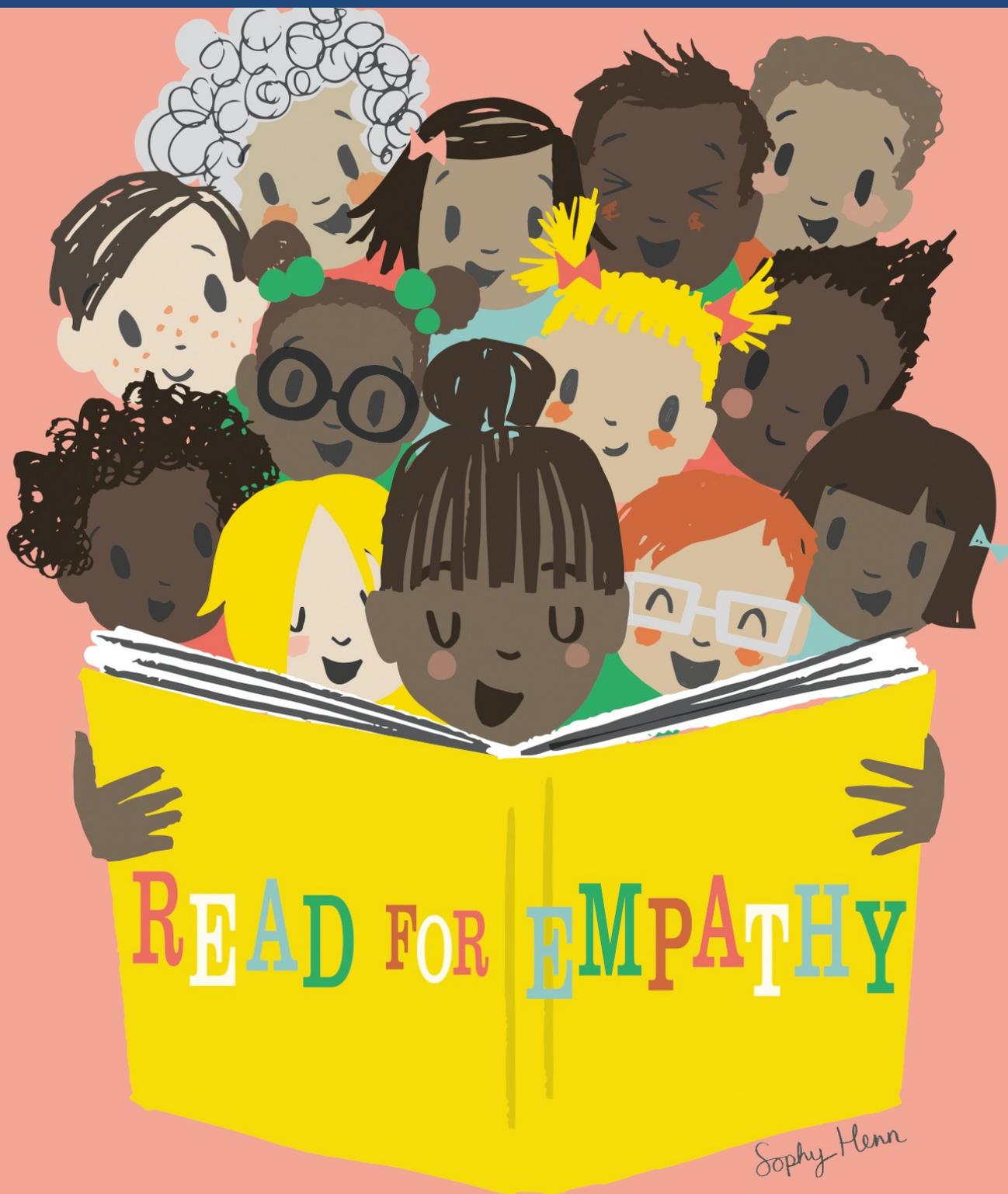


# FAMILY ACTIVITIES PACK

Brilliant empathy-boosting things to do at home!



Empathy Day 2021



# Family Activities



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

Empathy Day is all about the power of empathy to change lives by helping us understand each other better. This year's theme is *walking in someone else's shoes*.

We've created a set of family activities so you can join in at home. Do them together as part of our countdown to Empathy Day on 10 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 other people's perspectives.

This pack is full of great activities to develop those skills and put them into practice. You can do them in any order and 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!**

We'd love to see how you're getting on. Each time you finish an activity, ask a grown-up to take a photo and share it with us on social media @EmpathyLabUK using #EmpathyDay. Note to parents/carers: we love to see children's empathy creations, but advise not sharing photos of your children. And do visit [empathylab.uk](http://empathylab.uk) for lots of great empathy-related ideas and information.

## Ten family activities

<a href="#"><u>Go on an Empathy Walk</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Empathy Family Exhibition</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Empathy Family Book</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Empathy shoe shop</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Step into each other's shoes</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Make an Empathy Bookmark</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Book characters on holiday</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Musical Shorts</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>What's in the Empathy News?</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Make your Empathy Resolution</u></a>

**Remember to join us on 10 June for Empathy Day!**

A day of activities and online events led by superstar children's authors and illustrators. Take a peek at the programme on **page 15**.

**#EmpathyDay - Read. Connect. Act.**

# 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 grow empathy

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

**We know books are a powerful tool to develop empathy.** 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 10 June.**

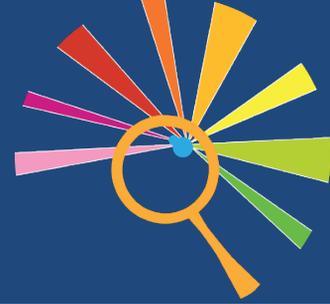


"Reading allows us to view the world - and ourselves - through another's eyes and to walk in their shoes for a while, developing understanding. This is the very essence of connecting and communicating with others.

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



## Go on an Empathy Walk

*This activity is for the whole family.*

### Imagine life for other people in your local area

**You will need:** outdoor clothes outdoor shoes

Go on an Empathy Walk together to understand your community in a very different way. Imagine yourself in the shoes of the people and situations you see. Maybe a homeless person, an argument, a family having fun. Notice and share your feelings - puzzled, glad, angry, worried? Note down what you see/feel to talk about when you get home. Draw a map or some pictures of what you have seen and felt or record a short film talking about your walk.

Use the walk as inspiration to make an Empathy Resolution, so that every day becomes an empathy day.

Share it all @EmpathyLabUK using #EmpathyDay and #EmpathyWalk hashtags.



Stories help us understand more. Through getting to know characters, we empathise better with people in real life.

Head to [empathylabuk/empathywalk](https://empathylabuk.com/empathywalk) to see Empathy Walks in action, examples from authors, and reading ideas to follow up your walk.

**Stay safe:** Please don't take photos of people or photos on private land unless you have explicit permission. Since this is all about discussing empathy together, as well as safety, we suggest children don't do the walk on their own.

# Family Activities



## Family Empathy Book

The whole family can take part in this activity

### Empathy builds a better world

**You will need:** notebook scraps of paper pen or pencil

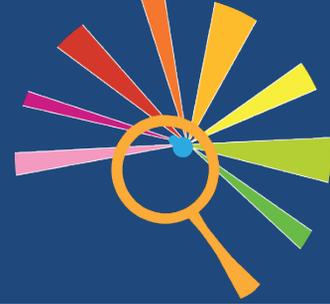
- Use a spare notebook. Or cut up scraps of paper - stapled to make a notebook.
- In Countdown Week you all **note down any acts of empathy you experience**. Maybe someone has listened well, or helped out. Maybe there was an act of empathy in the news.
- No rules! Just jot it down to remind yourself - and remember to **focus on someone else's empathy action**, not yours.
- Things like "Mum could tell I needed some space"; "Fatima let me join in".
- On Empathy Day read through the notebook together and talk about all those acts of empathy. How do they make you feel? Why do they matter?

### Make an empathy notebook together



**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**

# Family Activities



## Step into each other's shoes

*Suitable for all ages*

**See family life from the perspective of another family member!**

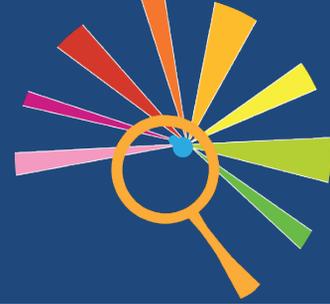
**You will need:** Each other!

- Each family member wears another's shoes - or carries an item of clothing belonging to another family member with them.
- **Take 15 minutes to assume that person's identity.** Everyone else must treat them as if they actually were that family member.
- Discuss how it felt to be that person. What did you learn about their life, and perspective?
- Share ideas! How could everyone improve the life of each family member?

**Spend time in someone else's shoes (literally!)**



Share a photo on social media  
**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**



## Book characters on holiday

*The whole family can take part in this activity*

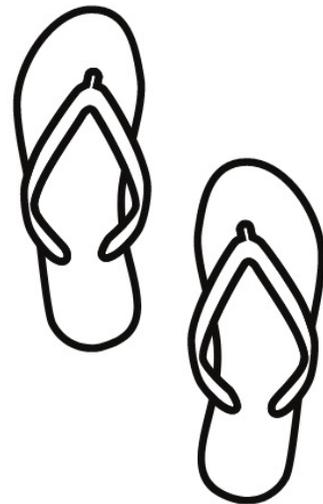
**Understanding book characters helps build empathy. This activity really helps you stand in a character's shoes (or flip flops!)**

**You will need:** postcard/piece of paper

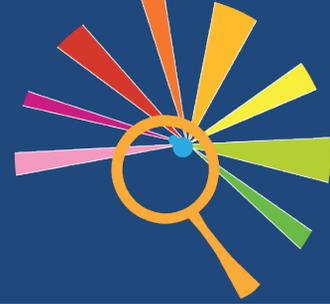
pens or pencils

- Imagine the holidays of your favourite book characters.
  - Would Winnie the Pooh love a beach holiday?
  - Would Willy Wonka enjoy a camping holiday?
  - And where on earth would the Gruffalo go?
- Draw some 'photos' of your favourite character on holiday.
- Write the postcard they might send home. Who would they write to, what would they say they'd been doing?

### Postcards home from favourite book characters



Share your character postcards  
**@EmpathyLabUK**



## What's in the Empathy News?

*For older children and adults*

**The last 12 months have seen some amazing acts of empathy. But also acts of cruelty, selfishness, injustice. How could the world be different?**

**You will need:** magazines or newspapers

- Watch the news together or read a newspaper.
- Choose a news story and think about how things could have been really different if those involved had showed more empathy.
- Rewrite the story from an empathy perspective.

**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**

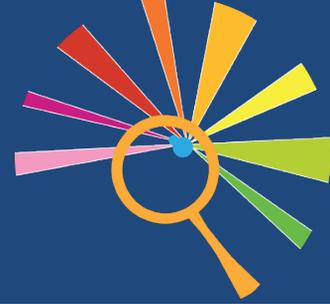
**Use empathy to rewrite the news**



On 10 June, famous authors and illustrators will be talking about why it's important to show empathy.

Head to our website to read about our Empathy Day plans:  
**[empathylab.uk/empathy-day-live-2021](https://empathylab.uk/empathy-day-live-2021)**

# Family Activities



## Empathy Family Exhibition

*The whole family can join in this activity.*

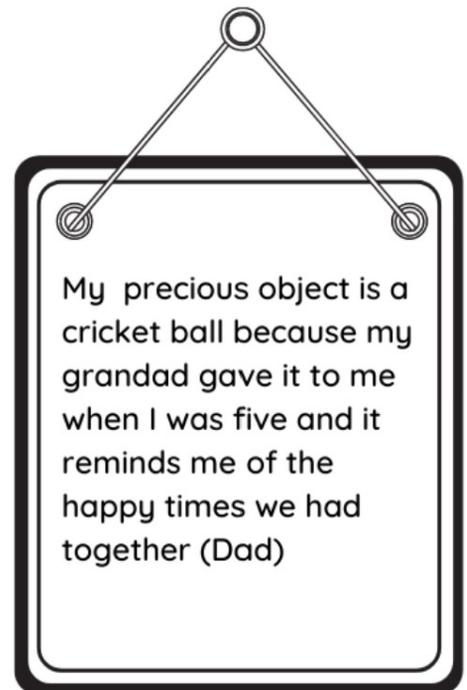
**Share precious family objects to understand each other better**

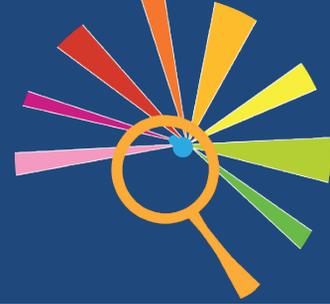
**You will need** everyone's precious objects    small piece of card /paper    pen

- Invite each family member to share their most precious objects and explain why they're so important.
- Set up a table or shelf to display them safely together for a short time.
- Write labels to explain the objects - just like in a real exhibition. Children could write these when they've heard each object's story.
- Maybe record each other talking about the object. Create a family archive.

**@EmpathyLabUK #EmpathyDay**

**Understand each other better through precious objects**





## Empathy shoe shop

For younger family members and adults.

**How well do you know your favourite books characters... what kind of shoes would they buy?**

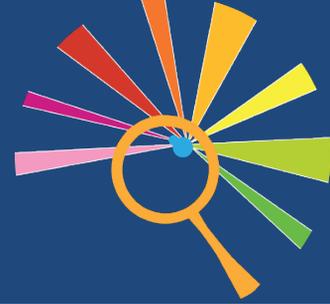
**You will need:** magazines catalogues paper pens

- Search through old magazines/catalogues and cut out pictures of shoes.
- Imagine you're going to a shoe shop with your favourite book characters. Maybe Harry Potter; Omar from *Planet Omar*; Tracey Beaker; Ahmet from *The Boy at the Back of the Class*; Miss Trunchbull from *Matilda*; Mr Stink; Paddington Bear.
- What shoes would they buy?
- Draw the character or write their name on some paper and stick on their 'new shoes'. Explain why they would choose those shoes.

**Shopping for shoes with your favourite characters**



Why not ask an adult to share your picture on social media using **#EmpathyDay** and tagging **@EmpathyLabUK**



## Make an Empathy Bookmark

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

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

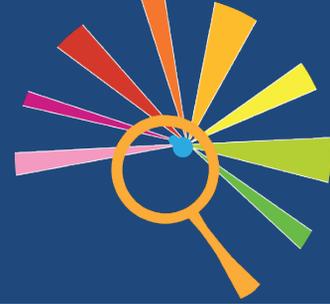
**You will need:** paper pen

- Create an empathy bookmark.
- On it draw the character that you think shows most empathy.
- Swap or give your bookmark to someone else in your family.
- Ask an adult to share a photo of the bookmark on social media.

**Make an empathy  
bookmark for someone  
else**



Remember to follow **@EmpathyLabUK** on social media



## Musical Shorts

*Children of all ages will enjoy this activity.*

**Music can powerfully reflect emotions. Can you express the emotions in stories by choosing accompanying music?**

**You will need:** access to [empathylab.uk](https://empathylab.uk) pen paper

### What is an Empathy Short?

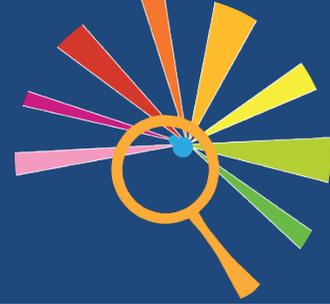
Empathy Shorts are short stories created by children's writers especially for Empathy Day. We'll be releasing them from 11 May.

- Find the Empathy Shorts at [empathylab.uk/empathy-shorts](https://empathylab.uk/empathy-shorts)
- Choose one of the stories.
- Suggest a song or piece of music that could accompany the story and reflects the same emotions.
- Ask an adult to share your ideas with us on social media.

**Music to express the emotion of stories**



Share your suggestions with us on social media **#EmpathyDay**  
**@EmpathyLabUK**



## 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/pens    sticky tack or tape

- On Empathy Day we want everyone to make an Empathy Resolution.
- What will you do to act with more empathy and make the world a better place?
- You may be inspired by your empathy walk, or something you've talked about after doing the activities in this pack.
- On a plain sheet of paper write 'Today is Empathy Day. Our Empathy Resolution is....' then write your family's resolution and decorate your poster.
- 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**

# Family Activities

## Practise Empathy Skills



### Top Tips!

Keep practising your empathy skills with our extra 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 would it feel like to stand in the characters' shoes?

#### 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



Don't miss... our wonderful **Empathy Shorts**, written by superb children's authors and poets. These 500 word short stories are all about standing in the shoes of others. They are funny, moving, thought-provoking and full of insights into the power of empathy. They're all on our website for you to enjoy right now at [empathylab.uk/empathy-shorts](https://empathylab.uk/empathy-shorts).



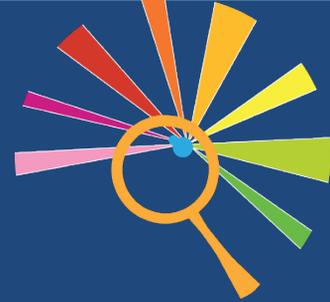
One especially relevant activity you could use the Empathy Shorts for is Musical Shorts (page 11). This involves suggesting a song/piece of music that could accompany the story and express the same emotions.

Some of the authors in our collections have created short films of themselves reading aloud their stories and poems. You can watch all of these **Read Alouds** at [empathylab.uk/read-alouds](https://empathylab.uk/read-alouds).

The #ReadForEmpathy **Illustrators' Gallery** will return for 2021 from 3 June with nine fantastic new illustrations - check out <https://www.empathylab.uk/RfE-illustrators-gallery>.

# Family Activities

## Empathy Day Programme



If you enjoyed the activities in this pack, you'll love **Empathy Day LIVE!**. You can stream the online programme on 10 June from [empathylab.uk/empathy-day-live-2021](https://empathylab.uk/empathy-day-live-2021).



## Empathy Day LIVE! 2021

Walk in someone else's shoes...

<b>10am - 11:30am</b>	<b>READ</b>
<b>10am</b>	<b>Launch with Cressida Cowell and young empathy leaders</b> Waterstones' Children's Laureate Cressida talks about stepping into other people's shoes, and children and young people share what empathy means to them
<b>10:30am</b>	<b>Draw with Rob</b> A special Empathy Day drawalong with the amazing Rob Biddulph
<b>11am</b>	<b>Authors' secrets: creating characters with empathy</b> Malorie Blackman, Bali Rai and Holly Bourne share insights into how they create characters, inspiring young people's creative writing
<b>11:30am - 2pm</b>	<b>CONNECT</b>
<b>11:30am</b>	<b>Empathy Walks</b> Joseph Coelho kicks off our Empathy Walks
<b>11:50am</b>	<b>Empathy Listening Lunch</b> Jacqueline Wilson shares top listening tips to use during the lunch break
<b>12pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1pm</b>	<b>Empathy Walks</b> Patrice Lawrence and Jane Porter describe their Empathy Walks
<b>1.20pm</b>	<b>Empathy Mirror</b> A. M. Dassu and Adisa play a body language game, guessing each other's emotions
<b>1.45pm</b>	<b>Paper Doll Dilemmas</b> Craft session from Hillingdon Libraries exploring and understanding emotions
<b>2pm - 3pm</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>2pm</b>	<b>Empathy Exhibition - 'In My Shoes...'</b> Michelle Robinson, Jay Hulme and Patrice Lawrence learn more about each other by sharing their precious possessions
<b>2.15pm</b>	<b>Empathy in Action</b> Children and young people talk about empathy as a power to combat... ...prejudice: Kwame Alexander with Pembrokeshire pupils ... Loneliness: Welsh Children's Laureate Eloise Williams with Swansea pupils
<b>2.45pm</b>	<b>Empathy Resolutions</b> Let's make every day an Empathy Day! Michael Morpurgo shares his thoughts on empathy in action. Nathan Bryon and Rashmi Sirdeshpande share their Empathy Resolution posters
<b>6pm-7.30pm</b>	<b>THE EMPATHY CONVERSATION</b>
A cutting-edge discussion between authors and psychologists about empathy and how books build it: Michael Rosen, David Baddiel, Catherine Johnson and Professor Robin Banerjee	



@EmpathyLabUK

#EmpathyDay

empathylab.uk



**#EmpathyDay - Read. Connect. Act.**

# Family Activities

## Extra partner resources



## Partner programmes

If you loved our Empathy Day activities and are looking for more, our British Library partners have some great *Discovering Children's Books* ideas that you can use to practise your empathy skills.

### Inspired by the Empathy Shorts?

- Why not write your own Empathy Short in a miniature book?  
[bl.uk/childrens-books/activities/make-a-miniature-book](http://bl.uk/childrens-books/activities/make-a-miniature-book)
- Or turn your favourite empathy story into a play in a toy theatre. Make sure you write the play from the perspective of different characters. [bl.uk/childrens-books/videos/make-a-toy-theatre](http://bl.uk/childrens-books/videos/make-a-toy-theatre)

### Create new worlds, using empathy



© Shelagh McCarthy

## Don't forget!

After each activity, ask a grown-up to take a photo and share it with us on social media @EmpathyLabUK using #EmpathyDay. We look forward to seeing you all step into someone else's shoes this Empathy Day - and every day!