

Seek to Understand Perspectives (Elementary)

Do you and a friend have completely different feelings about something? Maybe you don't like to play the same sports or read the same books. You might even have a friend who thinks some of the things you like to do seem strange. The reason is that we all have different perspectives. When we have different perspectives, it can sometimes lead to conflict.

When you don't understand someone's actions or feelings, you can use the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** to try to figure out how the other person thinks or feels. You imagine things from their point of view. You can even ask them questions like "Can you tell me how you are feeling?" or "Is there something I don't understand?"

Everyone has their own unique way of perceiving things based on experiences they have had. ***Seeking to understand perspectives*** helps you think about someone else's background and experiences and how those influence their thoughts and feelings.

I used the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** when my friend Brandon and I got into a disagreement about the music program. Our teacher had just asked me to sing the solo. I was so excited! I rushed over to Brandon and exclaimed, "I get to sing the solo in our music program next week! I am going to invite all my family to come! Isn't that great?" Brandon shrugged his shoulders and mumbled, "I guess." I couldn't believe he wasn't excited for me, so I shouted, "You don't even care about me! At least you could be excited for me!" Then he just walked away.

Brandon was a good friend, so I couldn't understand why he was acting this way. I used the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** to help me understand the argument. I needed to hear his perspective about why he wasn't happy for me. I asked, "Is there something I don't understand? You're a good friend, so when you walked away, it confused me. Can you explain what you are feeling?"

Brandon explained that he had walked away because he had really wanted a solo and had even been taking voice lessons. He was disappointed that he didn't get the solo and felt a little jealous of me for getting it. I started to understand his perspective. I didn't know how much Brandon had wanted the solo. I told him that I understood his perspective, and he apologized for walking away. By using the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives***, I was able to understand why we had a disagreement, and I learned something new about my friend.

You can use the strategy ***seek to understand perspectives*** when it's hard for you to understand someone's thoughts or feelings. ***Seeking to understand perspectives*** helps you understand their point of view.