



# EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES

## Empathizing With Others

(40 min; 65 min with optional activity)

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### Standard(s):

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1** – Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.

**ELA.K12.EE.1.1** – Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

**VA912.C.1.4** – Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

**SS.912.H.1.2** – Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

**SS.912.H.1.3** – Relate works in the arts to various cultures.

### Essential Question:

What is empathy, what does it look like and how can we put empathy into action?

### Learning Intention(s):

Students will identify examples of Empathy in action. By showing empathy to others we can help them with their struggles and get the support we need as well. Students will use EOD artwork and a quote during the lesson.

### Resources / Materials Needed:

- Empathizing With Others PowerPoint
- Pen/Paper/Pencil

### Online Video / Resource Links Used:

- Teens Utilizing Rotary Phone video (slide 19) – click [here](#)
- TV Sign-Off video (slide 26) – click [here](#)

### Before Instruction:

- Several of the activities include more than one option for implementation. Each classroom has its own personality; some are filled with students who are more than happy to share their feelings while others are not. Some of the options allow for more teacher direction and less student interaction.



## Direct Instruction:

### Slide 1 (1 min.):

- Display this title slide. Ask students if they know what the word “empathy” means.

### Slide 2 (2-3 min.):

- Option 1: Ask students to write their definition of “empathy” on one of their half sheets of paper.
- Option 2: Ask students to write their definition of “empathy” on one of their half sheets of paper and ask for volunteers to read off their definition. Identify similarities and differences between the definitions.

### Slide 3 (2-3 min.):

- Read the provided definition
- If students read their definitions aloud, you can identify similarities between student examples and the definition

### Slide 4 (6 min.):

- Ask students to write down examples of empathy-in-action on a separate piece of paper. They should not include their names.
- Provide them with some examples to get them thinking: helping an elderly person cross the street, sharing your lunch with a friend, etc.
- Option 1: When students are done writing, collect the papers and read aloud for the class.
- Option 2: Ask for student volunteers to read their examples aloud. This option works best when at least 10 students are willing to share.

### Slide 5 (3 min.):

- Display the EOD quote by Linda Thorburn.
- Ask how the activity that they just participated in supports the validity of the quote.

### Slide 6 (8 min.):

- Tell students that they are moving on to a new activity.
- On their other half sheet of paper they should create a list of all the ways that people use their cell phones. They should number each example.
- Students will have 2 min. to complete this activity (they can also work in pairs).
- After two min. determine which student (or group) had the most examples, and ask them to read off their examples.
- As the “winning” student/group reads ask the others to cross similar items off of their papers.
- After the longest list is read ask other students/groups to read an example that is not yet crossed off of their list.
- Point out how important our phones have become in our daily lives.

**Slide 7 (1 min.):**

- Display the EOD artwork. Ask students to quietly analyze it.

**Slide 8 (5 min.):**

- Ask students to answer the two questions on this slide with a neighbor.
- After two minutes ask for volunteers to answer the questions out loud.
- Guide the discussion to make sure that students understand the message of the artwork. Cell phones have become important (almost indispensable) parts of daily life, but some people are “trapped” because they can’t use them.

**Slide 9 (1 min.):**

- Point out that some people do not have access to a cell phone. For a small number of people, it is a choice. In most cases, though, a lack of money, cell service, or knowledge about how to use it is the reason. The artist chose to draw a senior citizen in the “phone trap” but could have put a person of any age there.

**Slide 10 (2 min.):**

- Explain to the students that over 99% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 use the Internet while only about 75% of Americans over the age of 65 use it.
- Ask them if they are surprised by either of these two statistics.

**Slide 11 (3 min.):**

- Explain to the students that 96% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 have a smartphone, vs. only 61% of older Americans.
- Ask them if they are surprised by either of these two statistics.
- Ask students why they think that so many more senior Americans use the Internet than own a smartphone? Is it possible that not knowing how to a phone is to blame?

**Slide 12 (3 min.):**

- Explain to the students that 89% of Americans 18+ living in urban areas have a smartphone, while only 80% of Americans 18+ living in rural areas own one.
- Ask the students why they think there is such a big difference. Suggest that poverty and access to cell service are possible reasons for this difference.

**Slide 13 (1 min.):**

- As we learned in our “struggle” activity at the start of this lesson, we have the ability to empathize with the struggles of others and to help them. We also showed that cell phones are important in today’s world. Here are some things that we can all do to increase accessibility to phones for all people.



### Slides 14-26 (25 min.):

- The remaining slides are a fun but optional activity.
- Statistics show that older generations use smartphones less frequently than younger ones and we can assume that in some cases this is because they don't understand how to use them. Younger generations that grew up with this technology may look down on older people for their lack of knowledge; digital life is more intuitive for young people. The remaining slides show objects that were important in the lives of older people that the youth of today may be completely unfamiliar with...the tables have turned!
- As you display each new slide ask students to explain what the object is. Supplement these responses with your own information.

### Extensions:

Have students complete an “action plan” for increasing phone accessibility. At a minimum, ask them to:

- Research charities that collect and distribute old phones
- Draft a letter to a Senator or Representative about infrastructure concerns
- Find contact information for a local senior center

Students can ask an adult for more examples of items that used to be commonplace that are not used anymore.

Wenjie Huo, the artist who created the artwork we studied, chose to include a senior citizen in the “phone trap”. While it is probably true that seniors are the largest group that faces phone accessibility issues there are other groups as well. Ask students to create either a 2D or 3D artwork that demonstrates phone accessibility issues for all groups of people.