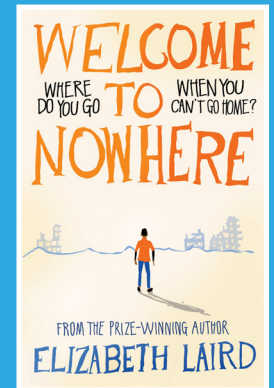
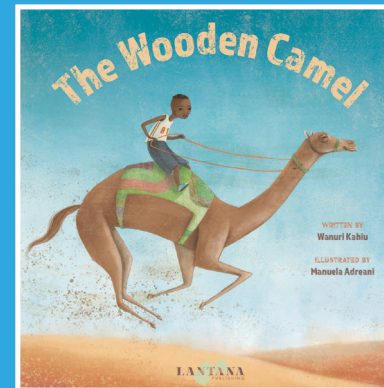
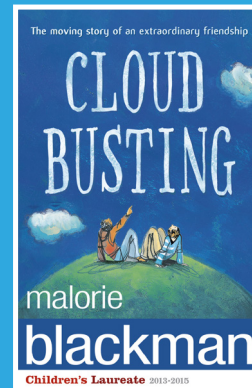
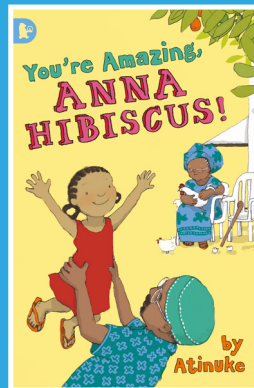
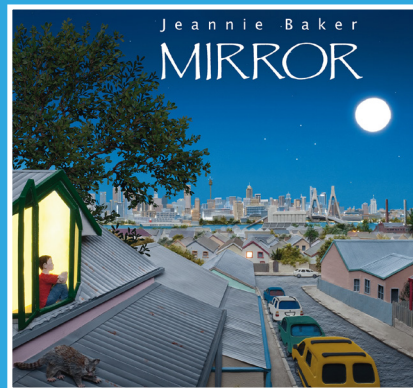
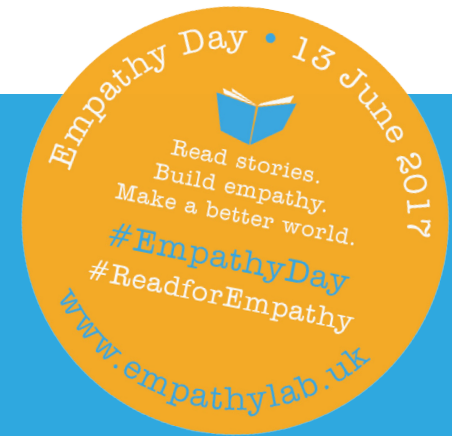


EmpathyLab

Read for Empathy Guide

21 books to build children's empathy

#ReadforEmpathy



Click here for:

- [Why Read for Empathy?](#)
- [The Read for Empathy book selection](#)
- [Picture books](#)
- [Novels and poetry](#)

Why read for empathy?

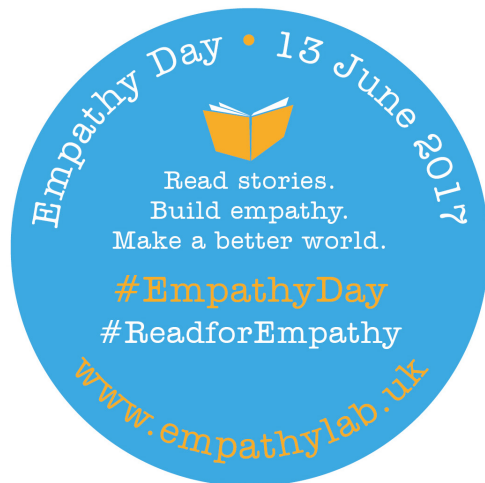
The world needs more empathy: to help us all understand and connect to each other better. New approaches are badly needed, with the recent rise in hate crimes.

Without empathy children won't thrive: psychologists say it is an essential life skill.

Use stories to build it: as you read with your child, you can build their emotional skills at the same time, because scientific evidence shows that reading builds real-life empathy. In identifying with book characters, children learn to see things from other points of view.

The Read for Empathy book selection

- 21 fantastic books for 4 -11 year olds, chosen to help build children's empathy as they read.
- Books which give children insights into other ways of life and issues of the day, like refugees or mental illness. With strong characters who help children understand how other people feel.
- Recommended by children, teachers and librarians.
- Endorsed by The Sunday Times children's book reviewer, Nicolette Jones.



Picture books

A mixture of books for 4 -11 year olds. No child is ever too old for a great picture book, and we've used this symbol * where they are best suited to older children.

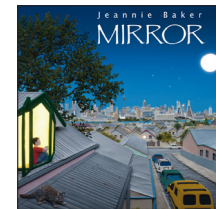


Something Else

Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell

Superbly illustrated book for exploring, and celebrating, being different. Tiny Something Else really pulls at your heartstrings.

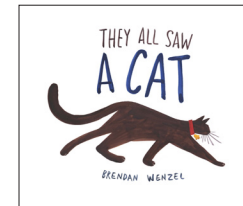
Puffin Books



Mirror*

Jeannie Baker

A wordless picture book, using collages to explore the contrasts and similarities between family life in Morocco and Australia. There is more that unites us than divides us. **Walker Books**

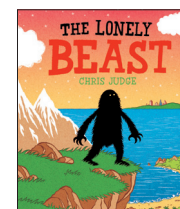


They All Saw a Cat

Brendan Wenzel

Lots of creatures – a mouse, bat, and fish - experience the same cat, but very differently. Brilliant book for learning how to see things from other perspectives, a key empathy skill.

Chronicle Books



The Lonely Beast

Chris Judge

Loneliness, compassion and valuing difference are key themes of this story. How would it feel to be the beast alone in a world of humans who reject you?

Andersen Press



Ossiri and the Bala Mengro

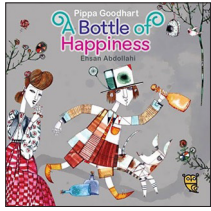
Richard O'Neill, Katharine Quarmby, illust. Hannah Tolson

Stories can tackle prejudice by helping children understand how other people live. Ossiri is a Traveller girl whose funny, imaginative story brings illuminating insights into Travelling culture. **Child's Play**

Empathy book-talking

Help children name feelings. As you talk, pick up on new words and share what they mean, e.g. "I'm wondering how Dogger is feeling...maybe a bit lost and alone?"

Picture books



A Bottle of Happiness

Pippa Goodhart and Ehsan Abdollahi

Two neighbouring communities see the world through very different eyes. But they learn, through the Bottle of Happiness, to adapt to each other's point of view. Fantastic illustrations. **Tiny Owl Publishing**



Welcome

Barroux

Three polar bears adrift on a melting ice sheet urgently need a new home, but they are turned away everywhere they go. Why? Lots to discuss in this deceptively simple picture book. **Egmont**

Empathy book-talking

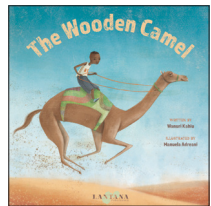
Use open questions that can't be answered with just a yes or a no. This helps start a discussion, giving children a chance to express their own thoughts.



The Journey*

Francesca Sanna

A deeply emotional read. The power comes through the illustrations which give the reader the sense of menace and fear experienced by a vulnerable family risking all to seek sanctuary. **Flying Eye Books**



The Wooden Camel

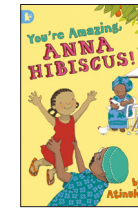
Wanuri Kahiu, illust. Manuela Adreani

Everyone has dreams, and this story of a Turkana boy who longs to be a camel racer will resonate with children everywhere. Readers will empathise with the kind-hearted siblings desperate to find a way to make their youngest brother happy.

Lantana Publishing

Novels and poetry

11 superb stories and one poetry book to help children immerse themselves in other people's lives. Perfect for 7-11 year olds, with this symbol * showing those suitable for the top of that age range.



You're Amazing, Anna Hibiscus!

Atinuke, illust. Lauren Tobin

Anna Hibiscus, small, delightful and bolshy, is growing up in Africa and dealing with strong feelings. Her grandfather won't wake up, and her twin brothers are horribly boisterous. **Walker Books**



Werewolf Club Rules

Joseph Coelho, illust. John O'Leary

This hilarious, vivid poetry collection has some wonderful poems about relationships and families, great for exploring feelings. Look out especially for those about the dad and the grandmother.

Frances Lincoln



All About Ella

Sally Nicholls, illust. Hannah Coulson

Everyone worries about Sam who is very poorly. His sister Ella feels forgotten. A funny, beautifully written novel for younger readers, exploring a sibling's complicated feelings when there is a sick child in the family. **Barrington Stoke**

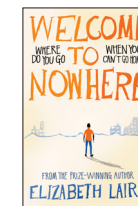


How to Train Your Dragon*

Cressida Cowell

An unlikely leader talks to the dragons instead of bullying them. This book series won the Philosophy Now Award for its meditations on moral themes, tied into an adventure in which surprising people help each other.

Hodder Children's Books

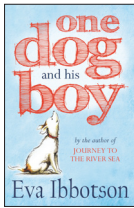


Welcome to Nowhere*

Elizabeth Laird

Omar is just a normal boy who loves mobile phones, but his life is turned upside down by war in Syria. Laird's vivid and authentic writing makes it easy to empathise with his refugee camp experiences.

Macmillan Children's Books

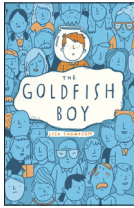


One Dog and his Boy*

Eva Ibbotson

A book which perfectly exemplifies how a skilfully developed character helps children experience all sorts of different emotions. On his huge adventure, Hal finds his perfect dog, and reshapes his family in the process.

Scholastic



The Goldfish Boy*

Lisa Thompson

An intriguing mystery about a missing toddler, seen through the eyes of Matthew, who suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Real emotional insight wrapped into a romping read. **Scholastic**



A Library of Lemons*

Jo Cotterill

A sensitively written story about sadness and strength. Calypso has to rescue her grieving dad, whilst herself trying to recover from losing her mum. Lots of opportunities to imagine characters' feelings and motivations. **Piccadilly Press**



Cloudbusting*

Malorie Blackman illust. Helen van Vliet

It's hard to step into the shoes of a bully, but this extraordinary book, written in verse, gives new insights, whilst being a terrific read.

Corgi Yearling



Coming to England*

Floella Benjamin, illust. Michael Frith

Floella tells her own story including her experience of racism and rejection. She helps children really understand how hard it would be to leave a much loved home and come to an unwelcoming country.

Macmillan Children's Books

Empathy book-talking

Focus on the character rather than the plot. Ask questions about the character's feelings.



Mr Stink

David Walliams, illust. Quentin Blake

Children often see and wonder about homelessness. This funny, touching book gives them a great way to understand how it might feel. **Harper Collins**



The Unforgotten Coat

Frank Cottrell Boyce

Julie, from Bootle, remembers two nomadic Mongolian brothers who helped her see the world through very different eyes. A story showing that having an open heart can lead to life-changing understanding and friendships.

Walker Books

EmpathyLab

EmpathyLab aims to harness the power of stories to bring about an empathy revolution in homes, schools and communities.

www.empathylab.uk  @EmpathyLabUK

A very big thank you to the Hachette Children's Group, a division of Hachette UK, for supporting this Guide's design.

"Now, more than ever, we need to harness the power of books to change the way we think and feel, and to connect us to each other. We couldn't be more delighted to be supporting EmpathyLab."

Hilary Murray Hill - CEO, Hachette Children's Group