

Stars and Stairs

Learn how this strategy relates to the Formative Assessment Process.

[Formative Assessment Process Flier](#)



[Understanding the Formative Assessment Process](#)



Overview

Description

This strategy provides students with information about what they did well in meeting the learning goal (the stars) and what the student needs to do (the stairs) to meet all the learning goals. Stars and Stairs feedback can come from the teacher, peers, or the students themselves.

Student Benefits

Using this tool can help students:

- see which learning goals/success criteria they met.
- see which learning goals/success criteria they still need to meet and how to get there.
- modify their work before a final evaluation.
- provide peer feedback.
- learn to self-evaluate.

Suggested Materials

- Handout with a stars and stairs
- Anchor chart with stars and stairs strategy
- Rubric and/or handout with learning goals/success criteria
- Example and non-examples of feedback for students



Step-by-Step

1. Give the students an assignment (e.g., an essay or constructed response problems) and time to work on the assignment.
2. Have students turn in their assignment to you.
3. Review the learning goal, success criteria, and student exemplar with the class.
4. Pass back the work to the students with your feedback.
 1. Each student should have stars—what they did well in relation to the learning goal/success criteria.
 2. Each student should have stairs—what steps they need to take to reach all the learning goals (or move beyond the goal if a student has already reached it).
5. Provide students time to revise their work by addressing their stairs and re-collect their work.
6. Evaluate the second elicitation of student evidence using stars and stairs feedback.



Things To Consider

- Review learning goals/success criteria before students provide peer feedback or self-evaluation.
- Review learning goals/success criteria before handing work back to ensure that there is accountability for the “stairs.”
- Have students work in pairs/groups after they have addressed the feedback to see whether they addressed the stairs and achieved the learning goal/success criteria or not.
- Task older students (grades 7–12) with evaluating their own work. Provide a checklist or rubric (success criteria) for students to use while assessing their own, or a peer’s work. Have these students clearly identify their stars and stairs.
- For older students, ask the same peer editors to evaluate student work again. The teacher will assess the final iteration after giving students an opportunity for final revision.



Strategy In Action

Clarify

Stars and Stairs addresses the clarifying component of the formative assessment process, as teachers review the learning goals, success criteria, and student exemplar before handing back feedback to students.

Elicit

This strategy elicits information from students about what they know about the learning goals and success criteria. When using as peer feedback or self-assessment, students' stars and stairs feedback shows what they know about the topic.

Interpret

The students and the teacher interpret students' work using the learning goals and success criteria.

Act

The students and the teacher act upon the elicited information by providing students with positive evaluation and next steps (aka. stairs) to reach (or go beyond) the learning goals.