



# EMPATHY CONNECTION

**(3 - 5)**

This unit builds multiple pathways for students to develop and practice empathy for those around them. Based on an emerging body of research, we have learned that empathy can be enhanced by witnessing it, practicing it, discovering commonalities with others, creating space to process empathy in real time, and learning how good it feels to understand and ultimately help others. In this unit, through true narratives from peers to those based on real experiences of humans and animals around the globe, your students will experience perspectives, emotions, and connections that will give their empathy muscles quite a workout!

-  **Circle of Compassion**
-  **Someone Else's Shoes**
-  **A Day in the Life**
-  **If You Could See the World through My Eyes**
-  **Empathy Blockers**
-  **Find Your Voice**
-  **Empathy in Our School**

THEME:  
THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# CIRCLE OF COMPASSION

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we connect our concern for the world around us with acts that meaningfully impact those in need?

## OVERVIEW

After being introduced to the concept of compassion, students will be challenged to think about how much they express it in their everyday lives and how to find opportunities to practice compassion meaningfully in the world around them.

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Define *compassion*.
- List people, animals, groups, and places for whom/which they have demonstrated compassion.
- Apply what they understand about challenges faced by others to create opportunities to practice compassion.
- Identify ways to demonstrate compassion.

### 1. Warm Up (10 min.)

- Ask students if they are familiar with the word compassion. Allow for responses. Then, provide the following definition: *having concern for the needs of others and wanting to do something to help.*
- Next, tell your students the following story. *On the way home from the park one evening, a family saw a young, frightened dog walking in the street. She tried crossing the road and was nearly hit several times. The family put a leash on the dog to get her out of harm's way and eventually adopted her.*
- Explain that this is an example of someone acting with compassion (or being aware of the suffering of another and taking action to help). Others may have walked by and not helped, but this family chose to show compassion. Luckily, many people choose to demonstrate compassion every day to help people and animals in need.

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** 50 min.

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

## STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1

ISTE: Standard 3–  
Knowledge Constructor  
Standard 6–  
Creative Communicator

## MATERIALS

- Circle of Compassion* Handout
- Compassionate Kid Stories*

## VOCABULARY

- Compassion

## LESSON NOTE

This is a modified version of HEART's *Circle of Compassion* activity from the Humane Education Resource Guide, which can be downloaded for free at: [www.teachheart.org](http://www.teachheart.org).

## ACTIVITY NOTE

The *Compassionate Kid Stories* are fictional stories written to inspire and teach youth about effective ways to demonstrate compassion.

- Ask students to think about a time when someone showed them compassion (allow them to share with a partner and for a few to share with the whole group). Allow the group to reflect on what it feels like when someone shows compassion.
- Ask students to think of a time they acted with compassion. Encourage them to think of examples that include not only people and animals, but also the environment. Explain how our natural world is also deserving of compassion. Allow a few students to share.

## 2. Compassion Activity (25 min.)

- Explain that most of us make choices every day that are compassionate, but we could probably find ways of adding even more compassion into our lives.
- Explain that they will be creating their own *Circle of Compassion*.
- Give each student a copy of the *Circle of Compassion* Handout. Explain that they are to add (with pictures or words) any people, groups, animals, or natural places they have compassion for. This means that they have done something to help that person, animal, or place (and do not harm them by their current actions). Challenge them to only add to their circle of compassion if they have been compassionate toward that person, place, or animal. If, for example, they really love tigers but have done nothing to help them, have them put tigers on the outside of the circle.
- Ask students to share an example of who or what they have compassion for, emphasizing the acts that demonstrate that compassion (e.g., if students have compassion for trees, encourage them to explain how they conserve trees by recycling their paper).
- Encourage students to share additional ways that they can show compassion to each other, to family, and to people and animals in our global community.
- Encourage students to think about ways that they can express compassion in their everyday lives related to the things they use, eat, and buy, and to the people, animals, and environments with whom or which they interact. Hand out the *Compassionate Kid Stories*.
- Organize the students into small groups, and have them read the *Compassionate Kid Stories*.
- Ask students what the kids in the stories have in common, and allow for a short discussion about any ideas or inspiration the stories may have given them as they try to bring more elements into their own *Circles of Compassion*.

## 3. Wrap Up (15 min.)

- Explain to students that even though this lesson is ending, this stage is when their real work to become compassionate can begin. Ask them to look at the list of people, places, animals, and groups outside of their circles. Ask a few students to share what is outside of their circle and brainstorm, as a group, what actions they can take to bring those elements into their circle.

## EXTENSION PROJECT

- **Research and Technology:** Allow students to choose something they placed outside of their circle of compassion (see the *Circle of Compassion* activity in the Warm Up) to research and to consider how they can help that person, animal, or place. Allow students to use the internet to do an online research project with a safe internet search engine like [www.kidrex.com](http://www.kidrex.com). Using their research, ask students to create a presentation or digital poster that describes the person, animal, or place that they want to help, and make a call to action with ideas for how to show more compassion. If students are working in groups, we recommend using Google Slides or Padlet, and if they are creating a digital poster, we recommend Glogster. For presentations, students can do a gallery walk to see their classmates' presentations. To save on printing paper, use QR codes or create a simple classroom website with links to each student's presentation.

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Kristina Hulvershorn

I use this activity to really challenge students to think courageously about their own actions. I think that the core of humane education is not only about understanding the issues affecting other people, non-human animals, and our natural world, but also pairing that with an interest and a willingness to engage with those issues positively. This activity asks students to think of themselves as part of the real life action that unfolds before them every day and encourages them to be active participants by aligning their actions with their beliefs. There is an incredible thing that happens with this activity. You will have students opening up about what they care for in the world around them and searching for ways they can make a difference. Seize these moments and allow your students to harness this care and good will. This lesson can be the launching point for some poignant and meaningful projects and units of study.

## COMPASSIONATE KID STORIES

### Trey and the Birds

Trey loved birds and he really enjoyed watching them. He was devastated when he saw how many flew into the glass windows at his school and injured themselves or died. He researched solutions and helped install nets around the windows prone to bird collisions. The netting helped the birds see the solid surface better, and fewer flew into the windows as a result.

### Maria and the Bees

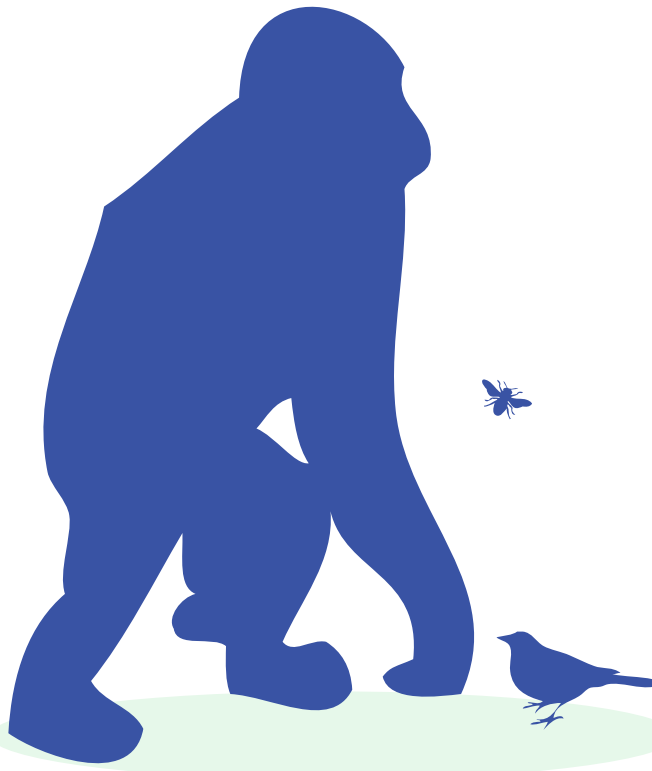
Maria was always fascinated with bees. She had recently noticed there were fewer bees around and began to ask why. After some research, she started to think it had something to do with the chemicals her parents and neighbors were using on their lawns. She convinced her parents to stop using the chemicals and made flyers to teach her neighbors about the problem as well. Maria hoped that her efforts would help to bring the bees back.

### Julian and Friendship

Julian was really upset that some of the kids at his school were being mean and bullying other students. He decided to do something about it. He began asking kids who looked lonely to sit with him at lunch and included them in games on the playground. He also gave a speech to his class about why being mean to others is such a harmful thing to do. Many of the kids at his school became concerned and made friends with kids who were often left out. They also started to speak up when they heard their peers being unkind to one another.

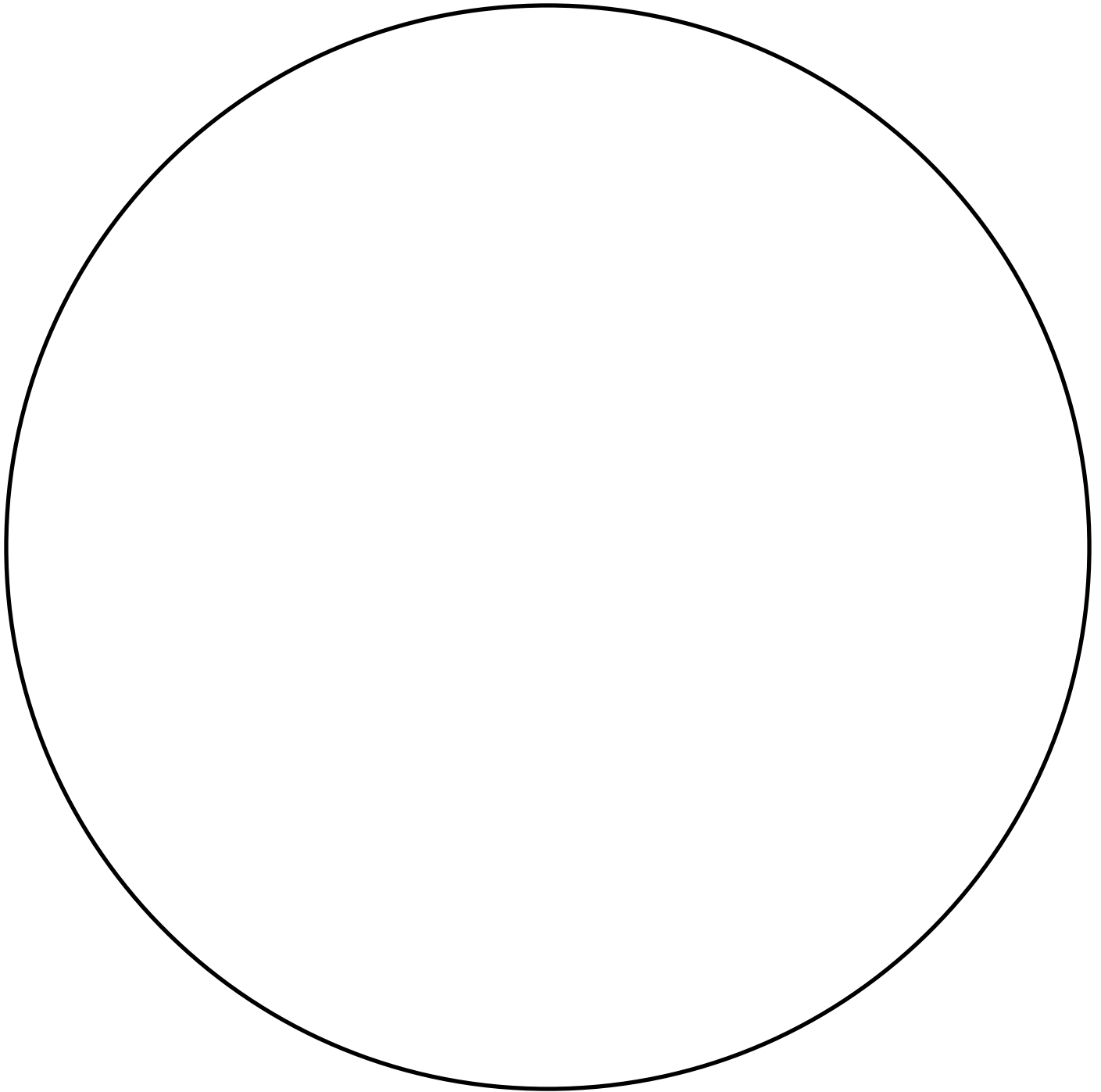
### Himiko and the Orangutans

Himiko loved orangutans. She had never seen one in real life, but read about them and even watched movies about them. She worried that she couldn't help them because she lived in the United States, far from the Asian rainforests where most wild orangutans live. Then, she learned that one of the problems facing orangutans is that their forests are being destroyed to make room to grow palm fruit trees for palm oil. She was surprised to learn how much of her food contained palm oil. Himiko decided to boycott products that contained palm oil and encouraged others to do the same. One of her favorite brands of cookies even replied after she sent them a letter explaining her decision to boycott their product. The company said that it would take the palm oil out of its cookies.



## CIRCLE OF COMPASSION

**Directions:** Add (in pictures or words) any people, groups, animals, or natural places that you have compassion for.



## THEME: THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does our understanding of the world around us change when we look at the world from another's perspective?

### OVERVIEW

This activity invites students to imagine what life is like from another person's point of view, such as a sugar plantation worker and a person with a disability. They will work collaboratively in groups and present their findings and reflections to the class. After students put themselves *in someone else's shoes*, the activity culminates by inviting them to employ empathy in their everyday lives.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Collaborate with peers to complete a task.
- Engage in role play to increase empathy.
- Reflect on situations from someone else's perspective.
- Develop responsible choice-making by understanding situations from another's perspective.

### 1. Warm Up (5 min.)

- Ask students to think of a school staff member, such as a custodian. Explain that whether we think about it or not, we are connected to this person. If we leave a big mess, their job is harder. If we help pick up after ourselves, they have more time to work on other parts of the job. Explain that one way to understand the world around us even better is to take the time to think about situations from another person's point of view.
- Explain that when we feel empathy, we strive to look at the world through another person's point of view and feel what they feel or walk in their shoes.
- Discuss the following fictional situations, and ask students to use empathy to identify the character's feelings and see situations from another point of view.
  - ➡ **Situation #1:** *Amber is being bullied each day at recess by three other girls. They make fun of her clothes and her hair. She doesn't understand why they will not leave her alone. When she returns*

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** 45 min.

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

### STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1  
SL.3.1, SL.5.1, SL.4.2  
SL.3.4, SL.4.4, SL.5.4

ISTE: Standard 6—Creative  
Communicator

### MATERIALS

- Someone Else's Shoes* Empathy Cards
- Someone Else's Shoes: Empathy Cards* Instruction and Reflection Worksheet

### VOCABULARY

- Empathy
- Perspective

### RESOURCE LINKS

**Edutopia: 4 Proven Strategies for Teaching Empathy**

[www.edutopia.org/article/4-proven-strategies-teaching-empathy-donna-wilson-marcus-conyers](http://www.edutopia.org/article/4-proven-strategies-teaching-empathy-donna-wilson-marcus-conyers)

**Start Empathy: A Toolkit for Promoting Empathy**

<https://startempathy.org/resources/toolkit/>

*to class, she sits quietly in the back, trying not to be noticed. The other kids often exclude her because she always keeps to herself and they think it is because she is self-involved.*

➤ Follow-up questions: *Using empathy, describe how you think Amber feels. Describe the situation from her point of view. Using empathy, describe how you think the girls bullying her feel when they bully her. How do you think the girls will feel the rest of the day? How is the bullying situation affecting Amber's relationship with the rest of her classmates?*

➤ **Situation #2:** *Antonio's mother is sick with cancer. Recently, she has been doing worse and is in the hospital. He is having difficulty paying attention in school because he is thinking about his mom. He is also having a hard time doing his homework because his dad picks him up after school to go directly to the hospital. He is worried about his mother, and he can't concentrate. Antonio's science group is frustrated with him and they think he is lazy because he is not contributing as much as they are to their joint project.*

➤ Follow-up questions: *Using empathy, how do you think Antonio feels? Describe the situation from his point of view. How is Antonio's situation affecting his relationship with his science group? Ask students to reflect on why empathy is important.*

- Break students into groups. Give each group an *Empathy Card*. Each card includes a fictional story about a person in a difficult situation. After reading their card, the goal is to understand the person's perspective and feelings.

## 2. Small Groups (20 min.)

- Pass out the *Empathy Cards* and *Someone Else's Shoes Instruction and Reflection* Worksheets.
- Ensure each group has a reader, recorder, role player(s), time keeper, and speaker. The reader will read the card and the instructions, the recorder will do the writing, the role player(s) will perform the activities and report their thoughts and reactions, the time keeper will keep the group on track, and the speaker will present the answers to the reflection questions. Give the group about 15 minutes to complete the handout.

## 3. Sharing (15 min.)

- Allow each group to share, beginning with the speaker summarizing the group's *Empathy Card*. The role players will talk about how they stepped into their person's shoes. Then give each group 1-2 minutes to share the answers to the questions.

## 4. Wrap Up (5 min.)

- Ask the class to recall some of the connections the groups shared. Ask if they can think of any ideas for how to use those connections to improve life for the people they studied. Ask the group to think about other ways they could practice empathy.
- Explain that one of the exciting things about empathy is that you can choose to practice it whenever you like. Challenge students to look at the world from the point of view of a classmate, another person, or an animal, in the next couple of days. Encourage students to remember this activity when they have a disagreement with someone. Ask them to practice empathy, to feel what the other person is feeling, and look at things from that person's perspective.

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Kristina Hulvershorn

This activity asks students to practice empathy, which is a skill that improves with practice. By providing memorable examples, students will remember what it feels like to experience empathy and will have an increased understanding of how to manifest it in their lives. Encouraging students to embrace empathy in everyday situations is essential because it is a vital skill for developing healthy relationships and executing positive conflict resolution. It is also a critical component of social and emotional learning. This activity will further students' understanding of how interconnected our choices are with the realities of others' lives.

## EXTENSION PROJECT

- **Technology:** Let your students apply what they learned in this lesson, by stepping into someone else's shoes with Voki. Students will create a virtual avatar based on someone they learned about from their empathy cards. If you can give your students access to computers or tablets, let students go to [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com) and create an avatar. Students may need to sign up, so we recommend creating a sign-in and giving students the login information. Students can pick a character from the empathy cards and animate the avatar by giving them sentences to speak. Students can type in the speech or record it themselves using a microphone. Let students use Voki to make these characters come to life by narrating their story in the first person. This activity will enable students to practice paraphrasing, writing from a different perspective, and to consider tone and setting as they build their Voki avatar.

## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS

### EMPATHY CARD #1: Migrant Farmworker

You are Miguel, a farmworker who works picking vegetables in fields in Georgia. Your days are long. You start at 6 a.m. and work up to 14 hours at a time. You and the other farmworkers are exposed to toxic pesticides, chemicals used to kill bugs that might cause harm to the crops. During the work day it is extremely hot, but you are not given water breaks. You are only given 30 minutes to eat lunch. You do your best to work non-stop because the owner of the farm watches you from a distance with his binoculars, and he notices if you stop at all. You put up with these conditions for your family since they are everything to you. You make \$5.50 per hour; while it may not be much, you need the money.

You spend your nights in the housing provided by the farm. It consists of a small room that you share with five other farmworkers. Everyone shares the bathroom facilities, which are dirty and have no privacy. There is no hot water for showers either. You do not want to complain about these working conditions, however. The thing that is most difficult is being away from your family. You have a son who is five years old and a daughter who is seven. They are living with your wife, Lupe. You do not have the legal documents to be in the United States, so it is extremely difficult to go back to Mexico to see them. You would rather work in Mexico, but it was impossible to find employment. You have been in Georgia for the past three years. Working in the United States was a last resort, but you did it so that you could provide for your beloved family. You work hard so that you can send money back to them to meet their basic needs and to earn enough for your children to attend school. You hope that your sacrifices will give them a chance for a better life.\*

### Role Play

To simulate Miguel's day, pour a handful of beads or small pieces of paper on the floor to represent the vegetables he picks. Whoever is playing Miguel will put on a heavy backpack to represent the back pain he has from working 14 hours a day. Bend down and pick up one bead or paper at a time, and then stand back up. Continue until the reader finishes the story or all of the "vegetables" have been picked up. Be sure to stand all the way up in between each "vegetable" you pick up to simulate the back breaking work that farmworkers experience from being in the fields for such a long period of time. The reader should read the following story while the role player performs the activity: *A pickup truck comes at sunrise and you jump in the back with five others. It's hot; it is supposed to get to 100 degrees today. There's a thermos at the end of a row, but by noon you know the water in it will be so warm that you won't want to drink it. Everywhere you look, there are crops to pick. Picking and dumping, picking and dumping...your hands itch. They tell you not to rub your eyes with your hands, but when sweat is dripping down, you forget. When everything itches like this, you know a rash is coming. Why are the green beans covered with a white film? What's on them? Whatever it is, it makes you cough. No time to deal with this now, so much to pick.*

\*This story was adapted from an interview on the National Farm Worker Ministry's website: <http://nfwm.org/farm-worker-stories/>



## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS

### EMPATHY CARD #2: A Person with a Learning Disability

Your name is Nicole and you are 12 years old. You have dyslexia, which is a condition that can make it difficult to read words, numbers, letters, and symbols.

You always feel lost in your thoughts. You're constantly thinking about one thing or another. You are told that it will become easier as you get older and more literate, but that seems like a long way off. You feel frustrated because the world seems strange and confusing. Everywhere you look, there are words: books, computers, and signs all day every day. It would be easier if all the letters always looked the same. You are using techniques to manage your condition, but with all the different fonts and sizes, the letters look different all the time and it is difficult to make sense of them. You often feel insecure and you have low self-esteem. You are becoming more introverted and keep to yourself. School is very challenging for you, not because you are not smart, but because the way you see words makes it difficult to read and write. Almost everything in school depends on reading and writing. It is all so stressful. If you can't read or write, it can make it difficult to learn anything else.

Being dyslexic makes it very hard to feel comfortable around others. You don't feel like you fit in, and you avoid people because you do not want them to know that you have difficulty reading and writing. It seems like everyone else can do it so easily when you struggle so much with it. You worry about what you will be able to do for a career when you finish school.

#### Role Play

To simulate a day in Nicole's life, you will need to use a clock, a pencil, and piece of paper. Copy down the following text using the opposite hand from the one you usually use for writing. You should complete the task within two minutes.

Mae bod yn ddyslecsig yn ei gwneud yn anodd iawn i deimlo'n normal. Cyn gynted ag y bydd pobl yn gwybod eich bod yn ddyslecsig maent ymyleiddio chi. Rydych yn teimlo fel nad ydych yn cyd-fynd â'ch cyfoedion yn yr ysgol. Rydych yn aml yn ofni na fyddwch yn gallu cael swydd.

**Activity follow up:** This activity loosely simulates what it might feel like to have problems recognizing words and letters. It demonstrates how complicated writing and reading can be when words look unfamiliar. Timing, handwriting, spelling, and frustration are just a few elements of this simulation.

This story was adapted from the Beating Dyslexia website:  
[www.beatingdyslexia.com/being-dyslexic.html](http://www.beatingdyslexia.com/being-dyslexic.html)

This exercise was adapted from the demos "Online Resources for Staff Disability Awareness"  
webpage: <http://jarmin.com/demos/course/dyslexia/09.html>

## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS

### EMPATHY CARD #3: Child Laborer

Your name is Sunita, you are from Nepal, and you work as a child laborer. Your parents died when you were 9 years old and you were sent to live with your father's cousin. He was supposed to take care of you, but he sold you to a carpet factory owner to pay off his debts instead. He said that you have to work there now. You think you have been working there for three years, but it is difficult to keep track of time at the factory. Each day is the same. Instead of going to school, you work making carpets all day long and your hands always ache. Your days are long, starting work before sunrise and not finishing until after the sun sets. You are only given two short breaks during your 16 hours of work to eat a bowl of rice or lentils. Your supervisors often yell at you, and the other children in the factory, to work faster. If they do not think your work is good enough, they hit you. At night you sleep on the factory's dirt floor, which serves as your bed. You often feel scared and wonder if you will ever escape this place.

### Role Play

To simulate Sunita's day, squat and imagine handling a sharp tool in this position for over 12 hours. Imagine staying in this position all day, tying the colored yarn to the threads. You can use the tool to push the fibers down. If you stop or slow down, you will be yelled at or beaten. Your hands hurt and often bleed, but if you complain you will be punished.

This story was adapted from an interview on CNN's website ([www.cnn.com/2013/08/14/world/asia/nepal-child-labor](http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/14/world/asia/nepal-child-labor)), from information gathered from *The Runaway: Nepal, Kumar's Story* ([https://newint.org/easier-english/child\\_labour/kumar.html](https://newint.org/easier-english/child_labour/kumar.html)), and from *Children of the Looms: Rescuing the 'Carpet Kids' of Nepal, India and Pakistan* ([www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/13\\_2/FieldReports/ChildrenoftheLooms/ChildrenoftheLooms.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/13_2/FieldReports/ChildrenoftheLooms/ChildrenoftheLooms.htm)).

## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS

### EMPATHY CARD #4: Sugar Plantation Laborer

Your name is Bayani and you are from the Philippines. You are 15 years old and your job is to harvest sugarcane. Even though you are young, you already suffer from back pain because harvesting sugarcane is such difficult work. You have cuts on your hands and legs from injuries you got while harvesting.

You have to work quickly or you'll lose your job and what little income you earn to support your family. You are paid by how much you can harvest in a day, so you push yourself to work as fast as you can. It is very hot and you become dehydrated from working for such long hours under the sun and sweating in the extreme heat.

You wish you could go to school to learn to read and write, but instead you are in the fields all day. The only future you see is that in two years, when you are 17, you will have the challenging task of cutting the sugarcane and stripping the leaves with a machete, a very large and sharp knife. This is not something that you are looking forward to doing.

For the millions of farmers and plantation laborers who depend on harvesting sugarcane for a living, earning a decent wage is not easy. You work for 8 or 9 hours per day and earn about \$3.50 a day.

### Role Play

To simulate a day in Bayani's life, pick up a ruler or pencil to represent a heavy tool. While standing a few feet away from anyone else, and being careful not to hit anyone or anything, swing it as you would to cut sugarcane for three minutes without stopping. Remember the faster you work, the more money you will make, so chop down as much as you can. You would be doing this work for at least 7 hours in the heat.

This story was adapted from a CNN interview, [www.cnn.com/2012/05/01/world/asia/philippines-child-labor/](http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/01/world/asia/philippines-child-labor/), and information gathered from Human Rights Watch's website, [/www.hrw.org/reports/2004/elsalvador0604/11.htm](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/elsalvador0604/11.htm)

## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS

### EMPATHY CARD #5: Factory Farm Worker

Your name is Jacob and you work in a factory farm that produces eggs. Factory farms are large industrial farms where animals are raised for food, kept in crowded conditions and suffer from lack of care. The owner of the farm runs the operation this way because he makes large profits. Your job is to walk through the large shed, where the hens are living in metal wire-floor cages, and to collect the eggs that they lay.

There are hundreds of hens confined to cages that are stacked on top of each other throughout the shed. The hens' waste falls down under the wooden floors of the building. The odor from all the waste is almost unbearable. But worse than the odor are the gases released from the large amount of waste gathered over such a long period of time.

You suffer from a severe respiratory infection from breathing in the ammonia released from the waste and the lack of ventilation in the building. You feel like you are constantly struggling to breathe. Your eyes are also irritated; they feel itchy and watery, making it difficult to do your job. More recently, you have been suffering from painful headaches and chronic coughing.

While you work, the hens sound like they are screaming, and they look miserable. They are thin, they have missing feathers, and they have sores on their bodies and their feet. You have to work through your own suffering and ignore the suffering of the hens to get through your shift. You walk along the long narrow path in between the two stacks of cages on both sides of you, collecting as many eggs as you can. You feel sick and you are having difficulty seeing what is in front of you.

While you do not make much money, you live in a community where the factory farm is the only industry in the area. You depend on this work to pay your rent and to feed your family. However, you are concerned that you will not be able to continue much longer if your health problems continue to get worse. The owner of the farm does not provide any health insurance, and you are afraid that your medical expenses will cost more than what you make. You are not sure what to do, but you will continue working as long as you can.

### Role Play

To simulate Jacob's day, pinch your nose while breathing through a straw. At the same time, walk back and forth across part of the classroom. The rest of your group will make loud screeching sounds, like stressed out hens. **Note:** Immediately stop walking, sit down (have an empty chair available), and breathe normally if it becomes too difficult.

This story was written from information gathered from The Food Empowerment Project website: [www.foodispower.org/factory-farm-workers/](http://www.foodispower.org/factory-farm-workers/)

This activity was adapted from a simulation described on the EarthJustice website: <http://earthjustice.org/blog/2011-june/what-s-asthma-like-try-breathing-through-a-straw>

## SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES: EMPATHY CARDS INSTRUCTION AND REFLECTION

**Directions:** Before you begin reading the empathy card, select different members of your group to be the reader, recorder, role player(s), timekeeper, and speaker. If anyone is not assigned a part, they can also be a role player. The reader will read the card and the instructions, the recorder will do the writing, the role player(s) will act out the activity from the empathy card and report their thoughts and reactions, the time keeper will keep the group on track, and the speaker will present the answers to the reflection questions.

### Group Roles

Our Reader is \_\_\_\_\_ Our Recorder is \_\_\_\_\_

Our Timekeeper is \_\_\_\_\_ Our Speaker is \_\_\_\_\_

Our Role Player(s) is (are) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Our empathy card is \_\_\_\_\_

2. The person we learned about is \_\_\_\_\_

3. How did the role player(s) feel when doing the activity? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What surprised you about this person's life? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How might you be connected to this person? (Do you buy the products they make? Do you know anyone like this person in real life? Do you have something in common with this person?) List any connections you can think of.

6. What do you think others should understand about this person? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you think others could do to make life better for this person?

THEME:

## THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

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### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What would it really be like to experience a day in the life of another creature?

### OVERVIEW

Students will read a brief story about an animal's life and will be asked to imagine life from that animal's perspective. They will then write a letter to communicate what a day in his or her life is like.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Practice perspective-taking.
- Write a friendly letter utilizing all five parts of a letter and appropriate grammar conventions.
- Write a fictional informative text from an animal's point of view.

### Day 1:

#### 1. Warm Up (15 min.)

- Ask students to imagine that they are away from their parents (at camp or visiting family) and need to write a letter home to tell their parents how they are doing and what a normal day is like for them.
- On the board or on a projection device, demonstrate the steps of writing a letter, including the elements of a heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Model age-appropriate level of detail, vocabulary, and content.
- Involve students in writing the details to help demonstrate the notion of writing about an imagined perspective. Explain that perspective-taking is when we try to understand a situation from someone else's point of view.
- Ask students to share times when they needed to understand someone else's perspective. If students are having difficulty thinking of actual situations, ask them to think of a situation when one of the following happened:
  - ➡ They had a disagreement with someone.
  - ➡ Someone reacted in a way that was unexpected.
  - ➡ They tried to find a compromise with someone.

### GRADE LEVEL 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** Two 45 min. periods (plus time for revision)

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies, English Language Arts

### STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: W.3.2, W.4.2, W.5.2  
W.3.5, W.4.5, W.5.5

ISTE: Standard 3–  
Knowledge Constructor  
Standard 6–  
Creative Communicator

### MATERIALS

- ❑ *A Day in the Life* Photo and Story Cards

### VOCABULARY

- Perspective

### EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

#### Kristina Hulvershorn

Perspective-taking and role-playing are powerful ways to help students develop empathy. We are rarely asked to consider the world from someone else's point of view, much less the point of view of an animal. This activity challenges students to use their creativity and empathy, while shining light on topics that are often hidden from their view. Students are fascinated by these stories and, in my experience, appreciate the opportunity to learn about such real and important topics.

## 2. Meeting the Animals (15 min.)

- Put students in 10 small groups, and pass out the *Day in the Life Story Cards* so that the students can read the stories with their peers. Ask them to discuss the following questions:
  - What surprised you about the life of the animal in your story?
  - What would you like to know more about?

## 3. Research (15 min.)

- Explain that they will consider what a day in the life of their animal is like.
- Allow students time to research questions that arose from the discussion.

### Day 2:

## 4. Writing (30 min.)

- Using information from their research and story, read the following to the students: *You may have thought about what it might be like to be another person, but have you ever considered what it would really feel like to be an animal? You are going to be asked to imagine that you are the animal from the story you read and the research you just did.*

*Imagine you are away from your family and need to write them a letter to tell them how things are going and what you are doing. Think about your daily routine from morning until night. What kinds of things do you do? What do you think about? What emotions do you have? What does your world smell, feel, and sound like? What do you like or not like about your experience?*

*Add as many details as possible to make it interesting and real. Include all of the elements of a letter and be as creative as possible.*

- Set the tone by asking for a quiet writers' workshop. Allow students to revisit the story, review sample letters, view photos, and conduct research as they write.

## 4. Wrap Up (15 min. plus editing time)

- Encourage multiple drafts and thorough editing (peer editing).
- Once letters have been edited, invite students to read their letters to each other in large or small groups.
- Ask students to think about some of the situations these animals experience in real life. Allow them to reflect openly.
- Discuss the differences between the experiences of the same species of animals.
- Invite discussion on ways that they can help animals. Guide students to understand tangible ways they can help (awareness campaigns, letter writing, consumer action, etc.)



### RESEARCH NOTE

It may save time to gather a few books, chapters from books, or articles about each animal from a library and have those available for each group. Children are often curious about details about animals, such as what types of foods they eat, their average lifespan, how “intelligent” they are, etc. If you have access to technology, consider allowing students to conduct online research. Use a safe search engine like Kidrex.org or build your own with only the sites you want students to see with a Google custom search engine.

### WRITING NOTE

Some students may remark that because their animals can't write, they shouldn't have to write anything. Acknowledge that this activity requires them to use their imagination because animals do not write the way people do, but do communicate with each other and experience thoughts, feelings, and senses in very similar ways. Explain that this activity is a way to imagine what an animal would want to communicate and then put those thoughts and feelings into words.

### WRAP UP NOTE

Be prepared to provide students with specific actions that they can take, related to each animal's story. If possible, allow time for a class project to follow through on one of the ideas generated when discussing ways to help animals.

## EXTENSION PROJECTS

- **Art:** Provide students with an opportunity to create masks of their animal. Then, have them read their letters while role-playing as their animal. Record the readings and post them on a classroom-created website.
- **Technology:** Make the letters that your students write come to life with the website Blabberize.com. Blabberize lets you animate any picture of a character and add a sound recording so that it looks like your character is talking with your voice. Allow students to research and find pictures of animals, or find pictures for them. Students can then upload the picture onto Blabberize, and record themselves, using the microphone on a computer or tablet, reading their letter out loud. You may need to help students use Blabberize's mouth tool to locate where the mouths on the animals are. The end product is a very engaging video that helps students imagine what their animal's letter would sound like. Here is an example of Sasha the Elephant: <http://blabberize.com/view/id/1511544>

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## SASHA

Meet Sasha. She lives with her family in southwest Africa. She is an African elephant who spends her days roaming through the savanna in search of food, eating, splashing around, and drinking from water holes. She travels in a herd with her calf and other elephants. It can get very hot where she lives so she enjoys squirting water from her trunk onto her body to cool off.

She eats grasses, roots, leaves, fruit, twigs, and sometimes tree bark. She actually can eat as much as 300 pounds of food per day. Her herd members help her care for her young, and they depend on each other for protection as well as companionship. The leader of the elephant group is the eldest female elephant, Sasha's aunt. Elephants use low vibrations to communicate with other elephants up to 50 miles away. Female elephants, like Sasha, will stay with their families for their entire lives.

She occasionally visits the bones of family members who have passed away. Scientists think this is how elephants mourn and remember their deceased relatives. She will live to be about 60 or 70 years old.



## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## MANGO

Meet Mango. Mango is an Asian elephant who tours with a traveling circus in the United States, visiting many cities to perform various acts. He was taken from his family and herd in Asia when he was young and became a captive animal, which means he cannot roam freely or choose what he does or where he goes the way other wild animals do.

Mango is forced to stand in strange positions, balance on platforms, and perform other tricks, by his trainers who use tools called electric prods and bull hooks. Sometimes Mango screams during his training sessions. His trainers are very forceful with him because they want him to learn tricks for the circus acts. He is used to being whipped many times a day.

Circus attendees have observed Mango swaying, chewing, rocking, and licking. Some scientists think that these actions are related to stress and boredom.

He spends his days traveling from city to city in a small trailer, getting trained to learn tricks, and performing. He is alone much of the time.

Most circus elephants only live to be 14. Because they spend most of their time standing on hard surfaces like concrete, they often develop serious foot and joint problems like arthritis, which eventually become so painful they cannot stand up.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## SARAH

Meet Sara. She lives at an animal sanctuary, which is a place where animals who are in need of help are able to live out their lives in peace.

Sara was raised on a factory farm, a place where many chickens are kept indoors with very little space. She was found in a cage after a tornado destroyed the area. She was very nervous for a long time after she was rescued.

She sleeps in a barn, wakes up when she wants to, and is able to wander around the dirt and grassy areas whenever she likes. Sara is a bit shy, but she found companionship with a couple of other hens at the sanctuary. She loves spending time with her friends, investigating her surroundings, scratching in the dirt, pecking for and finding fruit, and taking naps in the sun.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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### #4654

Meet #4654. #4654 has never been given a name. She has never known her family and is used to laying eggs for people to eat. She lives in a building with thousands of other chickens. When she was younger she was debeaked, which means people used a sharp, hot blade to cut off part of her beak to keep her from pecking her cage mates. She shares a cage, called a battery cage, with 8 other chickens. She has a space that is smaller than the size of a piece of writing paper to live, so she frequently gets into fights with the other chickens. She will spend her entire life in this cage unable to stretch her wings. Her cage is made of wire and often rubs her feathers off and hurts her feet. She has to produce more than 260 eggs per year. They are all taken for food for people and none are allowed to hatch. When she doesn't produce eggs, the people starve her for a week and a half (a process called "forced molting") to shock her body into producing more eggs. She will never be able to go outside, give herself a dust bath, raise chicks, or feel sunshine.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



## HANDSOME

Meet Handsome. Handsome is a 7-year-old Labrador-Chow mix. He lives in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was born near 22nd Street to a stray female dog. A woman picked him up and brought him to the vet. She fell in love with him so she decided to keep him.

The veterinarian diagnosed him with heartworm, an infection where a parasite harms the dog's heart. Luckily they were able to cure him, and he has been healthy ever since.

He loves taking walks, playing tug of war, swimming, rolling in the grass, and playing with his sister, a dog named Nia. He sleeps on his human mom's bed and always watches out for strangers, barking whenever he hears something that he thinks is suspicious. He loves treats and is often spoiled—receiving more than 3 or 4 of them a day.

He has a new baby sister who is a human and loves to watch out for and play with her. He likes scratches behind his ears and lying on the back deck when the weather is nice. Handsome is a very happy and well loved dog.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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### ARLO

Meet Arlo. Arlo is a 4-year-old Shepherd-Labrador mix. He lives in New Jersey and has been tied in a backyard since he was 6 months old. His mother was a homeless dog, and several of his litter mates were hit by a car. A boy picked him up and convinced his mom to allow Arlo to stay with them. He was allowed to stay inside when he was a puppy, but when he became big, his family put him in the backyard on a chain. He has fleas, which are very itchy, so his people don't let him come inside at all anymore.

He is not fed every day because sometimes his people forget to give him food. He has only been to the vet once. When it rains, he gets stuck in puddles because he is tied to such a short chain. He gets very cold and has to live near his own waste because of the short chain. He gets very thirsty when his people forget to give him water and very lonely since he spends almost every second of his life alone. He watches birds and squirrels, but can't run to play or chase them. He gets very scared by fireworks and thunder, but does not have any way to protect himself. Arlo longs for someone to take care of him.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## HANNO

Meet Hanno. Hanno is a Philippine Eagle who lives in a protected forest in the Philippines. This means no one can harm his habitat, tear it down, or use it for farm land. He is 3 feet long and weighs 15 pounds. He is expected to live anywhere from 30 to 60 years. He has strong talons and a powerful beak, which he practices using when he is not hunting for food. He travels with his mate, Erma, and they are raising a chick, their son, named Frederico.

He is able to fly, hunt, sleep, and use his time as he wishes in his forest home.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## WINIFRED

Meet Winifred. Winifred is a Philippine Eagle. This was her home. It was torn down to harvest the trees to build furniture and other household goods. Now she is separated from everything she has ever known and is trying to survive in an unfamiliar territory, where she is struggling to find food and nesting materials. She eats all kinds of animals who live in the woods, but since the trees were cut down it has become harder to find food. More than 80% of the trees in her country have been cleared.



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## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## TREY

Meet Trey. Trey is a wild coyote who lives inside a protected forest and prairie area in Ohio. He has a partner, May, with whom he spends most of his time. He has had several litters of pups with her. He is a wonderful hunter and lives on animals like mice and rabbits, as well as fruit and insects. There is plenty of food where Trey lives, and he has no reason to move beyond his home. He has never seen a car and only briefly encountered one human being, who was a hiker.



## A DAY IN THE LIFE STORIES



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## JIM

Meet Jim. Jim is a coyote who was born just outside Denver. He used to live near a chicken farm. He couldn't always find enough mice or rabbits, so he occasionally took a chicken. One night the farmer caught him and tried to shoot him. The farmer shot his cubs and his partner. Jim ran almost 100 miles away. He began looking for more food near a neighborhood. He ate a lot of garbage, some rats, and whatever else he could find. He began living in some shrubs near a family's home. One night, when walking their dog, a neighbor saw him and called animal control. The big white truck chased him out of the neighborhood. He ran until he came to an airport which, to a coyote, is a loud and scary place without much food. He goes through trash cans and scavenges for food that people throw away.

## THEME: THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# IF YOU COULD SEE THE WORLD THROUGH MY EYES

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### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How would we behave toward one another if we could understand things from someone else's perspective?

### OVERVIEW

This activity asks students to share a challenging situation from their viewpoint and then imagine a different scenario from the viewpoint of a peer. It is focused on fostering and encouraging perspective-taking, empathy, and group problem-solving.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Articulate their concerns in a respectful manner.
- Positively receive constructive feedback from peers.
- Thoughtfully provide constructive feedback to their peers.
- Reevaluate a situation by considering diverse perspectives.
- Listen to the concerns of others and support others as part of a group dialogue.

#### 1. Warm Up (15 min.)

- Inform students that today's activity will give them a chance to voice concerns over a problem they are dealing with and to receive support from their peers. Explain that this activity gives them an opportunity to practice empathy.
- Ask students to define *empathy*, and allow for responses. Then, let them know that empathy allows us to look at the world from another's point of view and to "walk in their shoes."
- Pass out the *If You Could See the World Through My Eyes* Worksheet, and allow students 10 minutes to fill it out. Encourage them not to overthink it. Tell them that anything they are worried about, even if it seems like a small problem, is worth including (provided they don't mind others discussing their problem).
- Have students cut or tear the bottom portion of the worksheet, and turn it in. Allow them to keep or recycle the top portion.

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** 60 min.

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

### STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1

### MATERIALS

- ☐ *If You Could See the World Through My Eyes* Worksheet

### VOCABULARY

- Empathy

### WARM UP NOTE

Ask students not to write down a problem that would make anyone else in the classroom uncomfortable because they were involved or know someone who was involved. Also, tell them not to use the actual names of anyone related to the dilemma out of respect for the individuals involved.

## 2. Set Up (10 min.)

- This activity can take place in a large group or smaller groups. Use your judgment on how much adult supervision your group will need at this point.
- Collect the worksheets, and then pass them back out so each student has a classmate's sheet.
- Ask students to read the sheet they are given; make sure it is not their own. Tell them to take a moment and consider the problem as if it were their own.



### SET UP NOTE

If you are concerned about what the students may have written, you can read through the problems as you pass the worksheets back out. If you are uncomfortable about discussing some topics in a full group, keep those, and ask some students to pair up with a single topic so that each student has a chance to practice empathy. Address any topics of particular concern one-on-one with the student, or enlist the help of a social worker or parent.

## 3. Activity (25 min.)

- Remind the students of your expectations for their behavior and that this may feel uncomfortable as a speaker or a listener. Laughing, making fun, or arguing are not appropriate ways of dealing with those feelings. Emphasize that the point is to listen and support, not guess who wrote what.
- Ask students to share the problem they received aloud, one at a time, as if it were their own problem.
- Ask them to talk about how they feel and what they need from others.
- Invite the rest of the students to share their thoughts, similar experiences, and any advice they have about the topic.
- After the students share, if you have an interactive and supportive group, you can invite students to identify themselves if they wish to clarify anything about the situation, or ask for more support. This is entirely optional and not necessary. If you do not opt for this step, explain that students can seek out a peer or teacher support afterward for more help with their problem.

## 4. Wrap Up (10 min.)

- Thank the students for listening and offering support to their peers.
- Remind students that if they would like more advice, they can approach a peer or trusted adult for additional support.
- Close the discussion by asking the following questions:
  - ➡ What surprised you about looking at things from another person's perspective?
  - ➡ What will you do differently now, after learning about these problems and perspectives?
  - ➡ What changes would you like to see in the classroom after learning about these problems and perspectives?
  - ➡ In what other situations might empathy be a useful skill to practice?

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Kristina Hulvershorn

One of the most challenging parts of building community is often that first step of addressing conflicts with one another. This activity allows students to venture into what is otherwise a particularly vulnerable area with anonymity, allowing for a safe discussion. Most often, this activity allows students to prove to the adults who work with them that they are full of incredible insight and maturity. I am always amazed at the kindness, support, and brilliance this activity pulls out of students.

## IF YOU COULD SEE THE WORLD THROUGH MY EYES

What are three things that have been bothering you lately? It can be a problem with a friend, a problem at school, or something happening at home.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Circle the one that you think your peers might be able to help you with. If this matter is very private, choose something else that you don't mind sharing with the class.

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Write 3-5 sentences about the problem, explaining what someone might need to know to really understand it from your perspective:

**A problem I'm dealing with is...**

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**Something I tried that didn't work is...**

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## THEME:

## THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# EMPATHY BLOCKERS

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What prevents us from being empathetic?

### OVERVIEW

In some circumstances having empathy for a person or an animal can be relatively straightforward. For example, when you see a dog's tail wag when you come home, you can feel the dog's happiness. The reason having empathy can be difficult is that our ability to empathize can become blocked. In this lesson, four common empathy blockers will be discussed: a lack of information, strong feelings of fear or anger, prejudice, and denial. Students will think critically about what can prevent people from being empathetic, and how they can engage with this information to become more empathetic themselves.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Identify at least three influences that can prevent someone from feeling empathy.
- Explain how certain influences can prevent someone from feeling empathy.
- Develop solutions to empathy blockers that will help people embrace empathy.

### Day 1:

#### 1. Warm Up (10 min.)

- Begin the lesson by explaining to students that they will be discussing *empathy*.
- Explain that *empathy* is the ability to understand how a person or animal feels. Provide two examples, such as, "When my cat had to go to the vet for a check-up, I empathized with her, and I could feel her fear" and "When we surprised my dad with a birthday party, I could feel his excitement."
- Then, ask students to share a time when it was easy for them to understand how a person or animal felt. As they share their examples, ask them why they were able to understand how that person or animal felt. They might explain that they knew how the

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** Two 45 min. periods

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

### STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: RI.3.1, RI.4.1, RI.5.1  
RL.3.3  
RL.4.1, RL.5.1

### MATERIALS

- Empathy Blockers* Reading
- Empathy Blocker* Scenarios

### VOCABULARY/TERMS

- Empathy, Empathetic, Empathize
- Empathy Blockers
- Prejudice
- Amygdala

### WARM UP NOTE

It may be difficult for students to think of examples of when they were not able to have empathy for someone else, so be prepared to share a few examples.

individual felt because they have experienced something similar or because of the way that person or animal acted (e.g., crying, laughing).

- Ask students if there has ever been a situation where they had a difficult time understanding the feelings of a person or animal. Ask them to share and provide an example such as, “When my friend received an A on the test he seemed upset, but I was not sure why. I could not understand exactly what he was feeling or why he felt that way” or “When my sister came over, my dog was barking in a way she had not barked before. I could not understand exactly what she was feeling or why she felt that way.”
- Name the following four common *empathy blockers*, which can prevent people from feeling empathy:
  - ➡ Lack of information
  - ➡ Strong feelings of fear and anger
  - ➡ Prejudice
  - ➡ Denial

### 2. Empathy Blockers Reading (15 min.)

- Explain to students that they will read about these four reasons people can have a difficult time experiencing empathy.
- As a group, read *Common Empathy Blockers*.
- Invite students to share their experiences with these empathy blockers or share your own experiences with empathy blockers.

### 3. Empathy Blocker Scenarios (20 min.)

- Next, share some examples of people not expressing empathy. The student’s task is to decide which empathy blocker(s) is/are best demonstrated in the situation and then consider what the people in the scenario can do to overcome what is blocking their empathy. This activity can be done as a class or in small groups.
- Pass out the *Empathy Blockers Scenario* Worksheet to each student.
- Either read each of the following scenarios to the class or ask student volunteers to read the scenarios. Allow the students time to answer the two questions on their own or to discuss in small groups before sharing their responses with the whole class.
  - ➡ **SCENARIO #1:** *The Geracy family (Hassan, Lena, and their son, Lewis) lives in Montana. Hassan is a professor at the local community college and Lena is a volunteer at a homeless shelter. The family is Muslim and, just like most followers of any major religion, they believe in treating people with kindness and respect. However, their neighbor does not understand their religion, and is afraid of all Muslims because of the terrorist acts committed by a small number of extremists, who happen to be Muslim. This neighbor is unfriendly to the Geracys and has told others that he does not want them in the community, even though the family has been respectful and kind to him.*

## RESOURCE LINKS

### Six Habits of Highly Empathetic People

<http://bit.ly/1d8k46p>

### Empathy Library

<http://empathylibrary.com/about-the-library>

### Cool School: Where Peace Rules

<http://coolschoolgame.com/>

### Common Sense Education Review of Cool School: Where Peace Rules

<http://bit.ly/2cT2DyXSpent>:  
<http://playspent.org/>

### Common Sense Education Review of Spent

<http://bit.ly/2dA3JDV>

## EXTENSION PROJECTS

### • Historical and

#### Current Events Connections:

Challenge students to apply what they learned about empathy blockers to examples from history or current events. Ask students to work in small groups. Provide each group with information about either a historical or current event when a certain group of people or a specific animal species experienced oppression. Challenge students to apply what they learned about empathy blockers to consider how a lack of empathy might have affected the way that group was treated. Ask them to consider how the treatment of their group might have been different if other groups in society expressed empathy for them. Consider having the students create presentations about the event they studied for the class.

- **Discussion:** Screen a film with your students that is told from the point of view of a person or animal who experiences mistreatment in the story, such as *Black Beauty*. Ask your students to identify when someone did not appear to have empathy for the narrator and what caused the lack of empathy. Then ask them to identify when someone appeared to have empathy for the narrator and how empathy was demonstrated.

## EXTENSION PROJECTS

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

➔ **SCENARIO #1 DISCUSSION:** Allow students to share their answers. If students do not mention it, explain that this scenario could demonstrate several empathy blockers, but the blockers causing the most influence are “prejudice” and “lack of information.” During the discussion of how the neighbor could overcome these empathy blockers, explain that it is important that we question our opinions of others and think about whether they are caused by prejudice. We should also make an effort to learn about diverse religions, cultures, and lifestyles that are different from our own so that we will have more information about the perspectives of others. Additionally, we can make an effort to talk with people we think are different from us and work towards seeing ways that we are similar.

➔ **SCENARIO #2:** *Arthur, a sweet dog, is now living in a home with a loving family, but his life used to be very different. He used to live with a man named Frank who became very angry with him when he barked too loudly or chewed on Frank’s shoes. Frank did not know that Arthur barked because he was anxious when a stranger walked past the house. Frank also did not know that Arthur chewed on shoes because he did not have any toys to chew. Instead of helping Arthur with these problems, Frank would hit Arthur or make him sleep outside in the cold. A neighbor could see that Frank was cruel to Arthur and offered to take him to an animal shelter. Frank decided he did not want Arthur anymore so he agreed. While at the adoption center a family who understood Arthur’s feelings and needs adopted him and gave him a loving home.*

➔ **SCENARIO #2 DISCUSSION:** Allow students to share their answers. If students do not mention it, explain that this scenario could demonstrate several of the empathy blockers, but that the blockers causing the most influence are “strong feelings of anger” and “lack of information.” During the discussion of how Frank could overcome these empathy blockers, explain that it is important that we learn how to cope with our anger. It is okay to be angry, but we have to express our anger by communicating our feelings in an open and honest way. It is not okay to express our anger by being cruel toward people or animals. We should also learn to better understand animals and how to correct unwanted behaviors by using techniques that are effective and humane. There is a lot of information available in books and online about how to teach animals through humane training techniques.

## Day 2:

### 4. Writing (35 min.)

- Review what empathy means and the examples of empathy blockers with students.
- Ask students to complete one of the following writing activities:
  - ➔ Choose one of the empathy blocker scenarios from the handout to re-write. In your new version show how the characters

## EXTENSION PROJECTS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

● **Educational Game:** There are several online games that teach students how to be more empathetic. Consider allowing your students to play some of these games. For younger grades, the game *Cool School: Where Peace Rules* allows students to explore a virtual school and resolve conflicts among cartoon characters involved in common classroom conflicts. When students are resolving conflicts in the game, ask them which empathy blockers are happening and what advice they would give to the characters in the game.

● **Educational Game:** For older students, the game *Spent* is a poverty simulator that simulates the life of an adult who faces daily struggles due to difficult financial circumstances. This game will let you foster a discussion around issues of poverty, misconceptions about those who struggle with poverty, and how to develop more empathy toward those individuals. It could raise some sensitive issues, and it is best if the teacher facilitates the conversation with the entire class. Please refer to the resource links for these two games and the Common Sense Education rating.

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Mickey Kudia

I think empathy is the most important thing we can teach young people, and not just empathy for people and animals with whom they are familiar. Having empathy for your friends and companion animals is easy, but having empathy for all living beings, especially those who are marginalized in society, may be more challenging and is necessary to create a world that is truly just and peaceful.

could feel empathy and then put their empathy into action. Demonstrate how the story changes when an individual feels empathy for someone else.

- ➔ Write an empathy blocker scenario based on a time when you did not feel empathy for someone else or someone did not have empathy for you. Identify the empathy blocker that prevented you or someone else from feeling empathy and explain how the situation would have been different if empathy was expressed.
- ➔ Write an empathy scenario based on a time when you felt empathy for someone or someone felt empathy for you, a person or an animal. Explain how the empathy was expressed, how it made the individual who was empathized with feel, and what happened in the situation.
- Consider providing students time to share their writing with a partner, a small group, or with the whole class, if they want to. Be cognizant that some of their work may be too personal to share.

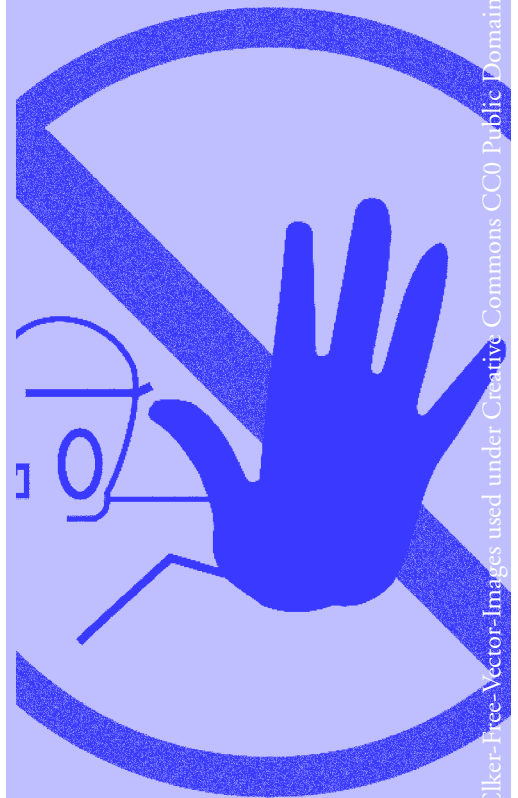
### 5. Wrap Up (10 min.)

- Review with students the four common empathy blockers: (1) they lack information about the perspective of the person or animal; (2) they have strong feelings of fear or anger; (3) they have a prejudice against a person or animal; and/or (4) they are in denial of what the person or animal is feeling or experiencing.
- Then ask students what they can do to prevent themselves from blocking their own empathy. Allow for responses and then discuss the following:
  - ➔ Read books/watch movies with stories told from different perspectives; talk with people who they think might be different from themselves; be mindful of their emotions especially when they are angry or afraid; be critical of their opinions and how they might be influenced by prejudice; be open to what someone else might be experiencing or feeling; and research information they hear about what a person or animal might be experiencing if they are unsure of its accuracy.



#### WRITING NOTE

You could assign this activity as homework, instead of an in-class activity. This would give students more time to think about and write their scenarios. As an enhancement to this activity invite students to include an illustration with their writing.



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## COMMON EMPATHY BLOCKERS

Having empathy for someone can be difficult because it can mean being vulnerable and opening ourselves up to understanding someone's feelings of frustration, pain, confusion, or sadness. There are also certain influencers known as *empathy blockers* that can make it even more difficult to feel empathy. Below is a description of four common empathy blockers: lack of information; strong feelings of fear or anger; prejudice; and denial.

### 1. Lack of Information

We can never know everything about someone or what they have experienced. Often people will guess how a person feels or why they are acting a certain way. Since we do not have all the information, these assumptions can be inaccurate.

**Example:** Gael's teacher thought that Gael was being stubborn because he did not participate in the class activity. What Gael's teacher did not know was that Gael's parents were getting a divorce and he felt upset and depressed. Gael could not concentrate on the activity because he was so anxious about his home life. He didn't know why his parents were fighting so much and he didn't know where he would end up living.

negative feelings toward them, such as anger, fear, or disgust. People's prejudices are often based on characteristics like skin color, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. People can even be prejudiced against animals because they have unfavorable feelings about a certain animal species.

**Example:** Jacob sees his neighbor walking her pet Pit Bull. Jacob is scared of Pit Bulls because he heard a story on the news about a Pit Bull who bit someone. He thinks that because this dog is also a Pit Bull, she is mean and aggressive. If Jacob felt empathy for the dog, he would realize from the dog's wagging tail and smile that the dog is happy, friendly, and does not want to hurt him.

### 2. Strong Feelings of Fear or Anger

When someone feels scared or angry, it can be difficult to have empathy for others because a part of the brain that allows someone to think and use empathy is taken over by the amygdala, another part of the brain. The amygdala causes people to act and say things without thinking. When the amygdala takes over, it is sometimes called the *fight-or-flight response* or the *amygdala hijack*.\*

**Example:** Sandra is angry with her younger sister for accidentally spilling a drink on her new shirt. Her sister tries to explain that it was a mistake, but Sandra is so upset about what happened that she does not have empathy for her sister and accuses her of doing it on purpose. If she felt empathy for her sister, she would realize that her sister feels guilty and wants to figure out a way to fix the situation.

### 3. Prejudice

Prejudice is when someone develops an opinion about someone before they know the individual. Their opinion is not based on truth, but on an unfair judgment they have of a group with which they associate the individual. When someone is prejudiced toward someone else they often have

### 4. Denial

When someone is in denial they refuse to believe that something is true. Sometimes when we hear new information it is difficult for us to accept it. Also, if something really terrible happens or someone is in an awful situation, people deny that it is actually happening because it is too difficult for them to accept that something so bad could actually be true.

**Example:** Naoki told his friend Camila that he did not eat meat because cows, pigs, and chickens can experience the same feelings as dogs and cats. He said that they are treated cruelly on large-scale farms and he did not want to support that. Camila told Naoki that he was wrong. She explained that her parents told her cows, pigs, and chickens are here for people to eat. She also said that farms would be shut down if they were that cruel to animals. Camila was in denial that what Naoki was telling her might be true because she loved animals and did not want to think about them being mistreated.

\*The term *amygdala hijack* was coined by Daniel Goleman in his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*.

## EMPATHY BLOCKERS WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Scenario #1

The Geracy family (Hassan, Lena, and their son, Lewis) lives in Montana. Hassan is a professor at the local community college and Lena is a volunteer at a homeless shelter. The family is Muslim and, just like most followers of any major religion, they believe in treating people with kindness and respect.

However, their neighbor does not understand their religion, and is afraid of all Muslims because of the terrorist acts committed by a small number of extremists, who happen to be Muslim. This neighbor is unfriendly to the Geracys and has told others that he does not want them in the community, even though the family has been respectful and kind to him.

**Which empathy blocker[s] do you think best describe[s] this situation? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

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**Using empathy, how do you think the Geracy family feels, knowing that their neighbor does not want them in the community? How does the neighbor feel?**

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**What could this neighbor do to better understand the Geracy family?**

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**Scenario #2**

Arthur, a sweet dog, is now living in a home with a loving family, but his life used to be very different. He used to live with a man named Frank who became very angry with him when he barked too loudly or chewed on Frank's shoes. Frank did not know that Arthur barked because he was anxious when a stranger walked past the house. Frank also did not know that Arthur chewed on shoes because he did not have any toys to chew. Instead of helping Arthur with these problems, Frank would hit Arthur or make him sleep outside in the cold. A neighbor could see that Frank was cruel to Arthur and offered to take him to an animal adoption center. Frank decided he did not want Arthur anymore so he agreed. While at the adoption center a family who understood Arthur's feelings and needs adopted him and gave him a loving home.

**Which empathy blocker[s] do you think best describe[s] this situation? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

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**Using empathy, how do you think Arthur felt when he lived with Frank? How do you think Arthur felt when he was taken to the animal shelter? How do you think he feels now with his new family? How do you think Frank feels?**

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**What could Frank have done to better understand Arthur?**

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## THEME: THE EMPATHY CONNECTION

# FIND YOUR VOICE

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### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What do people need to know about one another for optimal understanding and mutual respect?

### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will be able to find their voice by giving others insight into their identity as a member of a group they believe is misunderstood. They will be asked a series of questions that may help clear up misconceptions and create an opportunity for greater understanding among individuals and groups of students.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Define *stereotype*.
- Identify and share relevant information about groups to which the students belong.
- Develop a deeper understanding about peers and their group identities through shared discussion.
- Participate in bridging the gaps between people by speaking honestly and listening empathetically.

### 1. Warm Up (10 min.)

- Begin by asking students to think about, and then share, groups to which they belong. Students will likely volunteer information about teams, activities, and interests.
- Affirm these groups and ask them to think about other parts of their identity that make them who they are. In essence, encourage students to share what might feel more personal or even make them feel more vulnerable. If students seem uncomfortable talking about topics like gender or race, take time to review basic classroom agreements for treating each other with kindness and respect.
- Some examples of groups youth may identify with that might resonate on a deeper, more personal level for them include: people with disabilities, adopted children, residents of specific neighborhoods, people of certain ethnicities, biracial individuals,

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** 60 min.

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

### STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: SL.3.4, SL.4.4, SL.5.4  
SL.3.6

ISTE: Standard 6–  
Creative Communicator

### MATERIALS

- Find Your Voice Handout

### VOCABULARY

- Stereotype
- Assumptions

followers of certain faiths, children of same sex parents, etc.

- Ask students to generate a list of groups which are often misunderstood or misrepresented; draw from some of the examples above if students are having difficulty. Write this list out so students can see it.
- This activity will enable students to speak up for a group they are connected to and allow others to learn new information about that group as well. Explain that misunderstandings often happen when people don't take the time to listen and learn about each other's lives.

## 2. Writing Prep (15 min.)

- Give each student the *Find Your Voice* Handout and 10 minutes to complete it. Remind students that you want them to be brave and share things that may be new to their classmates. They should only *find their voice* for a group to which they belong.
- Allow them to prepare to share in front of the whole group by pairing each student with a peer and having them take turns answering the questions.

## 3. Find Your Voice Activity (20 min.)

- Reconvene and remind the students to take the activity seriously and to listen respectfully to the very best of their abilities. Remind them that this may feel uncomfortable, as a speaker or a listener, and that laughing, making fun, or arguing are not appropriate ways of dealing with those feelings.
- Invite volunteers to come up one at a time and ask them the questions. If some students wish not to speak, there is likely a reason why. Explain that more students can present at a later time, and then meet with students individually to see why they are uncomfortable sharing and to help them prepare.
- After you have taken volunteers, ask all students to write down three things that they learned about another group or a person in the box marked *Notes* on the handout.
- Invite students to listen quietly and respectfully as their peers *find their voice*.
- Ask the speakers to stand or sit near you, as they may need support from an adult if they are nervous.
- Ask them the following questions:
  - ➡ Which group did you find your voice for today?
  - ➡ What do you enjoy about being...(example: an immigrant from Colombia, a person with dyslexia, a girl who likes sports, etc.)?
  - ➡ What makes you frustrated about being...?
  - ➡ What do you wish others understood about being...?
  - ➡ What do others get wrong about being...?
  - ➡ How can others who are not in your group be more understanding or helpful?

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Kristina Hulvershorn

One of the best ways to overcome bias is to listen to the stories of people in groups different from our own. This lesson creates a meaningful way to do just that and can be an extraordinarily powerful activity for you and your students. To get maximum participation, the group must feel comfortable and safe (knowing they will not be criticized, made fun of, or bullied for speaking their truth) so use your judgment, and prepare your group accordingly. I recommend teachers participate in the activity as well, so your students can better understand you.



### LESSON NOTE

This lesson will probably be best received if you teach it after you have completed the *Agreements for Peace* activity on page 10, with your students, which aims to create a safe and inclusive classroom.

#### 4. Discussion (10 min.)

- Allow for a short discussion by asking students to share something new that they learned about another group.
- Ask students to raise their hands if they still feel curious about something someone said. Tell them that this activity will hopefully open the door to asking their classmates questions in order to better know them, as well as the groups to which they belong. Revisit the activity to allow all students to share (even if several weeks later).
- Ask students if hearing these stories made anyone realize that they may have made assumptions about their classmates that were not true. Ask students to try to imagine why we (our brains) assume things about people based on small amounts of information (like, for example, what they look like or what clothing they wear). Explain that people categorize things all the time, as a way of understanding the world, and when two things are similar in some way, we often associate any feelings and thoughts we had about one with the other. Clarify that while this type of association is not usually intended to be harmful, it can be. Let students know that just because two people or things share one characteristic, it does not mean everything is similar about them.
- Take a moment to define and provide an example of the word stereotype. Share that a stereotype is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. Explain that it is stereotyping to believe that something is true about a person solely based on a group they are a part of. For example, it is stereotyping for someone to assume that all boys are not good at talking about their feelings just because that person encountered a couple of boys who had difficulty talking about their feelings. Stereotypes are not necessarily true and are not applicable to everyone in a given group.

#### 5. Wrap Up (5 min.)

- Ask students to share what *finding your voice* means to them. Follow up by asking what they think giving a voice to someone else means to that person.
- Ask students to reflect and share ways they can take the lessons they learned during this activity to see everyone as an individual and to avoid stereotyping.
- Encourage them to recognize when they are making an assumption about someone else, to ask people questions to get to know them better, and to tell their own stories.
- Acknowledge that they rarely will know what a person feels, thinks, likes/dislikes, or believes without hearing about that person's experience.
- Allow students to share any final thoughts or feelings they have related to the activity.

#### EXTENSION PROJECT

- **Technology Integration:** Digital storytelling is a great way for students to tell personal stories about themselves while using technology to construct content. Often, students who are uncomfortable presenting to their classmates find their voice with digital storytelling. There are several good tools for digital storytelling, and we recommend **Adobe Spark** ([spark.adobe.com](http://spark.adobe.com)).

With Adobe Spark, your students are able to easily create a compelling story or narrative and even add their own voice narration. Please be aware that students will need an email address to sign up for Adobe Spark. A good alternative that does not require student emails is Voicethread.

Example of Adobe Spark post:

<https://spark.adobe.com/gallery/causes/example/i-am-rosie/>

Example of Adobe Spark video:

<https://spark.adobe.com/gallery/gallery-editors-choice/example/make-it-work/>

## FIND YOUR VOICE!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I) **What groups are you a part of?** (Think of what makes you who you are but that you feel like others don't really understand.) **Brainstorm your list here:**

II) **Choose the group you feel comfortable speaking up for, and circle it in the box above.**

III) **Fill in the blank with the group you have chosen, and think about how you would answer each question.**

1. What do you enjoy about being \_\_\_\_\_ ?
2. What, if anything, makes you frustrated about being a member of \_\_\_\_\_ ?
3. What do you wish others understood about \_\_\_\_\_ ?
4. What do others get wrong about \_\_\_\_\_ ?
5. How can others who are not \_\_\_\_\_  
be more understanding or helpful?

IV) **Notes: Write 3 things that you didn't understand about other groups before listening to your classmates.**



**THEME:**  
**THE EMPATHY CONNECTION**

# EMPATHY IN OUR SCHOOL

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can listening to others help us become more empathetic?

## OVERVIEW

In an effort to increase empathy for people at their school, students will interview someone they do not know well, such as a cafeteria worker, custodial worker, office administrator, or a student in a different grade. They will report what they learn to their classmates. Through this process, students will learn how active listening and conversation can help us to better understand one another.

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Demonstrate active listening.
- Create connections between active listening and empathy.
- Form relationships with new people.

## DAY 1:

### 1. Warm Up (10 min.)

- Begin class by asking students if they remember what empathy means.
- Explain that each student will interview someone at the school, with whom they are not familiar, as a way to put themselves in “someone else’s shoes” and practice empathy.
- If students do not know the definition of *interview*, explain that “an interview is usually when one person meets with another to ask him/her questions. The purpose of the interview is for one person to find out information from or about another.”
- Explain that some people, such as reporters and talk show hosts, have jobs where they conduct interviews.
- Ask students which behaviors or qualities they think someone needs to be a successful interviewer. Allow for responses and make sure to include *asking thoughtful questions* and *being an active listener*.

**GRADE LEVEL** 3-5

**TIME NEEDED** Two 45 min. periods

**SUBJECTS** Social Studies,  
English Language Arts

## STANDARDS

Common Core  
ELA-Literacy: SL.3.1B  
SL.3.4, SL.4.4, SL.5.4

## MATERIALS

- ☐ *In Your Shoes Survey Worksheet*

## VOCABULARY/TERMS

- Interview
- Passive listening
- Active listening
- Empathy

## LESSON NOTE

This lesson will be best received as a follow-up to at least one other lesson in the Empathy Connection theme, since students need to be familiar with the meaning of empathy. This is a project-based lesson intended to help students put what they have learned about empathy into practice. They are challenged to use active listening to see something from someone else’s point of view and understand that individual’s feelings.



## 2. Active Listening (20 min.)

- Explain that you will be discussing the difference between an active and passive listener.
- Tell students to think about a time when they knew someone was not listening to them. Ask them to think about how they knew the person was not paying attention so they can show what not listening looks like to their peers
- Let them know that when you say “go” you want them to act out what it looks like when someone is not listening and when you say “freeze” you want them to immediately pause and hold their position.
- Give the “go” cue and observe their behavior.
- Then say “freeze.” While the students are frozen, point out some of the things you see students doing. For example, “I see that Manuel is rolling his eyes” and “I see that Tamara is playing with her hands.”
- Have students “unfreeze” and ask them to share any additional behaviors they observed while they were pretending not to listen.
- Ask students what most people are thinking about when they are not listening. Allow for responses, then discuss that people often think about what they plan to say next, not about what the person talking is saying.
- Explain to students that they have now seen what it looks like when people do not listen respectfully to others. Ask how they think their interviewee would feel if they behaved this way during their interview.
- Next, discuss appropriate ways to behave while conducting an interview. Share that great interviewers use active listening techniques to ensure that others know they are being heard.
- Have students share ideas on how to show they are actively and respectfully listening; write their ideas on the board. If not mentioned, be sure to include the following tips:
  - ➡ Focus on the speaker and make eye contact.
  - ➡ Listen closely. If you cannot hear everything clearly, politely ask the speaker to repeat what they said.
  - ➡ Wait quietly for the speaker to finish talking before responding (emphasize the importance of being patient and not interrupting, even when we are excited).
  - ➡ As you listen, concentrate on what the person is saying and try to visualize it.
  - ➡ Ask questions if there is something the speaker said that you do not understand. Re-phrase the speaker’s main points to make sure that you have understood them using sentence starters like: “I hear you saying that...”; “Your point is...”; “You think that...”

## 3. Interview Instructions (15 min.)

- Distribute the *In Your Shoes* Worksheet. Explain to students that they will be asking the questions on the worksheet to someone at their school, preferably someone whom they do not know very well, such as a cafeteria worker, custodial worker, or an office administrator. They can

## EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

### Mickey Kudia

What I love about this lesson is that it provides students with an opportunity to practice empathy by taking the time to listen to someone at their school. There are many people who make up a school community and strong communities are built on trust and mutual understanding. By interviewing a cafeteria worker, custodial worker, librarian, or office administrator at their school, students connect with members of their community and learn about the important role they have in their school. It will also humanize people who the students might see everyday, but never get the opportunity to speak with and understand their unique perspectives, interests, and feelings.

## EXTENSION PROJECT

- **Writing and Technology:** As a class, create a website about empathy using Weebly ([www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)). Suggest that your students ask their interviewees for permission to turn their interviews into blogs or videos for the site. Students can share their knowledge about increasing empathy through active listening with people from around the world, while practicing their writing and speaking skills. Encourage your students to produce additional content related to empathy and what it means to them for the website.

## RESOURCE LINKS

### Conflict Research Consortium

<http://conflict.colorado.edu/>

### Greater Good in Action

[http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/active\\_listening](http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/active_listening)

also interview a teacher they have never had or a student in a different grade.

- Ask students what they think the purpose of this activity is and allow for responses. Make sure to share the following key points: to better understand someone at their school, to exhibit empathy for that person, and to learn how active listening and asking questions are some of the best ways to get to know someone.
- Ask for volunteers to role play how they will conduct the interviews.
- Have one student act as the interviewer and the other as the interviewee. Before they start the role play, emphasize that you want them to demonstrate being active listeners, using the tips they discussed earlier.
- After students finish role playing, ask their peers to provide them with positive feedback on what they did well. If needed, you can provide constructive criticism on ways they can improve. Then, as a whole class, discuss any additional suggestions for being a successful interviewer. Respond to any questions the students have about the project.
- Provide students with an appropriate deadline for finding an interviewee and conducting their interview. Make sure you also give them enough time to prepare for their presentation.
- Let students know that they will have to explain the project to the person that they want to interview. They should ask if the person is willing to participate and able to set up a day and time to be interviewed before the deadline. If the person does not want to participate for any reason, the student should be respectful and thank the person for their time and consideration. Explain that they will then have to ask someone else to be interviewed.

## DAY 2:

### 1. Review (5 min.)

- Review active and respectful listening skills with students.
- Encourage them to demonstrate their best active listening skills as they take turns sharing what they learned from their interviews.

### 2. Student Presentations and Discussion (35 min.)

- Have each student present their interviewees' responses to the questions.
- After all the students have shared, ask the class the following questions:
  - 🕒 Was there anything surprising that you learned from your interviews?
  - 🕒 Was there anything surprising that you learned from your classmates' interviews?
  - 🕒 Were there any similarities in interviewees' responses to the interview questions?
  - 🕒 What did you learn about the connection between respectful, active listening and really getting to know someone?
  - 🕒 How does trying to really understand others affect our empathy toward them?
  - 🕒 How can you use active listening to better understand the people you meet at school and in your personal life?



#### INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS NOTE

You may want to inform the staff and faculty about the project in advance to ask if anyone has a particular interest in participating or if there is anyone who would prefer not to participate. Then, you can inform your students of individuals they should not ask to interview or create a list of people to consider approaching. You also might want to create a shared list of interviewees that your students can fill out so that the students do not ask the same person to be interviewed multiple times. Encourage students to create their own interview questions about empathy instead of, or in addition to, using the ones provided in the lesson. Review the questions provided as an example and discuss the questions they create. Teach students how to best phrase their inquiries so they are able to effectively obtain the information they are curious to learn.



#### STUDENT PRESENTATIONS NOTE

You can enhance this project by asking students to create more formal presentations about what they learned from their interviews and the connection between getting to know someone and exercising empathy. They could create a poster, tri-fold, or PowerPoint to share what they learned about both the interviewee and themselves. Encourage students to include how the experience influenced their understanding of others and how it enriched their own lives.

### 3. Wrap Up (5 min.)

- Thank students for their work on the project and the discussion.
- Let them know that you hope they continue to use what they learned about active listening both in this class and in their personal lives.
- Ask them the following questions:
  - How would school be different if everyone had the opportunity to talk with everyone else at the beginning of the school year?
  - How can we work toward having a more empathetic school, even though we may not be able to talk to everyone in the school?



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## IN YOUR SHOES SURVEY

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

Empathy is when we “put ourselves in someone else’s shoes” to think about the world from their point of view and understand their feelings. To build empathy, you will interview someone at the school who you do not know well, practicing your best active listening skills. You can interview a cafeteria worker, custodial worker, librarian, office administrator, teacher (one you’ve never had), or a student in another grade. Ask them the questions below and write down their responses.

1. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your role at the school? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you feel about your position at this school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your favorite thing about our school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is one thing you would like everyone in the school to know about you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever felt misunderstood by people at our school? If so, please explain why you felt this way?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is one thing that we can do to better understand each other at our school?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Draw a picture of the person you interviewed below.

