

Do Something That Matters

# Growing our happiness

WEEK ONE



# How to be an Empathy Activist



**Read**

**Connect**



**Act**



We are going to be Empathy Activists and take action on the things that matter to you!

First step is to read or listen to a story. This will help us find inspiration and understand other people's feelings and experiences.

We'll then connect further with the characters to deepen our understanding and build our empathy.

And then we'll decide what action to take.

Teachers - pick a story to read connected to the theme. Choose from our selection, or choose a book you already know.

Read it together as a class (picture books can be used in this way for older students as great way to dive into a subject, or read an excerpt of a longer novel).

As you read you may like to highlight the feelings and emotions of the characters - pictures may be especially useful for this. Identify how characters are feeling and find as many different words to describe them as you can. It's useful to share that characters may be feeling a mix of emotions, just like we do in real life.

SEND students: Use emojis or emotions charts so students can identify different feelings through the story.

Older students: chart how feelings change through the story or excerpt, and link the changes of

feeling to triggers or events in the narrative.



## Talking points

# Growing our happiness

What makes you happy, and how can you do more of it?

When you feel sad, angry or upset, what helps you feel better?

What are your best ways to cope with anxiety or stress?

How comfortable do you feel sharing emotions with others?



Using the story and character discussion as inspiration, start to link the feelings in the story with what you notice around you.

Use these themed discussion points, or add your own based on the book you've used as inspiration.

As you discuss further, start to identify what themes keep coming up for the group.

There is no need for students to share anything personal. Remember that you can keep the discussion within the story if that feels more comfortable, eg 'Character x is feeling sad, what might help them feel better?'

# What matters to you?

Where would  
**more empathy**  
help?

As a group,  
identify one  
issue you'd like  
to **change**

Add your idea to our  
**nationwide discussion**



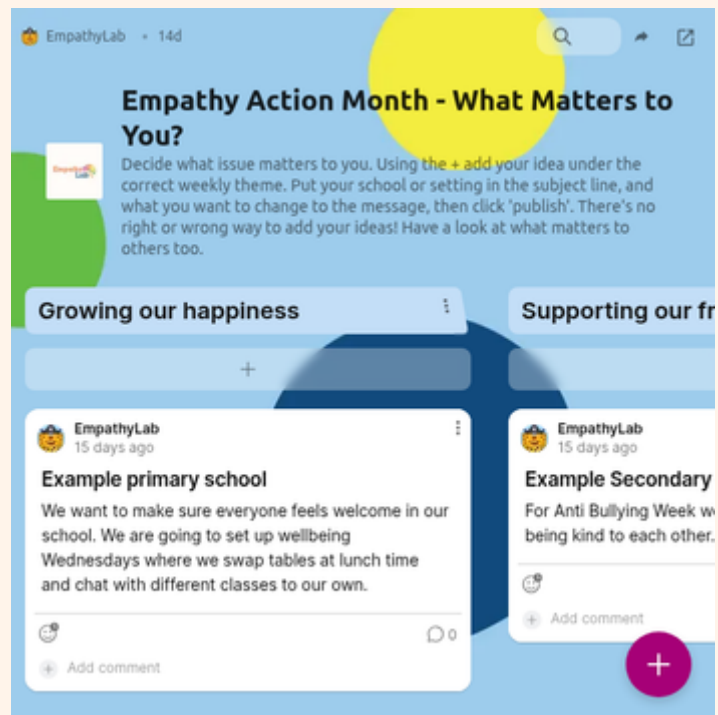
From your discussion, identify what matters most to the group. What are interested by, or what gets them talking. Is there something they feel is unjust, or unfair?

As a group is there an issue which you feel everyone is keen to change? It could be something related to them which, or it could be something they feel others are experiencing and needs to change.

What you identify is likely to be inspired by the story you've read, but if you go off on a tangent, that's fine too! What's most important is that the group feel compelled to take action.

# What matters to you?

click on the padlet to add your ideas and join our nationwide discussion



Click on the padlet link and follow the instructions (in grey at the top) to add what matters to your group.

Make sure you add it under the correct themed week!

And add your school or setting name to the subject line.

There's no right or wrong way to express your idea - it could be simply the issue you have identified, or it could also be how you think you might want to change it.

Take a look at what other settings have added as inspiration too. Feel free to add comments on other ideas if your group have thoughts to add.

# Do you need to find out more to help you create a change?

You could:



**Research**



**Read**



**Create a survey**



Now you have an issue identified, do you need to find out more to help you take action?

What do you need to find out? Who could you ask, or where could you look?

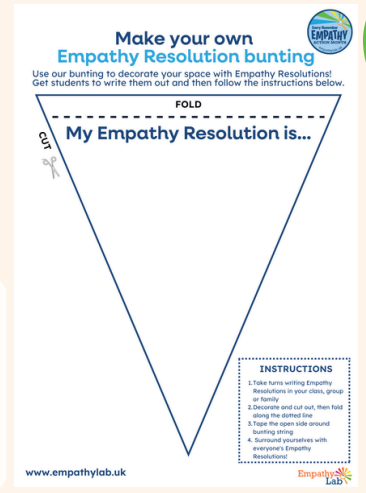
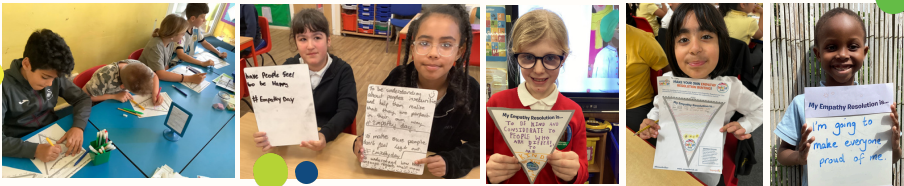
You could split into groups to do some further research and deepen your understanding of how the issue affects others.

# What action will you take?

## Create an Empathy Resolution

- To listen really carefully, especially to people I disagree with!
- To make people feel better when they're down by acknowledging their problems.
- Don't laugh at people when they make mistakes!
- When families are sick help them in return.

Resolutions from author, Rashmi Sirdeshpande and students from Oasis Academy



Now that you have identified an issue and understood as much as you can, building your empathy for those affected, it's time to think about the action you will take.

An Empathy Resolution is promise of small person action you will take to make a real life change.

You could make these as individuals, or create a group resolution.

The resolution could help you take a small step towards a bigger change, eg listening to people most affected by the issue you have noted.

Use our resolution bunting (download and print from the web resources) to display your resolutions in your setting.



# Turn your Empathy Resolutions into action

As a group, decide what you can do - however small!

1.

**WHAT** needs to  
happen and  
**WHEN?**

2.

**WHO** is going to  
take the actions  
forward?



Just making a resolution may be enough for now - small steps!

But if you wish, you could create an action plan for real change.

Using the issue you have identified:  
What would make a difference, what action could you take?

Break it down into easy to manage steps.

When can you take the action?

Who will be responsible for each step?

Create map or timeline of your steps. What is your deadline to complete each step?



Thank you for taking part in Empathy Action Month!

You have been inspired by a story to connect with the feelings and experiences of others, boosting your empathy skills.

Thinking through what you want to change will help you see that you can take steps to create real life change!

How can you help each other continue to practice your Empathy Resolutions and / or follow through with your action plan?

We'd love to hear what actions you take, and what changes because of YOUR Empathy Activism. Let us know using #EmpathyAction Month, email [info@empathylab.uk](mailto:info@empathylab.uk), or add more to your padlet entry!