

## Lesson 2: Expressing feelings

## Key stage 2: Year 3/4

This is the second in a series of three KS2 lessons written for Year 3 or 4 exploring mental health and wellbeing. This lesson focuses on learning to describe and express feelings and the importance of doing so. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.



### Learning objective

Pupils will learn:

- about ways of expressing feelings and emotions and why this is important



### Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- name a wide range of feelings and emotions
- match feelings to a scale of intensity and identify strong feelings
- describe different feelings and how they are experienced in the body
- recognise why it is important for people to express their feelings



### Climate for learning

Before teaching these lessons, ensure that you read the accompanying PSHE Association document [Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, handling questions, and additional advice relating to teaching about mental health effectively and safely.



### Key words

feeling, emotion, body, mind, express, describe, intense, strong, happy, sad, scared, angry, worried, pleased (plus range of vocabulary to describe different feelings)



### Resources required

Box or envelope for anonymous questions



Flipchart paper or sugar paper stuck up to form a 'Graffiti wall'



Pens and pencils



Ball or beanbag



Resource 1: Feelings match up



Resource 2: Picture a feeling  
– image stimulus a, b, c, & d



Resource 3: Body outline



OPTIONAL:

- dictionaries and thesauruses
- additional range of poetry and artwork on the theme of 'feelings'

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Baseline assessment: Feelings graffiti wall	<b>Ensure that this activity is completed before delivering the lesson.</b> Pupils write all the feelings and emotions they can think of on the graffiti wall.	10min
2. Warm up game: Feelings hot potato	Pupils throw a ball or beanbag (hot potato) to each other – each person tries to name a different feeling or emotion.	5min
3. Feelings thermometers	In groups, pupils match synonyms to a 'root' word, then identify the strong or intense feelings by ranking similar vocabulary on a scale of intensity.	15min
4. Expressing feelings	Pupils use pictorial and descriptive imagery to talk about different feelings, then draw and write about a feeling on body outline to describe how it is experienced.	20min

5. Scenario: giving advice and providing support	Pupils read a scenario about a child who is not expressing some difficult feelings – they provide advice.	10min
6. Endpoint assessment	Pupils feedback something they learned about feelings today, that they have not thought of before. Pupils go back to their feelings graffiti wall activity - add to or amend it in light of their new learning	10min
7. Extension activity (optional)	Share poems about feelings – pupils can write their own pieces of descriptive writing. Explore artwork depicting different feelings – pupils can create their own. Display in school.	-

## Baseline assessment



### Feelings graffiti wall



Ensure this activity is completed before delivering the lesson.

Ask pupils to come up to the graffiti wall and write all the words they can think of to describe a range of feelings and emotions.

The purpose of this activity is to enable you to find out the pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and attitudes, as well as reconnecting them with the learning from last lesson. Whilst they are working, note any responses, gaps in understanding, or misconceptions that need addressing through the lesson. Keep the graffiti wall displayed throughout the lesson – pupils will return to this activity at the end of the lesson to assess their learning.

## Core activities



### Warm up game: feelings hot potato



Reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson.

Pupils stand in a circle and throw a ball or beanbag (a 'hot potato') to each other. When each pupil catches the 'hot potato' they try to name a different feeling or emotion. Pupils have the right to pass if they can't think of one.



### Feelings thermometers



This activity will help to introduce more words to describe the intensity of feelings.

Pupils work in groups to match the word cards from **Resource 1: Feelings match up** to the root words (happy, sad, scared, angry, worried, pleased). You may wish to provide dictionaries. Should some groups complete this activity quickly they should use the blank cards to think of other words in each set, as an additional challenge.

## Feelings thermometers (cont.)

Next, pupils rank the synonyms of the root words on a scale of intensity to show how feelings can build up or suddenly burst. Ask them to clearly identify the words that best describe the strongest or most intense feelings.

As a class, discuss their work, explaining that: *feelings change all the time, but sometimes things happen that make our feelings build up and up until they become very strong or intense. Sometimes we get a very strong or intense feeling from just one thing or moment in time. Eventually, for the most part, very strong feelings tend to fade. You may want to add that if someone feels like this a lot of the time or if they know someone who does, it is best they talk to someone (trusted adult) about what is happening. It is important to be able to describe our feelings as it helps us and others know how to manage them.*

### Support:



Pupils may need adult support to discuss the meanings of the different words. Pupils can be given fewer root words and synonyms to match up and then just identify the words that suggest a more intense or strong feeling, rather than making a scale of intensity.

### Challenge



On flipchart paper, pupils work in groups to brainstorm as many other words as they can associated with a given root word (e.g. happy, sad, scared, angry, worried, pleased), then choose three words to rank on a scale of intensity. They can also think of different root words. You may wish to provide thesauruses to help.



## Expressing feelings



Display images from **Resource 2: Picture a feeling** around the classroom. Pupils suggest which feelings words are suggested by each image, share ideas and discuss.

Provide the class with examples of how feelings are often described as similes or metaphors and discuss their meaning, for example:

- Colours: 'she saw red', 'feeling blue', 'in a black mood', 'tickled pink' or 'green with envy'
- Temperature: 'fiery temper', 'boiling over with rage' or 'cool as a cucumber'
- Images: 'over the moon', 'shaking like a leaf' or 'walking on sunshine'

Use these as a stimulus for the following activity.

Each pupil chooses one of the words from the feelings thermometer activity (it is a good idea to choose a more intense word or feeling) and using **Resource 3: Body outline** as a basic template on which to draw and write, they respond to the following questions:

- If you could explain where in the body someone would experience that feeling, where would it be?
- If the feeling had a colour, what colour would it be?
- If it had a shape what shape would it be?
- If it had a texture, what texture would it be?
- If the feeling were an image or a picture, what would this be?
- If the feeling had a sound, what sound would this be?

*Display these around the classroom, ask pupils to walk around to look at the different ways they have interpreted and expressed the feelings. Explain that feelings can be expressed in lots of different ways: art – drawing and paintings, poetry, singing; listening to, playing or composing music; writing a diary or journal, making a chart of feelings or just saying them aloud.*



## Scenario: giving advice and signposting support



Discuss with the class, why finding ways to express feelings is important for our health and wellbeing. For example: *if we allow a feeling (like anger) to build up without expressing it, it can build up so much that it explodes and this may come out in unhealthy or not-very-nice ways, like if someone shouts at someone else for no reason.*

Read the following scenario to the class:

*Jamie feels worried a lot of the time. Everything seems to worry Jamie. It feels like all the worries in the world are building up into a big pile, sometimes it feels like a wall of worries. Jamie tries not to think about what is happening or the feelings.*

Pupils discuss in pairs or small groups:

- What would help Jamie express the feelings?
- What might be stopping Jamie from doing this?
- What might be the consequences of Jamie not expressing the feelings?
- What would most help Jamie in this situation?

Take feedback. Reiterate the importance of talking to someone about difficult feelings, especially if they have not so good feelings like worry, sadness or loneliness. Recap different ways to express feelings (including writing, art-work) but include the importance of talking to others.

## Plenary/ Assessment of learning



### Reflecting on today's learning and assessing progress

Pupils feedback something they learned about feelings today, that they have not thought of before.

Ask pupils to come back to their feelings graffiti wall from the beginning of the lesson with a different coloured pen or pencil. Ask the pupils to amend or add their new learning to the wall.

## Extension activity →



### Curriculum links



Make links to pupils' learning in other subjects such as English, Music or Art. Make a school or classroom display.

Introduce pupils to poetry and descriptive writing about feelings. Pupils create their own short pieces of descriptive writing about feelings.

Look at work by different artists about feelings. Pupils produce collages or pieces of art work about different feelings.