



## UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO EXECUTIVE FUNCTION STRATEGIES

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### WHY THIS UNIT?

The introductory module gives students and teachers an opportunity to learn more about themselves and about executive function processes. The lessons in this unit provide a general introduction to the key concepts underlying the SMARTS program. These lessons present the “big picture” about executive function, thereby promoting strategic learning and helping students to think critically and flexibly.

### WHAT IS IN THIS UNIT?

**Lesson 1: What is Metacognition? (1 hour):** Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition” and identify their personal strengths and challenges. Students begin their own strategy notebooks that they will use for the duration of the SMARTS program to record reflections and collect handouts.

**Lesson 2: What is Cognitive Flexibility? (1 hour):** Students discuss the concept of cognitive flexibility and its importance for strategy use. They complete an activity that illustrates how words can have multiple meanings.

**Lesson 3: What is Executive Function? (1 hour):** Students complete an activity that introduces them to the five executive function processes and helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses in these areas.

**Lesson 4: I-SEE a Strategy (1 hour):** Using case studies, students identify which strategies are individualized, systematic, efficient, and effective (I-SEE). Then, they examine their own strategies, refining them to ensure they fit the I-SEE model.