

#EmpathyDay 2022

Empathy – our Human Superpower

EmpathyLab is on a mission to build a book-based empathy movement

On Thursday 9 June 2022, **#EmpathyDay returns** for a sixth year, when we have never needed empathy more.

Some younger children may have spent a **third of their lives in lockdown**, denied the interactions needed to develop crucial and lifelong social skills. Empathy-education strategies combat this, building this key life skill which many are surprised to find is learnable. Empathy Day harnesses the power of reading to build real-life empathy, as evidenced by scientific research.

This year's programme focuses on **empathy – our human superpower**, challenging us to activate our power and be the best versions of ourselves we can be. From 5 May, schools, libraries and families can join in by: reading from the Empathy Collection of expertly selected children's books and taking part in the Empathy Superpower Challenge which has nine empathy-boosting activities designed to teach and boost empathy skills. On the day itself, leading authors and illustrators bring things to a head in a superb online festival, modelling the nine Challenge activities, like Empathy Walks and Superpower X-Ray glasses.

The goal is to inspire children and families to learn more about empathy and put it into action, harnessing the electricity of some of the Britain's favourite authors and illustrators to encourage the nation to get involved.

What is happening in 2022? (Further details overleaf)

THE EMPATHY COLLECTION

A collection of expertly selected books for 4-16 year-olds

Exclusive new short stories and illustrations

EMPATHY SUPERPOWER CHALLENGE

From May – new for 2022!

Nine creative empathy-boosting activities

EMPATHY DAY LIVE!

Thursday 9 June

Free to join and open to all online
Authors and illustrators inspire us to do the Challenge activities

Who is involved in 2022?

Some of the nation's favourite authors and illustrators, including Children's Laureate **Cressida Cowell**, former Laureates **Michael Morpurgo**, **Jacqueline Wilson** and **Michael Rosen**, *Noughts and Crosses* author **Malorie Blackman**, and poet **Lemn Sissay**. Others include Sophie Dahl, Stephen Mangan, Nadia Shireen, Onjali Rauf, Rashmi Sireshpande and Phil Earle.

They will join schools, libraries and children's publishers in Empathy Day Live! and will spearhead the Empathy Superpower Challenges from May.



Why is empathy important?

"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 effectively with others."

Malorie Blackman

"If there's something we need in this world more than anything else, it's empathy. This will come hugely through books, because that is the way most of us first learn about other people."

Michael Morpurgo

"Empathy is a vital skill, and books are the best, and most fun, way to learn it."

Cressida Cowell

Only 10% of our empathetic ability is genetic, highlighting the importance of learning empathy skills

2021 saw a 44% growth in school participation in #EmpathyDay

Empathy is recognised as a force for good in politics and education: **Marcus Rashford** has said he is disappointed by the 'lack of empathy' shown towards the 'most vulnerable'

THE EMPATHY SUPERPOWER CHALLENGE - New for 2022

A menu of nine creative empathy-boosting activities to inspire children, young people, families & businesses to take the challenge and Read. Connect. Act. Participants are also encouraged to Pass It On by sharing the challenge to inspire others.

READ	CONNECT	ACT
<p>Speak Empathy to Power Recommend stories to the decision makers in your life! They need empathy superpowers to help make the best choices.</p> <p>Superpower X-Ray Glasses Design your own empathy glasses to help you see the world through someone else's eyes.</p> <p>#EmpathyPowerPose Empathy readers assemble! Strike a pose with your favourite empathy reads – and share safely on social media.</p>	<p>Human Discoveries Take turns to share something no-one else knows about you – a thought, a dream, a special possession ... Have a conversation to discover more.</p> <p>Listening-Switch Power Bank Practise your listening superpower – how many listening skills can you switch on?</p> <p>Empathy Walks Notice and reflect as you take a walk in your local community. How might you put empathy into action to help those around you?</p>	<p>Unsung Empathy Superheroes Celebrate people making a difference through empathy. Display their achievements on an Empathy Wall of Fame.</p> <p>Empathy Resolutions Make a resolution to change things for the better, then share to inspire others.</p> <p>Give an empathy comic strip gift Create a comic strip story about empathy as a human superpower. Give it as a gift or share with someone in your community or school.</p>

EMPATHY DAY LIVE! - 9 June

An amazing online festival, free to join and open to all. Participants can take part in the nine Empathy Superpower Challenge Activities throughout the day, led by top authors & illustrators including Cressida Cowell, Nadia Shireen, Onjali Q. Rauf and many others.

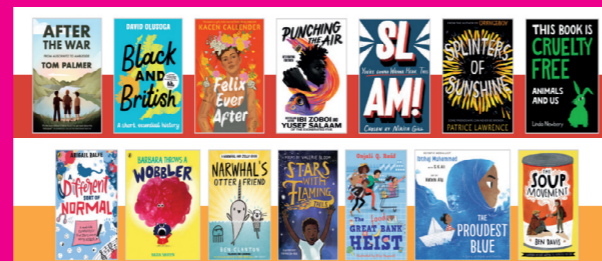


Launch From 7:30am	Launch: Children's Laureate & Friends Cressida Cowell launches Empathy Day Live! with friends Michael Morpurgo, Malorie Blackman, Joseph Coelho, Michael Rosen, with contributions from young readers
Read From 9am	Superpower X-Ray Glasses: Nadia Shireen, Benjamin Dean and Jen Carney help design empathy glasses to help see the world through someone else's eyes Power Pose Book Recommendations: Strike a Pose with your favourite empathy reads – with Jacqueline Wilson, Rob Biddulph, Nizrana Farook, Stephen Mangan, Zanib Mian and more! Speak Empathy to Power: Sita Brahmachari, Nicola Davies, Onjali Q. Rauf, and Alex Wheatle help children and young people recommend empathy reads to the decision makers in their life
Connect From 10am	Listening Switch Power Bank: Practicing the power of Listening for empathy, with Bali Rai and Val Bloom Human Discoveries: Sharing thoughts, feelings, dreams, or something special which nobody else knows, with James Mayhew, Rashmi Sirdeshpande, Tom Percival & Elle McNicoll Empathy Walks: Engaging in the local community and thinking about how to help those around us, with Burhana Islam, Abigail Balfe, Tom Palmer, Ben Davis, Cath Howe, Manon Steffan Ros & Mel Darbon
Act From 11am	Empathy Comic Strips: Creating a comic strip to share, with help from Sophy Henn and Mark Bradley Empathy Resolutions: Phil Earle and Patrice Lawrence help create resolutions for being more empathetic

FINALE: Empathy-themed 'Draw with Rob' with Rob Biddulph

THE EMPATHY COLLECTION

Book Collection: 60 expertly selected books for 4-16 year-olds to #ReadForEmpathy + bi-lingual Welsh collection for the first time
Empathy Shorts: exclusive 500-word free short stories
Read for Empathy brand new illustration galleries



"We're delighted that 43% of the collection's books are by authors of colour, and that it features seven illustrators of colour. Books reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences are essential for helping children connect across divides in a diverse

UK". - 2022 Judges

"Empathy is an important social and emotional skill that is required to thrive. It is crucial for a caring society and aids wellbeing. It is a learnable skill: a genetic study of empathy found that we are born with very little (around 10%). But 98% of us are able to improve our ability to be empathic at any time in our lives, making it a very learnable skill."

Dr Helen Demetriou, Faculty of Education, Cambridge University

"I really, truly believe that increased empathy will change the world, maybe even save the world."
Holly Bourne

"Every school needs to champion this EmpathyLab work – for me it is school-changing, life-changing, child-changing and potentially world-changing."

Sonia Thompson, Headteacher, St. Matthew's Primary

THE RESEARCH

- 1) 94% of employers say that social and emotional skills are as important in the workplace as academic qualifications
Sutton Trust 2017
- 2) Social and emotional skills are more significant for young people's academic attainment than their IQ.
Public Health England 2015
- 3) Hate crimes are at their highest level since records began in 2012
Gov.uk
- 4) 98% of us are capable of improving our empathy skills at any point in our lives
The Empathy Revolution, Roman Kzarnic

WORK WITH SCHOOLS

EmpathyLab are the founders of Empathy Day. They are working in Wales to model an approach to empathy education using literature to build pupils' empathy skills and social activism. The new Curriculum for Wales features empathy **35** times.

Research from the whole school programme has found very positive outcomes:

- **96.7%** of teachers reported that they felt **more confident and more able to teach empathy skills**
- **96%** of teachers said that pupils' **knowledge and understanding of empathy** had improved
- **89%** of teachers reported seeing an **improvement in the vocabulary** pupils were using to describe feelings

'Pupils are seeking out injustices and using empathy to resolve differences in the classroom and playground. There have been fewer incidences of racism since we began our empathy journey'

Headteacher, Pembroke Dock Community School

'It has helped build stronger relationships between teacher and pupils. My class is a lot more open in the way they talk about feelings; it's breaking down the barriers between us. Our children have become much kinder and more empathetic – I've been blown away.'

Empathy Lead, Pennar

EMPATHY IS MADE UP OF THREE ELEMENTS



Notes to Editors

About EmpathyLab

EmpathyLab's mission is to raise an empathy-educated generation. The non-profit is passionate about the power of stories to build empathy and the power of empathy to make the world a better place. The organisation's three programmes are a whole school empathy education programme; an annual Read for Empathy book collection for 4-16 year-olds, and Empathy Day, every June.

It was started in 2014 by Miranda McKearney OBE, who also founded The Reading Agency.

www.empathylab.uk @EmpathyLabUK

About Empathy Day

Empathy Day was founded in 2017. It aims to drive a new empathy movement, inspired by research showing that humans are not born with a fixed quantity of empathy – it's a skill we can learn.

In 2022 Empathy Day is on Thursday 9th June and is a lightning rod for a new story-driven empathy movement.

A wide range of organisations are joining forces to harness books' empathy-building power, inspired by scientific evidence that in identifying with book characters, we learn to see things from other points of view.

Schools, libraries, young people's organisations, publishers and booksellers are working with EmpathyLab to emphasise empathy's importance and create story-based activities which help us all understand each other better.

About Empathy Builders

45 children's publishers have come together in a scheme called Empathy Builders, working with EmpathyLab to develop Empathy Day into a major force for change.

About Miranda McKearney OBE

Miranda is passionate about the power of reading to change lives and has spent 35 years turning kitchen table ideas into nationwide campaigns, culminating in founding The Reading Agency, a national charity, in 2002.

Having 'retired' to go trekking, she became fascinated by the building body of research showing that reading builds empathy. This led to her founding EmpathyLab, along with four fellow founders – Sarah Mears, Craig Hill, Caroline Scott and Ruth Harrison.

[@MirandaMcK](https://twitter.com/MirandaMcK)