

## Part 2: ‘Practicing Empathy’ Activity

### Introduction

Some people think of animals as their best friends. Others think of them as scary. And some hardly think of them at all! But all animals—from the biggest elephant roaming the plains of Africa to the tiniest little fish in the deep blue sea—are living, feeling beings, just like us. We can learn more about animals’ lives by having empathy for them—in other words, by putting ourselves in their place to understand how they feel.

*Note:* This activity presents an opportunity to expand students’ vocabulary about feelings. It is best done after they have completed basic lessons on recognizing and identifying feelings.

- Explain that empathy is the ability to understand how someone else is feeling. Tell students that often, we can tell how a person is feeling by imagining how we would feel if we had the same experience.
- As a class, brainstorm a list of words used to describe feelings and write them on chart paper.
- Show the video at [SharetheWorld.org/DucklingRescueVideo](http://SharetheWorld.org/DucklingRescueVideo) as an example of displaying empathy for another living being.
- Ask students to describe how the animals were feeling before and after they were helped. Then ask, “What helped you understand how the ducklings might have felt?” (Possible answer: They imagined how they would feel if they had the same experience.)
- Ask students if they have ever seen anyone show empathy for another human or an animal. Have them describe the experience. (If they need prompting, ask them if they have ever seen anyone help someone who has fallen down or rescue an injured animal.)
- Read the first scenario below aloud. (Display the image of a dog from the Visual Support Guide, which can be accessed at [SharetheWorld.org/VisualSupportGuide](http://SharetheWorld.org/VisualSupportGuide).)

**Scenario #1:** A dog who is lying on the sofa being petted by his guardians feels ... (*happy, content, loved*)

- Have students work in small groups to discuss how the animal is feeling and to finish the sentence using a word that describes a feeling. (They can use the class chart with the list of words that describe feelings for assistance.) Then, discuss their responses as a class.
- Do the same with the other five scenarios. (Display the images of animals from the Visual Support Guide, which can be accessed at [SharetheWorld.org/VisualSupportGuide](http://SharetheWorld.org/VisualSupportGuide).)

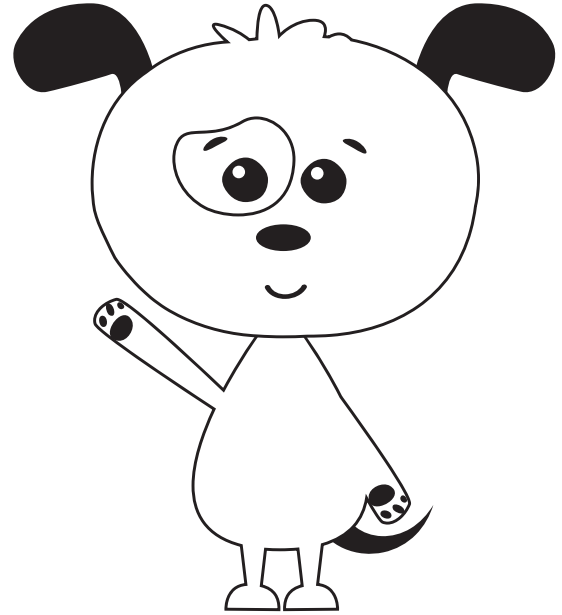
**Scenario #2:** A dog who is always chained up outside feels ... (*sad, miserable, lonely*)

**Scenario #3:** An orca swimming in the ocean with family feels ... (*happy, joyful, content*)

**Scenario #4:** An orca who is forced to do tricks and swim in circles over and over again in a tank at a marine park feels ... (*sad, frustrated, trapped*)

**Scenario #5:** A mother cow whose baby calf is drinking milk from her udder feels ... (*happy, devoted, loved*)

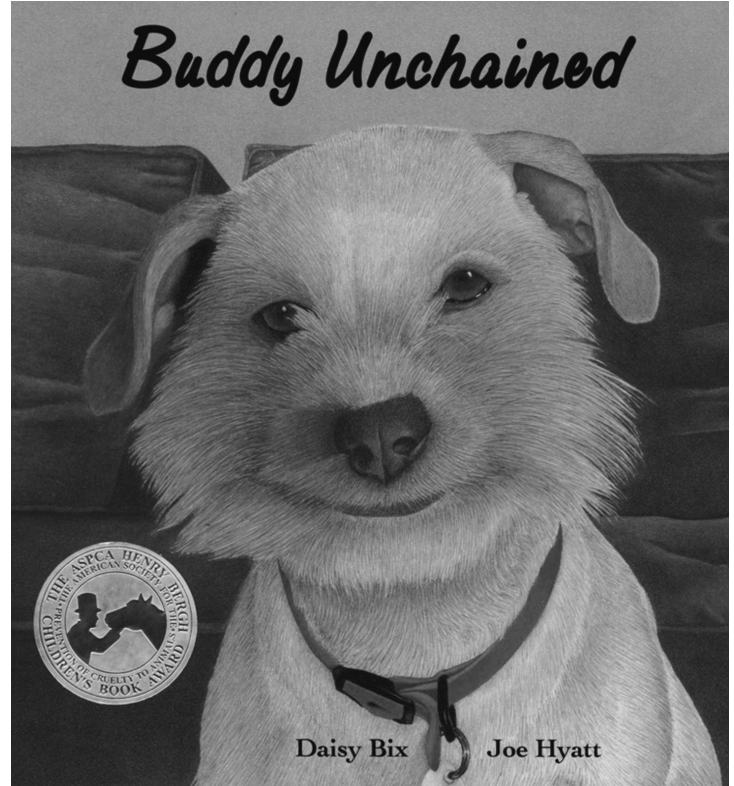
**Scenario #6:** A mother cow on a dairy farm whose baby is taken away from her feels ... (*sad, heartbroken, worried*)



## Part 2: ‘Practicing Empathy’ Activity (cont’d)

### Common Core Supplemental Activity

- Read *Buddy Unchained* by Daisy Bix about a dog named Buddy who was left chained outdoors without food or clean water. The story follows him from a sad existence in a backyard to his new life when he is adopted into a loving home.
- Ask students which family took the best care of Buddy. Have them answer by engaging in “Turn and Talk” with a partner. They should give reasons for their answers. Then, have them share their responses as a class.
- Ask, “What is the message that the author wants to give us? What does she want us to learn from this story?” (To understand dogs’ basic needs, how to take care of them, and why it is cruel to chain them outdoors; how to treat dogs with the love and care that they deserve; to be kind to dogs and give them what they need)
- Discuss which family showed empathy for Buddy, and ask students to describe which actions showed empathy and which showed a lack of empathy.
- Discuss and chart dogs’ basic needs. (Food, water, shelter, exercise, training, social interaction, affection)
- Have students imagine that their family just adopted a dog from a shelter. On poster paper, they should draw how they would take care of the dog to satisfy all of his or her basic needs.



### Common Core Standards Addressed

RL.K.1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.1.1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL.K.2: With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

RL.1.2: Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

RL.2.2: Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

SL.K–2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade-level topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.