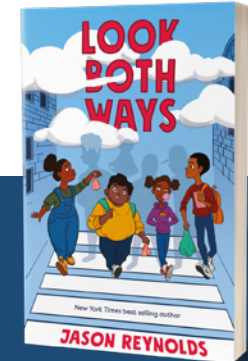
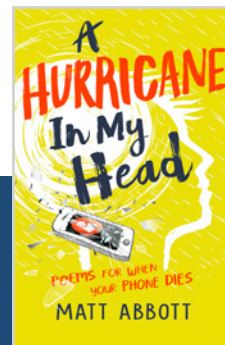
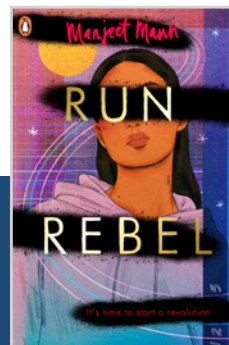
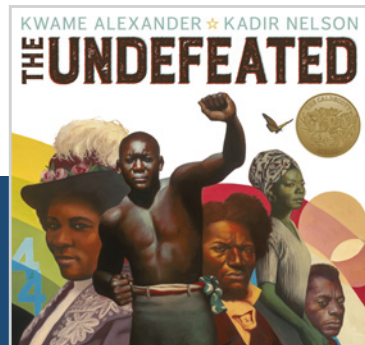




EmpathyLab

Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.



2021 Read For Empathy Guide

Books to build empathy - for young people aged 12-16

#ReadForEmpathy

How does empathy work?

Graphic and verse novels

Poetry

Novels

Top tips



EmpathyLab

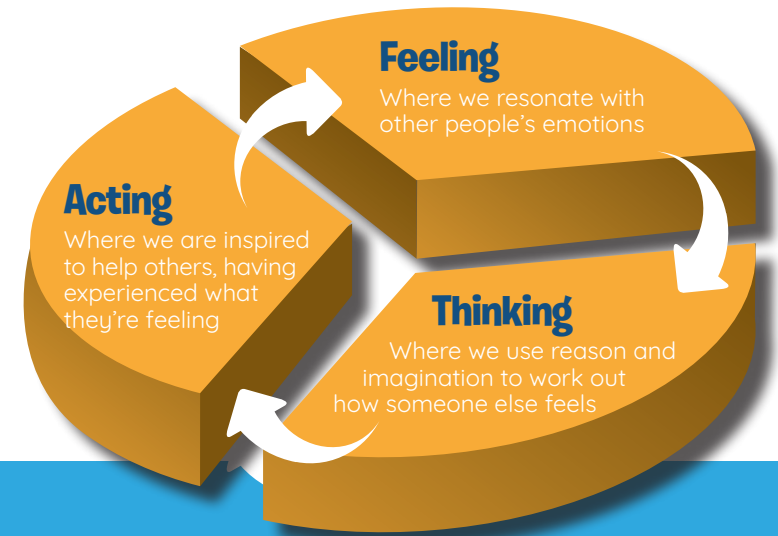
Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

Empathy is our ability to understand and experience someone else's feelings. It builds stronger, kinder communities. It's a crucial life skill that children need to learn, thrive and contribute.

We're not born with a fixed quantity of empathy – it's a skill we can all learn. Excitingly, research shows that books are a powerful tool to develop it. When young people identify with book characters, they learn to see things from others' points of view. As they read, they are building their empathy skills.

How does empathy work?

Empathy is made up of three main elements.



The 2021 Read for Empathy collection

This guide is for people living and working with 12–16 year-olds. You'll find twenty fantastic empathy-boosting books – chosen by an expert panel – to help young people gain insights into other people's feelings, perspectives and ways of life.

If ever we needed a world with more empathy, it's now. Please use the books to inspire everyone to put empathy into action – in homes, schools and communities.

The Guide is brought to you by EmpathyLab, in partnership with book supplier Peters. We also have a Guide with books for 4–11 year-olds. You can use these all year round, and they will be especially useful in the run-up to Empathy Day on 10 June 2021. Please join in! Register for updates at empathylab.uk and follow [@EmpathyLabUK](https://twitter.com/EmpathyLabUK).

Graphic and verse novels, poetry, short stories and novels

Twenty powerful books, including novels, short stories, verse novels, poetry and a graphic novel. All chosen to help young people aged 12–16 develop real-life empathy. We have used this symbol* to indicate those that are suitable for older readers, and books with themes that may need to be introduced with caution, such as drug abuse, suicide and sexual abuse.

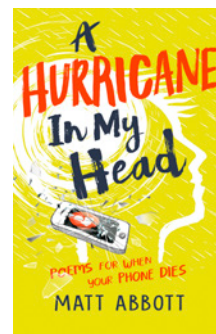


Clouds Cannot Cover Us

Jay Hulme

This poetry collection is both a cry of anguish and an exploration of family, heritage and self-identity. Beautiful life-affirming poetry that makes no judgements but inspires us to reflect upon our dreams, accept our differences and enjoy the best of what makes us human.

Troika Books



A Hurricane in my Head

Matt Abbott

Explore the uncertainties of becoming a teenager, the confusion of emotions stirred by first love, and a gorgeous poem recognising that a teacher is also a person! A very child-centred poetry collection that is all about understanding others.

Bloomsbury Education



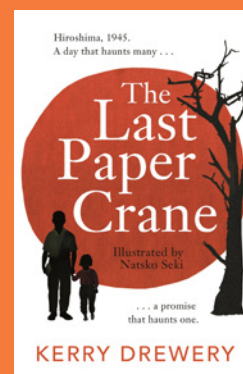
Tin Boy

Steve Cole

Illustrator Oriol Vidal

Meet Tono, a terrified boy who dives for tin on the sea bed in Indonesia. His story makes us confront uncomfortable truths about how we use the earth's resources and how children across the world are exploited to feed people's greedy desires. A brilliant, highly unusual read.

Barrington Stoke



The Last Paper Crane

Kerry Drewery

Illustrator Natsko Seki

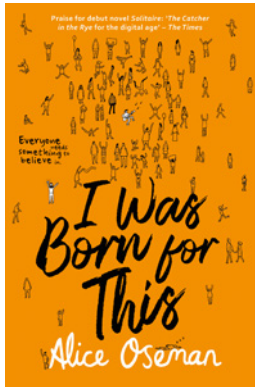
Mizuki is worried about her troubled grandfather who 60 years ago lived through the horrors of Hiroshima. Plagued by guilt about a girl he had hoped to save, he relives the trauma. A heartfelt, ultimately hopeful novel which helps us understand the feelings of those affected by the nuclear bomb in the deep way that only fiction can.

Hot Key Books

'Empathy engenders change. If we cannot put ourselves in others' shoes, we lead narrower lives.'

Lucy Popescu, Editor

Graphic and verse novels, poetry, short stories and novels



I Was Born for This*

Alice Oseman

Jimmy is finding that a life of fame in a teenage boy band is fraught with anxiety. His voice alternates with that of Angel, a lovely, funny Muslim girl obsessed with the band. Their lives collide as everything changes. Great book for exploring deep emotions.

HarperCollins



Eight Pieces of Silva*

Patrice Lawrence

A disturbing mystery set on a housing estate. Vivid characterisation is achieved through the voices of dual narrators. Becks is a lesbian teenager and the outspoken sister in a blended family, left to fend for herself by older sister Silva. Suspense builds as Becks uncovers Silva's obsession with a boy, and her vulnerability.

Hodder Children's Books

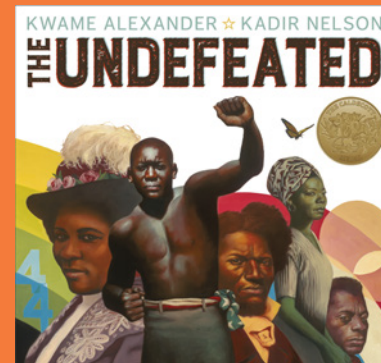


Gloves Off*

Louisa Reid

This verse novel explores body image, self-confidence and bullying that explodes into brutal violence. Lily and her mother Bernadette are victims of an unforgiving society. Experiencing life in their shoes may just make us think before we rush to judge others.

Guppy Books



The Undefeated

Kwame Alexander & Kadir Nelson

A dramatic, heart-stopping poem presented as a picture book – about black lives blighted by prejudice and yet undefeated. Beautiful illustrations add even more emotional depth. An exceptional book for our times, and in the context of Black Lives Matter.

Andersen Press

'Fiction gives us empathy: it puts us inside the minds of other people, gives us the gift of seeing the world through their eyes.'

Neil Gaiman, Author

Graphic and verse novels, poetry, short stories and novels



The Gone Book* Helena Close

Skateboarder Matt's *Gone Book* is a record of life after his mum left. We feel viscerally the rawness of life in the left-behind family, and the chaos in three boys' lives. Raw, funny, violent, incredibly real.

Little Island Books



And the Stars Were Burning Brightly* Danielle Jawando

Nathan is 15, and his brother Al has just committed suicide. Agonisingly, he and friend Megan try to find out why. Written with such empathy that we too experience the fury, guilt and grief of those left behind. Ultimately a celebration of life.

Simon & Schuster

Keep an eye on empathylab.uk for extra resources



On the Come Up* Angie Thomas

16-year-old Bri has ambitions of being a great rapper. We feel the pressures on her and will her on – to fight for her dream and be true to herself. Powerful insights into the obstacles of poverty and prejudice many young black people have to overcome.

Walker Books



The Missing Michael Rosen

The story of Michael Rosen's search to discover the fate of his great uncles, 'the missing Rosens'. An account of the brutality that can happen when empathy is lost, and the plight of a family caught up in terrible Holocaust experiences. Also read Michael's poetry collection *On the Move*, which reflects on his family and others forced to flee their homeland.

Walker Books

'That's the beauty of empathy - it has a great power to change every situation for the better.'

Zanib Mian, Author

Graphic and verse novels, poetry, short stories and novels



Scavengers Darren Simpson

Landfill lives as a scavenger and longs to venture Outside. At the heart of this strange world is the need for connection and hope. A shocking, poignant, unforgettable blast of a read, about breaking down walls and facing fears head on.

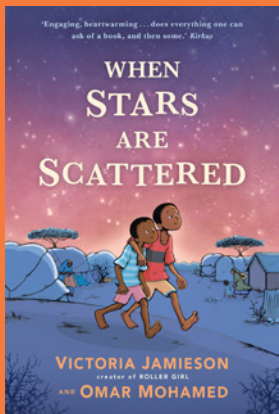
Usborne



Boy, Everywhere A. M. Dassu

13-year-old Sami has a privileged, peaceful life in Damascus, full of football and computer games. But in a flash all this is gone, and his family have to flee Syria. We have visceral insights into the terror experienced by refugees and asylum seekers, and are moved to tears by the way Sami and his family are always trying to help others.

Old Barn Books



When Stars Are Scattered Victoria Jamieson & Omar Mohamed

A beautiful, empathetic graphic novel about Omar, a Somali boy separated from his mother, stranded for years in a Kenyan refugee camp and struggling to care for his younger brother. We get right inside his head, living through his ambitions and frustrations as he yearns to be educated and leave the camp. In the moving end pages, we discover it's all based on a true story, and that the brothers are thriving in America.

Faber



Clap When You Land* Elizabeth Acevedo

A fine verse novel in which we experience the very different perspectives of two sisters – Camino in the Dominican Republic and Yahaira in New York. Until their father is killed in a plane crash they don't know of each other's existence. Through their eyes, we confront uncomfortable economic and gender power inequalities. Ending with love and understanding, this wonderful book will stay with you for a long time.

Hot Key Books

**'Empathy is a quality of character
that can change the world.'**

Barack Obama

Graphic and verse novels, poetry, short stories and novels



Run, Rebel* Manjeet Mann

Amber fears her dad and worries about her mum. We share the anger and the secret dreams of a girl living in an oppressive and violent household. Amber's resilience and determination to lead a better life offer ultimate hope in this powerful verse novel.

Penguin Books



A House Without Walls Elizabeth Laird

Safiya and her family have to escape war-torn Syria and seek refuge with family in Jordan. It isn't easy, but the family gradually rebuild their lives. Safiya is a vivid character who shows us that even in extreme situations people have resilience, dreams and dignity.

Macmillan Children's Books

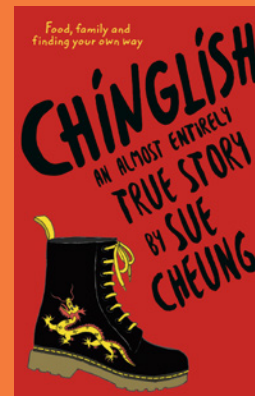
Keep an eye on empathylab.uk for extra resources



Look Both Ways Jason Reynolds

What happens after the school bell sounds? In these ten short stories (one per street), we explore the feelings and motivations of expertly crafted characters on their walk home. Helps give young people insight into the lives of those experiencing challenging situations, such as financial struggles or parental illness.

Knights Of



Chinglish* Sue Cheung

Teenager Jo Kwan lives in a flat above a Chinese takeaway. She dreams big but life is difficult as she struggles with depression, a violent father and bullying classmates. This beautifully written book is an emotional read, offering authentic insight into the life of a vulnerable girl.

Andersen Press

'When we read about a character from a different culture or gender or ability than our own, we learn the skill of perspective-taking, and understand how our lives are all interconnected.'

Muhammad Khan, Author

Five top tips

Put empathy into action Research shows that empathy plays a big role in our desire to make the world a better place. Seek out books with themes that inspire young people to become empathy activists.

Talk about characters Instead of discussing what might happen next, focus on the characters and their feelings. What are they afraid of? What might they do next? Which was most interesting? This builds understanding of other people.

Listen well Try to listen deeply, with 100% attention, as young people talk about their experience of a book.

Share diverse books Challenge young people to read a book that jolts them into understanding lives very different from their own, such as stories set in other countries or with characters of different races, religions and experiences.

Build human connections Sharing stories connects us to each other in new ways. Read the books yourself as a springboard for deep conversations to help you better understand a young person.



EMPATHY DAY 10 JUNE 2021 - change your perspective, walk in someone else's shoes

- Countdown Week starts 3 June, with a special Family Weekend on 5-6 June
- Look out for the free Family Activity Pack – fun, empathy-building activities to do together
- Empathy Day Live – superb online empathy festival, led by authors and illustrators

Using picture books creatively

Refugees	Inter-generational relationships
 <p>The Suitcase Chris Naylor-Ballesteros</p>	 <p>Tibble and Grandpa Wendy Meddour & Daniel Egnéus</p>
 <p>Boy, Everywhere A. M. Dassu</p>	 <p>The Last Paper Crane Kerry Drewery</p>

Picture books work for all age groups, and have an important empathy-building role. We've paired two books from this collection with picture books exploring similar themes. You can find more wonderful picture books in our Read for Empathy Guide for children aged 4-11.

Here's how you can join in

READ	CONNECT	ACT
<p>Use books to deepen your understanding of others – find and start an empathy-boosting book</p> <p>For great ideas, use empathylab.uk/RFE</p>	<p>Go on an Empathy Walk around your community. Share what you've experienced</p> <p>Practise listening 100%. Use our Listening Switch exercise bit.ly/ListeningSwitch</p>	<p>Put empathy into action. Make an Empathy Resolution poster and put it in the window</p> <p>Teachers, librarians, community leaders: find out more about building empathy into your home and work – come on our training, use our toolkits</p>
<p>Check out what is happening for Empathy Day at your local library or borrow an empathy-boosting book</p> 	<p>Link up – share your favourite empathy reads using #ReadForEmpathy</p> 	<p>Help drive a new empathy movement. Talk to everyone about why it matters @EmpathyLabUK</p> 

Go to empathylab.uk  [@EmpathyLabUK](https://twitter.com/EmpathyLabUK) to find out more.

EmpathyLab

Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

Empathy is a beacon of hope. Join our 2021 programme

EmpathyLab offers training and Empathy Day toolkits for schools, libraries and early years providers. These help you build young people's empathy, literacy and social activism.

Find out more at empathylab.uk Training enquiries to laura@empathylab.uk

How to order the books in this Guide

To order the Read for Empathy book collection and explore how you can develop empathy through the power of books, please visit the Peters website at peters.co.uk/empathy2021.

- The Read for Empathy Secondary collection is available with 26% off and free delivery
- If you have any queries do not hesitate to contact Peters on 0121 666 6646 or email empathy@peters.co.uk.

Thank you to everyone who has helped with this Guide

- Selection Panel: Fozia Aksar, Jon Biddle, Richard Charlesworth, Jenny Ford, Subnum Hariff-Khan, Paul Harris, Nicolette Jones, Miranda McKearney, Sarah Mears, Anna Nolan, Sarah Smith, Simon Smith, Sonia Thompson, Dawn Woods
- Our partners at Peters and the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
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- Read For Empathy illustrator: Marianne Ferrer
- Print: Penguin Random House



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Official book supplier

