

Lesson: Empathy



National Curriculum Learning Objectives:

1. Make contributions relevant to the topic and take turns in discussion

(Eng 3a)

2. Create, adapt and sustain different roles, individually and in groups

(Eng1 4a)

3. Use character, action and narrative to convey story, themes, emotions, ideas in plays they devise and script

(Eng 1 4b)

4. Use language and style that are appropriate to the reader

(Eng 3 1c)

5. To talk and write about their opinions and explain their views on issues that affect themselves and society

(PSHE 1a)

6. To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making amends and setting personal goals

(PSHE 1b)

6. To be sensitive to the needs of the audience and think carefully about the content and quality when communicating information [for example, work for presentation to other pupils, writing for parents, publishing on the internet]

Description

Pupils will learn the meaning of the word empathy, and most importantly how to be empathetic, through the medium of discussion and drama.

They will have the opportunity to write and perform a short dramatic piece on empathy in groups, and will use their new understanding of empathy to report on one another's work in the form of an online blog.

Suggested Time: Two 1hr sessions

Activities

Dramatic writing and performing (activity 6)

New Words:

Empathy

Blog

Resources

[Story Ajay's Journey](#)

Step 1:

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Start the session by reading aloud the story on empathy, ([Story Ajay's Journey](#)).

Next write the word 'Empathy' on the whiteboard in giant letters.

Question time!

Q: Does anyone know what the word empathy means?

Class teacher to then guide the class to establish a definition of the word Empathy and write it on the board.

For example: *Empathy; to have an understanding of another person's situation and/or feelings*

Q: How do the characters in the story show empathy towards each other?

Children should be asked to feedback to the teacher in an open discussion.

Question time!

Q: Have you ever been/felt empathetic towards someone or something?

Children to be given thinking time and then time to talk to their partner about their thoughts.

Children to feedback to the class teacher in an open discussion.

Step 2:

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Organise children into groups of four (or another suitable number) and tell them they will be working together to devise a short play where the characters display empathy towards each other in some way. *(The children should be encouraged to think about real life experiences, where they have seen people being empathetic towards each other and to make their play as realistic as possible.)*

Examples of empathy scenarios which you may like to share with the children, or offer to children who are struggling to come up with an idea.

1. Three children are playing a skipping game together on the playground during break time. They see that the new girl from their class is sitting alone on a bench. One of the girls skipping was new to the school not long ago herself, and knows what it feels like not to know anyone to play with. She goes over and invites the girl who is sitting alone to join the skipping game. She had understood and **empathised** with the new girl's situation, and was able to help her as a result. Act out this scene in a group of four.
2. A group of teachers are sitting in the staffroom eating their lunch. One of the teacher's mothers is unwell in hospital, and he is feeling very low about it. The other teachers in the

staffroom empathise with his situation, as they too have had relatives who have been unwell. One of the teachers suggests going for a nice long walk after school to clear his head. Another teacher recommends taking a photo album to the hospital that he and his mother can reminisce and smile over. The third teacher invites him round for dinner that evening, so that he does not need to cook when he gets home for the hospital. All three teachers have shown empathy and understanding to their colleague and have helped him. Act out in a group of four.

3. In a slum in Mumbai, a ten year old boy is working hard to find bottle tops that he can sell to make some money to buy dinner that night. He has not found anything worth selling and starts to feel scared about not having any food to eat.
Nearby an elderly lady sits and reads a book in the afternoon heat, as she is feeling much too hot to hang her washing out. She can see the boy searching the ground for useful things to sell. Understanding that he is struggling, she offers to give him some dinner if he will hang out her washing. He does this and together they eat rice in the early evening sun. Act out in pairs.
4. A brother and sister are sitting in their hut in their slum community doing their homework. Their mother is sewing clothes for them to wear. The younger sister is struggling with her maths homework. The elder brother has done the same homework before. The mother sees the situation and encourages her son to be empathetic and help his little sister with her homework. As he helps her, he remembers how he used to struggle with the same maths problems, and in understanding her situation, is able to help her. Act out in a group of three.

Children should be aware that they will be expected to perform their pieces to an audience. They should also be told that they will be writing a review of each other's performances, which they will then upload to an online blog.

Class teacher to visit each group whilst they are creating their pieces of drama and use questioning to develop understanding of empathy and how each character will be feeling.

Questions to ask during devising period!

Q: What facial expressions would your character have if they were in this situation?

Q: What thoughts would be in your characters mind at this point?

Q: How would your character react if they saw that happening?

Q: How did empathy help your characters live or work together?

Step 3: (NB: this next session can be started on a different day!)

Suggested time: 30 minutes

In this session children will perform the dramatic pieces they prepared in the previous session. (*Give them some time to finish them if they did not manage to do so in the previous session.*)

Pair the groups up and tell them that they will be performing their Empathy plays to one another.

Explain that the group watching the performance will need to concentrate, as later they will be asked to write a journalistic 'online' blog review on the performance that they have seen. Tell the children that they will need to be **empathetic** whilst watching the play, in order to understand what

the other characters are going through and consequently write a strong review. (NB: *The teacher or some appointed photographers could capture photos to accompany pupil's reviews.*)

Step 4:

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Once the performances have been watched children can choose whichever one they liked to write up as a blog review.

The review should be a description of what they saw and the way in which the characters showed understanding and empathy towards one another. They should also talk about what they liked about it and if there is anything they might change. (NB: It might be useful to bring in clippings of real reviews written for performances as examples.)

Children could work in groups to produce their online review or this could be set as an individual exercise.

Tip!

In order for children to write their review using constructive criticism, teachers can use a 'wish' and 'star' system where children prefix their sentence with a 'star' for something that they liked, and a 'wish' for something that they would change; this structure enables the review to be written kindly and fairly.

Step 5:

Once reviews are finished they can be uploaded onto the 'Enterprise 4 Change' website for sharing!

Fundraise with Enterprise 4 Change!

You can help to support the children that live within Mumbai's slum communities!

Let us tell you about Ashna, she is a 10 year old girl who lives in the Shivaji Nagar slum community, she gets up at 5am every day to help her mother cook and clean for the day before heading to the fish market. At the fish market she will spend five hours cleaning in a hot and smelly environment, before going to collect her baby brother from a nearby crèche and looking after him until their mother returns home after a long day working on the rubbish tip.

You can support girls like Ashna by holding a fundraising event, click [here](#) for ideas!

The money you raise will help to pay for Ashna's education so that she can go to school and have the best possible chance at a great future!