



## UNIT 3: COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY: SHIFTING AND FLEXIBLE THINKING

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### Why this unit?

Shifting and flexible thinking are the cornerstones of executive function. Often referred to as cognitive flexibility, shifting and flexible thinking encompass the ability to think flexibly and to shift approaches easily. Children's ability to think flexibly changes with age. During the elementary years, children have a limited understanding of the importance of using multiple approaches for solving problems. However, by middle school and high school, students begin to realize the benefits to using multiple approaches for problem solving. Lessons in this unit directly focus on students' abilities to cognitively shift so they can integrate effective strategies and use new approaches to solve problems.

### What is in this unit?

**Lesson 1: Being Flexible and Shifting Expectations (1 hour):** Review the concept of cognitive flexibility. Students will begin to think about shifting between multiple perspectives in writing at both the sentence and paragraph levels.

**Lesson 2: Shifting Perspectives in Writing (1 hour):** Students will consider the importance of a flexible approach to writing that addresses multiple audiences and rewrite a paragraph from a different perspective.

**Lesson 3: Skim and Scoop Strategy (1 hour):** This reading strategy will teach students how to comprehend what they read efficiently and how to differentiate between the main ideas and details of a text.

**Lesson 4: Purposeful Highlighting (1 hour):** Students will use highlighting to identify multiple perspectives when reading and taking notes. This strategy will also help students highlight effectively and to avoid over-highlighting (the "yellow page syndrome").

**Lesson 5: Shifty Math (1 hour):** Students will identify multiple methods for solving a problem and understand how the same problem can be analyzed in multiple ways.