I Used to Think... Now I think...

Think about what you have learned about the topic we have been studying and complete the following sentence stems:

I used to think...

Now I think...

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?
This routine helps students to reflect on their thinking about a topic or issue and explore how and why their thinking has changed. It helps consolidate new learning.

Application: When and where can I use it?
This routine can be used whenever students' initial thoughts, opinions, or beliefs are likely to have changed as a result of a learning experience. This may be after reading new information, watching a film, listening to a speaker, experiencing something new, having a class discussion, at the end of a unit of study, and so on.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?
Explain to students that the purpose of this activity is to help them reflect on their thinking about the topic and to identify how their ideas have changed over time. Here's a possible approach for using the routine:

"When we began our study of _____, you had some initial ideas about it. Take a minute to remember what ideas you previously had about _____. Write a few sentences using the sentence starter, "I used to think..."

"Now, think about how your ideas about _____ have changed as a result of what we've been studying/ doing/discussing. Again, in just a few sentences, write down what you now think about _____. Start your sentences with, 'Now, I think...'"

Have students share and explain their shifts in thinking. When you first begin using this routine, it is often helpful to do it as a whole group so that you can probe students' thinking to help them explain it in more depth. Once students become accustomed to explaining their thinking, students can share with one another in small groups and pairs.