



High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.59

DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY

Unit. Stage Two of Development—WE

Problem Area. How Do I Build Relationships with Others?

Precepts. B1: Practice human relations skills including compassion, empathy, unselfishness, trustworthiness, reliability and listening.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K-12.12 — Applying Language Skills — Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Define empathy.
- 2 Identify phrases that show empathy.
- 3 Demonstrate empathy in given situations.



© 2004 National FFA Organization
It is illegal to reproduce copies of this material
without written permission from the National FFA Organization.
National FFA Organization





Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

Canfield, Hansemn, and Kirber. Chicken Soup For the Teenage Soul—Letters of Life Love and Learning. Deerfield Beach, FL. Health Communications, Inc., 2001.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ HS.59.TM.A
- ✓ HS.59.TM.B
- ✓ HS.59.TM.C
- ✓ HS.59.AS.A cut into separate pieces enough for half of the class.
- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Pen/pencil
- ✓ Notebook



Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- Empathy
- Sympathy



Interest Approach



Let's begin today by closing our eyes and picturing the following in our minds: Think of a little baby who is just learning to take its first steps. The baby falls—nothing serious, just a gentle fall cushioned by a trusty diaper. The baby is not hurt, and begins to go about its way...until it sees the concern on its mothers face, and begins to cry.



We are going to learn about empathy today, and how it differs from a word that rhymes with it.



When we rush to a baby, like the one that fell down, showing sympathy, they sense your emotions of concern and fear. This usually causes them to feel those same feelings, and, as a result, they realize this may be serious, so they begin to cry.



Who can give us an example of what a sympathetic approach to the baby might sound like?

Examples such as Gasp! Oh no! Oh no! All these examples are said with panic or concern in their voice and a worried look on their face.



An empathetic response to the baby's fall, on the other hand, is one of understanding and encouragement. A result



of this statement usually reassures the child and ends in the baby thinking about it and then carrying on with their activity. Who could give an example of this type of response?

Examples such as oops! That's ok, You're ok. Bonk! Let's try it again. These reactions are said with a smile and upbeat voice and expressions.



Sympathy and empathy are both ways to react to other people. Both are positive human behaviors; however, in many circumstances, empathy actually helps people more than sympathy. In this case, sympathy made the baby feel as if the incident was worse than it really was. It has been said that sympathy is often more familiar to people since it deals with emotions that everyone is born with.



Think of a person you know who has gone through a tough time in life. Today, we are going to gain some tools and experience being empathetic, so we can be understanding and encouraging to people around us who are going through difficult times. Keeping the example of a baby falling, let's define empathy, and determine how it is different from sympathy.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Define empathy.



Using the example of the baby falling and the reactions we heard in class, we are going to create a list to compare the two reactions.



In your notebook, write “empathy” and “sympathy” at the top, with a line between them.
Demonstrate on the board.



Under each word we are going to create a list of characteristics to help us determine the difference between the two actions. Quickly turn to your neighbor and list as many differences as you can think of.

Give them 30 seconds.

Post HS.59.TM.A and capture several responses as a class.



Let's list a few of your responses. I'll capture them on the overhead.





Great, it looks like you are all very observant of the details found in the examples. Let's break this down and try to find the differences between the two. Basically, it comes down to emotion. Let's record the following definition in our notebooks.

Post HS.59.TM.B.

I. **Empathy** is being able to understand people's feelings and situations without involving emotion.

A. **Sympathy** is sharing emotional feelings with someone in a certain situation. Sympathetic people put themselves in the another persons shoes emotionally.



Using the meanings of these two words, let's take a few minutes to record a personal experience we've had with both.

Wait.



Now that we have a simple definition and can tell the difference between sympathy and empathy, let's look at what empathetic words we might use in circumstances where empathy would be helpful to others.

Objective 2. Identify phrases that show empathy.

You will need HS.59.AS.A with the expressions already cut into pieces and ready for use during this objective.



When you approach someone, the first words out of your mouth determine if you are being empathetic. Sometimes emotions are hard to control when people are going through rough times, and an empathetic friend is the best thing for that person. We are going to look at how to start conversations on an empathetic note that shows understanding, but also encouragement. In your notebook, record these introductions to phrases that show empathy.

Post HS.59.TM.C on a writing surface and have students add to their notebooks.

II. Phrases that show empathy.

- A. I see ...
- B. I realize ...
- C. It looks like ...
- D. I appreciate ...
- E. It seems ...
- F. I understand ...
- G. I'm aware ...
- H. I know ...
- I. I imagine ...
- J. It appears ...



Once everyone has the information recorded, continue with the activity of completing the phrases. You will give two examples of complete sentences using these introductory phrases that can be applied to the given examples. After your examples, students will complete each introductory phrase in their notes using either of the two example scenarios you will give.



As you can see, these are simply a few words to begin your opening sentences for empathetic conversations. Here are two scenarios to use as examples. Complete each of the phrases in your notes. There is no right or wrong answer, so be as creative as possible. I'll write the scenarios on the board and give you a few examples.



Let's pretend we have two friends. One has stubbed his toe, and the other did not make the team she tried out for at school.

Write the examples on the board.

Stubbed toe

Didn't make team



In your notebooks, apply the empathetic phrases to either example, and complete the sentence for each of the empathetic phrases we recorded in our notes. Here are a few examples. **See** your toe really hurts—would you like to ride with me to lunch? **Understand** you are upset about the team, but now you will have time to become more active in FFA and earn your way to state convention.



Is there anything else you need before we begin? Working individually, let's take about three minutes to complete the sentences in our notebooks.

Wait.



If you are not quite finished, or are stuck on one of them, perhaps hearing others' ideas can help you complete your notes. Let's begin on one side of the room and go down the list, sharing your sentence for one phrase.

Choose a student to begin with the first phrase in the notes, and then continue around the room.



We've heard many different ways to show empathy for these two examples. As we know, emotions come naturally to everyone; however, empathetic statements do not. Some people are better at being empathetic than others, but it is possible for everyone to become more comfortable with showing empathy. The key to improving any skill is practice.

Objective 3. Demonstrate empathy in given situations.

In this activity, you will assign students a partner. Each pair will draw an emotion from a hat. The emotions come from the pieces cut from HS.59.AS.A. Within the pair, one will act out someone experiencing the particular emotion, and the other will respond to that person with empathy.





We can demonstrate empathy anytime we encounter a person who is feeling a certain emotion. During this activity, we are going to have a little fun being creative and entertaining, and also gain practice being empathetic.

Assign students a partner. A group of three will be fine for uneven classes.



When I say go, find a partner and draw a particular emotion out of a hat. Think of a scenario to which that emotion could be applied and wait quietly for more instructions. Go!



When I say begin, one of you will act out the emotion, while the other will react with an empathetic response. You have 3 minutes to prepare a 30-second skit demonstrating empathy. Are there any questions? Begin.



Use HS.59.AS.A cut into separate pieces. Wait three minutes with a one-minute warning.



You have one minute to wrap things up.



STOP!



As soon as everyone is back in their original seat and are quiet, we will begin with our performances.

Wait. You will need to keep performances to 30 seconds, or this can run too long.



We will have a performance from each group. Following their performance, we will thank them for the entertainment by clapping and saying, “Bravo! Bravo!” Then the next group will entertain us. When other groups are performing, the rest of us will keep a list of words, phrases, or actions used to show empathy.



Who will begin with their demonstration of empathy?

Choose a group to begin. Be sure class applauds after the performances, and that everyone has a chance to demonstrate.



Review/Summary



Let's have some fun and reinforce what we have learned today.

Use Mother Goose Moment .



Using the famous poem “Three Blind Mice,” I want you to change every line to incorporate information you learned from this lesson. I will collect them when you are finished. Please work on this individually.



Words to original Poem

Three blind mice

Three blind mice

See how they run

See how they run

They all took after the farmers' wife

They all took after the farmers' wife

Three blind mice

Three blind mice



Every day we probably encounter many opportunities to show empathy, but don't even realize it. I challenge you to use empathy in your everyday life. Now that you have the tools to use it correctly, my hope is that it will be a very comfortable fit.



Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

For one week, have the students keep a journal of situations where empathy was demonstrated. Have them turn it in to the teacher.

►FFA Activity:

Have students practice empathetic statements at the chapter speaking contest for those who do not move onto the next level.

►SAE Activity:

Report about two ways they can incorporate empathy into their SAE.



Evaluation

HS.59.Assess.A

Answers to Assessment:

1. Empathy is being able to understand people's feelings and situations without involving emotion.
2. Empathy is reacting to people's situations without emotion; sympathy is when you put yourself in someone's shoes emotionally and actually feel what they are feeling.
3. Any of the following
 - I see ...
 - I realize ...
 - It looks like ...
 - I appreciate ...
 - It seems ...
 - I understand ...
 - I'm aware ...
 - I know ...
 - I imagine ...
 - It appears ...
4. Answers will vary



DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY

► **Directions:**

Answer the following short-answer questions.

1. Define empathy.
2. Explain the difference between empathy and sympathy.
3. List three empathetic phrases.
4. Give one example of a time you showed empathy.



EMPATHY

SYMPATHY



EMPATHY

♦ ***Empathy*** is being able to under stand people's feelings and situations without involving emotion.

♦ ***Sympathy*** is sharing emotional feelings with someone in a certain situation. Sympathetic people put themselves in the other person's shoes emotionally.



TERMS USED TO SHOW EMPATHY

- ◆ I see ...
- ◆ I realize ...
- ◆ It looks like ...
- ◆ I appreciate ...
- ◆ It seems ...
- ◆ I understand ...
- ◆ I'm aware ...
- ◆ I know ...
- ◆ I imagine ...
- ◆ It appears ...



Make one copy of this sheet and cut into separate pieces. Pass out one emotion to every pair of students. For larger classes, several pairs may have duplicate expressions.

Angry

Sad

Scared

Depressed

Crying

Pouting

Tired

Frustrated

Angry

Sad

Scared

Depressed

Stubbed your toe

Crying

Pouting

Tired

Frustrated

