



Stories of loneliness

Exploring stories helps learners to build empathy and understanding of complex topics such as loneliness.

How to use:

Use these three activities to help learners understand and explore the theme of loneliness through a range of stories and characters. Educators can use one or all of the activities. They can be used altogether or separately. We encourage educators to adapt the activities to suit them.

Recommended ages: 7-18



Learning objectives

Learners will:

- explore situations and events that might make people feel lonely
- develop an understanding of how others might feel in different situations
- think about how feelings can change the way people act



Activities

- read characters' stories
- helping the characters
- write your own story

Read characters' stories



Suggested timing: 20 minutes

Use the characters and their stories to explore loneliness in more depth.



Read through all or some of the characters stories in the PowerPoint. Different characters' stories may be suitable for different learners and draw out different themes.

Ask learners to work through a choice or all of the stories, encourage them to think about the following questions:

- how might the character be feeling — What words might describe the feelings?
- what situation or factors affect them – What might be making them feel lonely?
- how the character might act — What might they do?
- what could help them to cope with feeling lonely?

Ask learners what they have learned about loneliness and how it affects people.

Helping the characters



Suggested timing: 10 minutes

Now

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think about what these characters could do to help themselves or help each other.

Encourage learners to think about:

- who is the character and what are their interests and hobbies?
- who else could help them? This could be other characters or people the characters will have in their lives, like teachers or responsible adults.
- what kind words or actions could others say or do to help them?
- for older learners: what situation are they facing and what problems might it be causing? What are possible solutions to these problems?



Encourage learners to think about what the characters could do to help themselves and what they could do to help each other too. Write down the ideas on a piece of paper to help. Write a “what we can do for ourselves” and “what we can do for others” list of ideas or discuss as a group.

Ask learners what they have learnt about loneliness and ways they can help themselves and others to cope from this activity.

Write your own story



Suggested timing: 20 minutes

Now encourage learners to create their own characters and/or stories.

Encourage them to think about:

- what kind of character and what experience of loneliness do they want to show?
- encourage them to think about the characters background and situation. What is making them feel lonely?
- how is loneliness changing what they think, feel and do?
- is there another character who can come and help them? How do they help them?



They could draw their characters, use our characters but rewrite their stories or draw a whole story like a comic strip. For tips on how to draw comic characters [look at these videos by the artist Dan](#). They could write the story or create a poem or play instead if they prefer.

Encourage learners to share their different stories with the class and discuss the commonalities and differences in people’s portrayal of loneliness. What kinds of characters and stories does everyone create? How does this change how you think about loneliness?