

The Joy Story: Joy and Heron — Empathy

EXPLANATION:

The following activity is designed around the short-film called 'Joy and Heron'. The story begins with a fisherman and his dog, Joy on an early morning fishing trip when they encounter a heron. The heron helps herself to the fisherman's bait. Whilst Joy is not happy about the theft of the worms she soon has a change of heart. Students are encouraged to discuss topics of kindness and empathy they view in the film and critically reflect on their importance in daily life.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 4–6

STUDENT GROUPING: Group discussion

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 45 mins approx.

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

English: Sequence of content F-6

Strand: Language

Language for social interactions - How language used for different formal and informal social interactions is influenced by the purpose and audience

- Understand that social interactions influence the way people engage with ideas and respond to others for example when exploring and clarifying the ideas of others, summarising their own views and reporting them to a larger group

Purpose audience and structures of different types of texts How texts serve different purposes and how the structures of types of texts vary according to the text purpose

- Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve a particular aesthetic, or to realise humorous and persuasive purposes and effects

Learning Continuum of Personal and Social Capability

Social awareness

This element involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others. Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism ~~and sexism~~ or gender bias. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:



- appreciate diverse perspectives
- understand relationships.

SCOPE OF TASK:

When a pesky Heron tries to steal all the worms meant for a fishing trip, little Joy tries to scare it away without rocking the boat and scaring away the fish, too. From [Passion Pictures Australia Joy and Heron](#), is an animated short film that celebrates kindness and understanding.

1. Begin this activity by asking students if they know what empathy is (awareness of others' feelings and ability to see situations from alternate points of view). Questions could include:
 - What does empathy mean? Perhaps encourage students to use dictionaries or internet to discover definitions (if using internet remind students of sage internet practices)
 - How does it feel when you see other people hurt or upset?
 - How does it feel to show or receive empathy?
2. Inform the students that they are going to watch a short film created by [Passion Pictures Australia](#). Ask them to watch the film to see if any of the characters display empathy in the film. The film is titled The Joy Story: Joy and Heron:



3. Ask students to recount what happened in the film. There were three characters – who did they see display empathy? What actions did they align with empathy? Some conversation points could include:
 - Consider the whole scenario before presuming what is happening. This means not jumping to conclusions and seeking to understand what is happening. Why is this important in real life – can examples be shared?
 - How did kindness impact on the scenario? What happened when Joy (the dog) first displayed kindness – as there a ripple effect? How does this happen in real life – can examples be shared?

Students responses about empathetic actions that they recall can be recorded on a whiteboard:

| Fisherman | Joy | Heron |
|-----------|-----|-------|
| | | |

4. In conclusion, ask students to answer two questions and to write their responses on a *Post it*® notes:

- Why is empathy important in our lives?
- How do you feel when someone shows you kindness?

Write these questions on the whiteboard and students can place their *Post it*® notes under each question. Provide students with some time to review what their classmates have written and to discuss amongst themselves the responses.

RESOURCES:

- Projector to watch the short film
- *Post it*® notes and pens

CGI Animated Short Film "Joy and Heron" by Passion Pictures can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/1lo-8UWhVcg>