hard. That's important.
  - d. I finished the whole (task).
  - e. I know I can improve. This is just the first step.
  - f. I'm proud I did not give up.

## Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Tell students that the class will have choices of centers in the room and they will use the self-talk method to help themselves stay on task. Remember that some students do not like to talk to themselves in their minds, not with their voices. That is fine, too.
2. Visit each station and review the steps for each task.
3. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate using self-talk for positive support in each station.

## Independent Practice (You do)

1. Send students to centers according to your class practice, and tell them to practice their self-talk while working.
2. Encourage quiet voices in each station and respect for their peers who wish to self-talk in their heads.

Notes:

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### Conclusion/Reflection

#### Gather back as a group and Discussion:

1. How did you do?
2. Was it hard or easy to use self-talk to stay on task?
3. What else did you do to try to stay on task?

#### Connect to the classroom:

1. Why is staying on task difficult sometimes?
2. How can we use self-talk to help ourselves stay on task?
3. How can we help each other stay on task?
4. What do staying on task and being focused have in common?
5. Why is it important to stay on task?

Notes:

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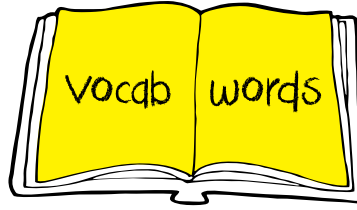
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## Vocabulary Definitions

### task (n)

- Definition: A piece of work to be done or undertaken.
- Context: The students had the task of cleaning up the classroom together.

### focus (v)

- Definition: to direct one's attention or efforts.
- Context: Mark was ready to focus on his reading and finish the book.