

# FAMILY ACTIVITIES



## Read for Empathy



**Brilliant empathy-boosting things to do at home!**

# Family Activities

## Countdown to Empathy Day



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With our thanks to Helen Bate for the cover illustration

Cover: Helen Bates

Content: Sarah Mears

Design: Francesca Wilks

#EmpathyDay - Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

# Family Activities

Countdown to Empathy Day  
26 May - 8 June



## If ever we needed more empathy, it's now.

Empathy Day is all about the power of empathy to change lives. Your children would usually be taking part in school or in libraries.

In this very different year, we've created a set of family activities so you can join in at home. Do them together as part of **our 14 day countdown to Empathy Day on 9 June**. Parents and older siblings can get involved too!

Being able to understand how other people think and feel is a vital skill. Research shows that reading teaches children to talk about emotions and see the world from new perspectives. This pack is full of great activities to develop those skills and put them into practice.

The activities are divided into Empathy Day's three themes - **Read, Connect, Act** - but you can do them in any order. You don't need specific books to take part. Drawing and craft materials are helpful, but all the activities can be done with just scrap paper and a pen. **You don't need to print this pack!**

## Activity List

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### Remember to join us on 9 June for Empathy Day!

A day of activities and online events led by superstar authors and illustrators!

Take a peek at the programme on **page 21**

#EmpathyDay - Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

# Family Activities

## Empathy and how to build it



### What is empathy?

Empathy has been described as a human superpower. **It's our ability to understand and share someone else's feelings.**

Empathy is made up of three main elements: **feeling, thinking and acting.**

### Why it matters

**Empathy is an essential life skill for all of us.**

More empathy in our world will create happier children and stronger communities. A better world.

### How to build it

We're not born with a fixed amount of empathy – it's a skill we can learn.

**We know that books are a powerful tool to develop it.** By identifying with book characters, children learn to see things from other points of view. As they read, they're building empathy skills.

It's that easy.

**Head to the end of this pack where you'll find more tips and ideas to boost your child's empathy, plus the full programme for Empathy Day on 9 June**



"Reading allows us to view the world – and ourselves – through another's eyes and to walk in their shoes for a while, developing understanding. This is the very essence of connecting and communicating with others.

Reading is such a wonderful way to bring people together in a world that increasingly seeks to build walls and barriers between us."

*Malorie Blackman*

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Make and decorate Empathy Glasses

*This activity is for younger children but the whole family could join in.*

**Our Empathy Glasses help children focus on other peoples' points of view and imagine seeing things through a character's eyes.**

**You will need:** paper      coloured pens or pencils      scissors (ask an adult to help)

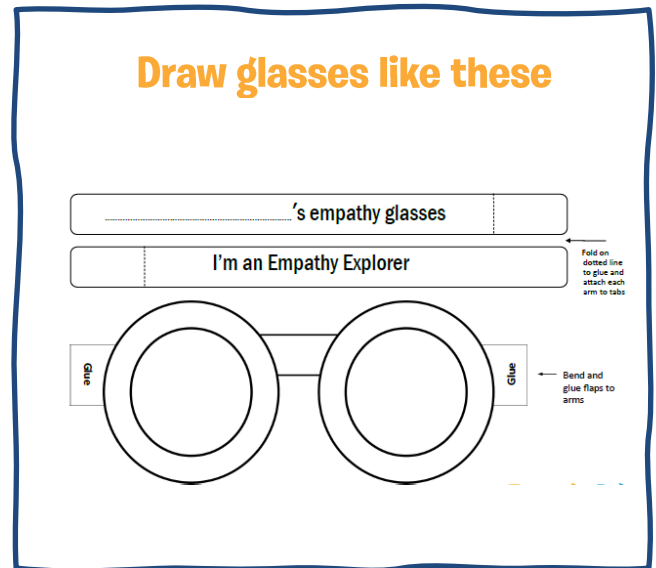
Use our handy template, which you can download [here](#), or draw your own on a piece of paper to create a personalised pair of Empathy Glasses.

**Tip!** Be creative with your decoration. Why not try coloured paper, stickers or anything else you have at home to make a unique pair of Empathy Glasses.

Once you've decorated your glasses, ask an adult to **carefully cut them out**.

Next, fold the arms of the glasses, making sure they fit on your face.

**Now put them on and have fun talking about how all the characters in your favourite books might see the world in different ways.**



On Empathy Day at midday, Malorie Blackman will be asking everyone to put on their Empathy Glasses and recommend their favourite #ReadForEmpathy book on social media. Get yours ready now!



# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Meet your favourite character

*The whole family can take part in this activity.*

**Choose your favourite storybook character. You're about to meet them!**

**You will need:** a piece of paper                      a pen or pencil                      imagination!

Walk into a room and close your eyes.

As you open them, **imagine your favourite character is standing there.** They tell you it's their birthday!

**Tell someone you live with who the character is and what you would give them as a birthday present.**

Next, imagine you're making them their favourite birthday treat. **What would you give them to eat?**

**Now draw a fridge with an open door, with shelves full of their favourite foods.** Ask your whole family to join in with ideas!

**What's inside your character's fridge?**



We'd love to see your drawings! Ask a grown-up to share a picture on social media  
**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### See the world through a character's eyes

*Suitable for all ages – get creative!*

Choose your favourite storybook character. You're going to make the world as they see it!

**You will need:** a shoe box or other small box  
sticky tape or glue

some card or scrap paper  
coloured pens or pencils

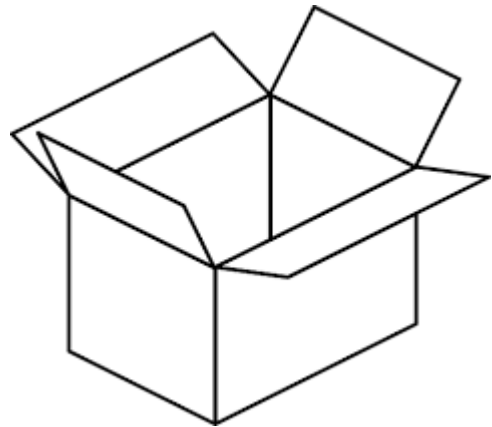
Use a cardboard box to **create a tiny 3D scene from a story**, just as you imagine your chosen character sees it.

Use pieces of card, or anything you have in your home to make miniature pieces of furniture. You can be really inventive!

**Really think about your character's world.** What would Matilda see when she visited Miss Honey's house for the first time? Or, what does the neighbourhood that Sephy and Callum from *Noughts and Crosses* see every day look like?

If you don't have a box, you can draw a picture of the scene or design it on a computer.

**Can you make a character's world from a cardboard box?**



Let us know what scene you've made and share a photo on social media  
**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Top Ten Empathy Books

*The whole family can take part in this activity.*

There are so many books which are brilliant for boosting empathy. Why not develop a list of your Top Ten Empathy Books?

You will need: your book ideas      a piece of paper      a pen or pencil

Gather everyone in your family together and talk about how reading can create feelings of empathy.

Think about how authors help you understand feelings by making you see things through the eyes of different characters.

Next ask everyone in the family to suggest a book for your list of the best empathy reads.

Any book can be included and you could widen this to your extended family and friends.

Why not draw up your list as a poster? Or you could even record a video counting down the Top Ten and explaining why you picked each book.

A Country to Call Home

Ravi's Roar

We'll be asking for your Top Ten #ReadForEmpathy recommendations on Empathy Day! @EmpathyLabUK



# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Detecting feelings in faces

*Any family members can try this activity.*

Researchers say that people who read are better at recognising how others are feeling. This activity puts that to the test!

**You will need:** five books, magazines or newspapers

Find five different books, magazines or newspapers with pictures or photos of people's faces in them.

Choose some faces and **see if you can work out how the person is feeling**, just by looking at them.

How can you tell? Is it all in the face, or can you find other clues to their feelings?



Think about all the different ways you can describe similar emotions.

On 9 June, famous authors and illustrators will be talking about why it's important to be able to understand other people's feelings.

Head to our website to read about our Empathy Day plans [www.empathylab.uk](http://www.empathylab.uk)

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Character Pairs

*Older and younger siblings, or the whole family can play this game together.*

**What would happen if characters from different books met? This is where you find out!**

**You will need:** a selection of books

**Pick two books and choose a character from each.**

**Think about the two characters and answer these questions:**

- What would they think of each other?
- What would they say to each other?
- How might they show empathy to each other?

**Keep playing with new books and characters!**

It's more fun if you play with very different characters. For instance, you could try introducing a character from a picture book to a character from a book for young adults. You might end up with some funny pairings!

**Hello, I'm Odd Dog**

**Hi, I'm the BFG**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Empathy Awards

*The whole family can take part in this activity.*

Roll out the red carpet for the Empathy Awards! See if your family can agree which book character shows the most empathy.

You will need: ideas of storybook characters

Think about what it means to be empathetic. Of all the book characters you can think of, which shows the most empathy?

Get everyone in your family to think of their own nominee, and then you can debate who should be the overall winner.

If you want to have lots of fun with this activity, you could create a mini awards ceremony or certificates for the winners!

Who would you give the Empathy Award to?



Why not ask an adult to share the name of your winner on social media using **#EmpathyDay** and tagging **@EmpathyLabUK**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Empathy Spotter

*The whole family can take part in this activity.*

Sharing a story is a great way of connecting and feeling close to others.

You will need: an Empathy Short, which you'll find [here](#) from 27 May

Ask someone in your family to read one of our Empathy Shorts out loud to the rest of the group.

Once they've finished reading, **talk about how you felt about the story.**

- Were there any characters you felt more empathy for?
- Did the characters show empathy for each other?

#### What is an Empathy Short?

Empathy Shorts are short stories created by children's writers especially for Empathy Day. We'll be releasing them on 27 May during the Countdown to Empathy Day.

Reading together is a great way to spend special time as a family. And discussing the story afterwards really helps you understand other people's feelings and perspectives.

If you liked this activity, **why not try it with some of your own books?**

Remember to follow [@EmpathyLabUK](#) on social media to read all the latest Empathy Shorts as they're released

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: READ



### Illustrating #ReadForEmpathy

*Children of all ages will enjoy this activity*

Be inspired by your favourite illustrators and create your own #ReadForEmpathy illustration.

You will need: a piece of paper pens, pencils or paints

We are unveiling a brand-new empathy illustration each day from 26 May, until Empathy Day on 9 June.

You can see drawings from some of the best children's illustrators on our website [here](#).

Now it's your turn!

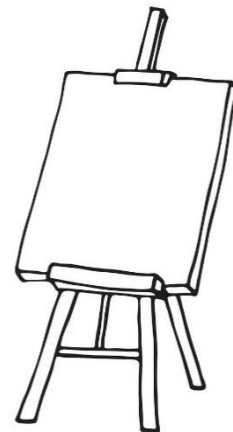
Grab your pens, pencils, paints or any other art materials and something to draw on.

Create a picture showing what #ReadForEmpathy means to you.

You could even try creating a digital illustration on the computer.

Once you've finished, why not share your art with us on social media using #EmpathyDay @EmpathyLabUK

How would you draw the theme of 'Read for Empathy'?



# Family Activities

## Family Activity: CONNECT



### Using art to talk about feelings

*This is a group activity for the whole family.*

**When we look and listen carefully, we learn so much about other people.**

**You will need:** a listening ear                      lots of imagination!

**Gather a few family members and look at this picture together.**

**Next, ask each person to tell the group what they think is happening in the picture.**

**Listen very carefully** without interrupting or making any judgements.

Did everyone have the same ideas, or were there different views?

**Now ask each family member to imagine they are one of the characters in the painting.**



**Thomas Benjamin Kennington**

One-by-one, **tell the group what your life is like and about your hopes and dreams.**

You could even write a short conversation between the characters as if it were a play, and then act it out.

You can find out more about the painting [here](#)

Image credit: Coram in the care of the Foundling Museum

**#EmpathyDay - Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.**



# Family Activities

## Family Activity: CONNECT



### Feeling emotions through music

*This is a group activity for the whole family.*

**Music is really powerful and can be full of emotions. Listening together will help children think about their feelings and share them.**

**You will need:** a piece of paper                      a pen or pencil                      a song or piece of music

**Play a piece of music and listen really carefully.**

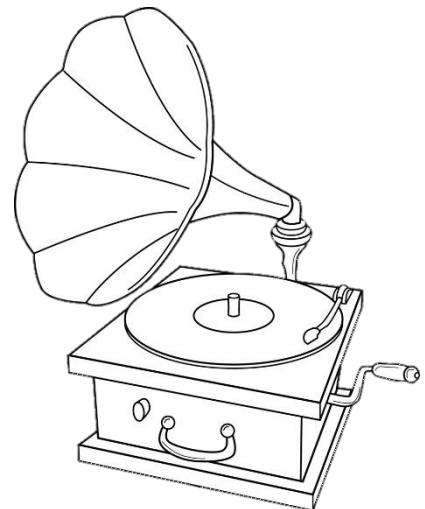
**While you're listening, draw a picture of how the music makes you feel.**

**Swap your drawings with each other.**

**Did you end up with the same picture? If not, talk about why you think that is.**

**Try it again with a different type of music. Why not listen to some pop, jazz, electric or even film music?**

**How does different music make you feel?**



We'd love to see your drawings! Share them on social media using **#EmpathyDay** and tagging **@EmpathyLabUK**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: ACT



### Family definition of empathy

*This is a group activity for the whole family.*

Being able to understand and explain what empathy is and why it matters will help children put their empathy skills into action

**You will need:** a piece of paper      a pen or pencil      the internet

Start by talking about what you think 'empathy' might mean.

Next, watch this Sesame Street video: [youtu.be/g\\_1Rt1R4xbM](https://youtu.be/g_1Rt1R4xbM)



Once you've watched it, **work together to create a family definition of empathy.** What words would you use?

Now put your heads together to **come up with a list of the ways everyone in your family could show more empathy to each other.**

We'd love to read your definition! Share it on social media using **#EmpathyDay** and tagging **@EmpathyLabUK**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: ACT



### Empathy Mosaic

*This is a group activity for the whole family.*

**Create a mosaic of empathy, recognising and celebrating empathy when it happens.**

**You will need:** scrap paper      coloured pencils or pens      sticky tack or tape

Collect up some pieces of scrap paper, or coloured paper if you have it.

**Every time someone in your family makes you feel understood, write a short note about it.** This could be things like:

*'Anna knew I was sad so she sat next to me'*

*'Mum could tell I needed time on my own'*

*'Ali saw I was feeling lonely so he let me join in with his game'*

The only rule is that you have to write about someone else's empathy action, not your own!

**Once you've created a few notes, stick them onto a big piece of paper, your fridge or even a wall.** Make sure you have a grown-up's permission first!

**Keep adding to it every time someone shows empathy.** Soon you'll have a beautiful multi-coloured mosaic of empathy!

#### Create a colourful Empathy Mosaic



Share a picture of your mosaic on social media using **#EmpathyDay** and tagging **@EmpathyLabUK**

# Family Activities

## Family Activity: ACT



### Make an Empathy Resolution

*This is a group activity for the whole family.*

#### How can we put empathy into action?

**You will need:** scrap paper      coloured pencils or pens      sticky tack or tape

On Empathy Day, we'll ask everyone to make and share an Empathy Resolution. This is what you're going to do to make sure you act with more empathy and make the world a better place.

**Why not come up with something as a family?** Once you've agreed on something, **design a poster with the resolution on it.**

Take a big piece of paper and write the heading 'Today is Empathy Day. Our Empathy Resolution is...' at the top.

Now decorate your poster in any way you like, but make sure to include the action you're going to take!

Once you've finished, **put your poster in your window so other people can see it!**

#### Empathy Resolution Ideas:

**Listening harder and not interrupting**

**Asking friends and family how they are feeling**

**Finding out what my neighbours need**

**Helping our local food banks**

On Empathy Day, watch authors talking about their own Empathy Resolutions and share your poster on social media using **#EmpathyDay @EmpathyLabUK**



## Top Tips!

Keep practicing your empathy skills with our additional ideas and resources.

Why not try out these tips when you're next sharing a story?

### Tip 1: Recognise feelings

Use lots of different emotion words when discussing stories.

### Tip 2: Talk about characters

Instead of discussing what might happen next, focus on the characters. What are they afraid of? Who was the most interesting?

### Tip 3: Don't forget pictures

Illustrations are especially good for 'reading' other people – can you tell from the picture how a character feels?

### Tip 4: Listen

Listen really carefully as children explore their feelings about the book. Don't worry about silences, give them space to reflect.

### Tip 5: Take it further

Has a book helped your child see the world differently? Do they feel inspired to do something to help others? Why not act on this, as a family.

# Family Activities

## Extra resources



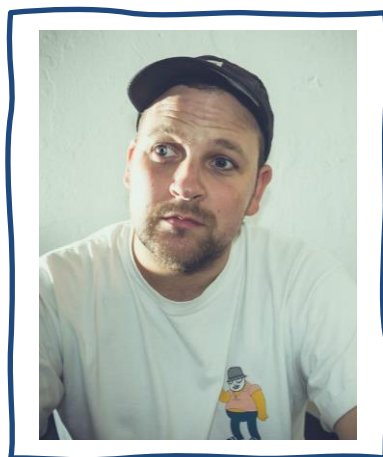
## Empathy Read Aloud

Every year we create a booklist of new books that we think are great empathy-boosting reads. You can find out more about the collections [here](#).

Some of the authors in this year's collection have created short films of themselves reading aloud their stories and poems. You can watch them all [here](#).



**Catherine Johnson**



**Steven Camden**



**Sophia Thakur**

## Get in touch!

We'd love to see how you're getting on with these activities during the countdown, and how you're celebrating Empathy Day on 9 June.

Each time you finish an activity, ask a grown-up to take a photo of your masterpiece and share it with us on social media [@EmpathyLabUK](#) using [#EmpathyDay](#)

**Note to parents/carers:** we love to see children's empathy creations, but we advise not sharing photos of your children.

And don't forget to visit our website and follow our social media channels for lots of great empathy-related ideas and information [www.empathylab.uk](http://www.empathylab.uk)



# Family Activities

## Empathy Day Programme



## Join us on 9 June

If you enjoyed the activities in this pack, you'll love **Empathy Day!**

On 9 June, we're hosting a day of brilliant activities and online events to boost your empathy. We'll be joined by favourite children's authors and illustrators including **Malorie Blackman, Cressida Cowell and Rob Biddulph.**

You'll find more about how to take part with each activity on our website [www.empathylab.uk](http://www.empathylab.uk)

### 9.30am to 12.30pm READ

- 9.30am Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell introduces Empathy Day
- 10am Special #DrawWithRob from Rob Biddulph
- 10.30am Empathy-themed Story Maker's Show from Puffin
- 11am Empathy Library Rhyme Time - join Kate Priestley from Kingston Libraries in a rhyme time about emotion
- 11.30am Sarah Crossan sets the Empathy Poetry Challenge
- 12 noon **ALL TOGETHER:** Malorie Blackman leads putting on Empathy Glasses and sharing #ReadForEmpathy ideas

### 1.30pm to 2.30pm CONNECT

- 1.30pm Authors Jo Cotterill and Robin Stevens show us the *Listening Switch* exercise for listening 100%
- 2pm Author Joseph Coelho leads *Empathy Charades* and families play at home

### 2.30pm to 3.30pm ACT

- 2.30pm Authors Onjali Rauf and Sita Brahmachari introduce 'putting empathy into action'
- 3.30pm **ALL TOGETHER:** make an Empathy Resolution poster to share on social media or put in your window

### 7.15pm EVENING EVENT on TWITTER

- 7.15pm The Empathy Conversation with authors Cressida Cowell and Muhammad Khan, and psychologist, Professor Robin Banerjee

Join in on social media ALL DAY using #EmpathyDay

@EmpathyLabUK



www.empathylab.uk

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