

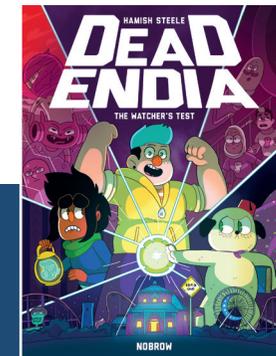
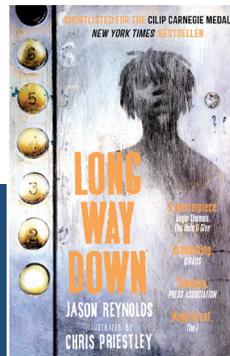


Peters

Official book supplier

EmpathyLab

Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.



2020 Read For Empathy Guide

Books to build empathy - for young people aged 11-16

#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 share someone else's feelings. It is an essential life skill, crucial if our young people and communities are to thrive.

We're not born with a fixed quantity of empathy – it's a skill we can learn. Excitingly, research shows that books are a powerful tool to develop it, because in identifying with book characters, young people learn to see things from other 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 2020 Read for Empathy collection

This Guide is for people living and working with young people aged 11–16. You'll find seventeen 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. Please use them to inspire young people to turn feelings of empathy into action – in their homes, schools and communities.

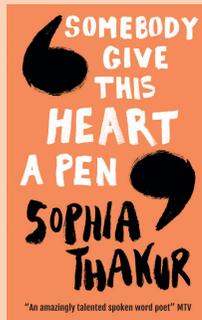
This Guide is brought to you by EmpathyLab, in partnership with specialist children's book supplier Peters. We also have a Guide with books for 4–11 year olds. You can use these all year round, and they will be especially useful in the run-up to Empathy Day on 9 June 2020. Please join in! Register for updates at www.empathylab.uk and follow [@EmpathyLabUK](https://twitter.com/EmpathyLabUK).

Graphic and verse novels, poetry and novels

Seventeen powerful books, including graphic novels, verse novels and poetry. All chosen to help young people aged 11–16 develop real-life empathy. We have used this symbol* to highlight those that are more emotionally challenging, or have language or themes more suitable for older teens.



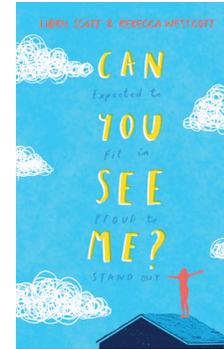
POETRY



Somebody Give This Heart a Pen* Sophia Thakur

Moving, mature poetry collection. The poems are angry, tender, and sometimes heart-breaking. They trigger reflections on our place in the world and our responsibilities to ourselves and others.

Walker Books



Can You See Me? Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott

We love this unusual book written by an 11-year-old girl and an experienced author. It offers a truly authentic opportunity to experience life for a girl with autism trying to navigate a neurotypical world.

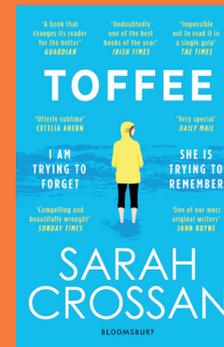
Scholastic



Furious Thing* Jenny Downham

A daughter is nearly destroyed by her father's emotional abuse, but she finds the strength to challenge him, and saves herself and her mother. Powerfully builds insight into the experience of survival, and recovery.

David Fickling Books



Toffee* Sarah Crossan

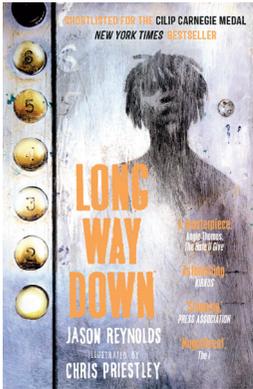
Marla has dementia and Allison has run away from home. Brought together by chance, they find solace in each other. A superb verse novel raising important questions about how we care for each other in our communities.

Bloomsbury YA

'Reading is such a wonderful way to bring people together in a world that increasingly seeks to build walls and barriers between us'

Malorie Blackman

Graphic and verse novels, poetry and novels



Long Way Down* Jason Reynolds

Illustrator Chris Priestley

We follow Will's story as he sets out to avenge his brother's murder. Ghostly figures conjure up memories and reveal perspectives that help us understand his lack of hope, and the choice he has to make. A stunning verse novel, taking place over the course of an elevator ride.

Faber & Faber



The Black Flamingo* Dean Atta

A glorious, life-affirming book exploring the life of a bi-racial gay teenager determined to be himself. Michael's inevitable wobbles make his character feel vibrantly real, and we rejoice in the support he has from his family and friends.

Hodder Children's Books



The Boy Who Steals Houses* C. G. Drews

A raw and painful read about two vulnerable brothers who feel utterly rejected by society. We're gladdened by the empathy of strangers who find a way to give the boys the security they need.

Orchard Books



Heartstopper: Volume 1* Alice Oseman

A graphic novel which sensitively captures the awkwardness of first love against a backdrop of homophobic bullying. Readers can really empathise with the two boys simply trying to be true to themselves.

Hodder Children's Books

'Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as more than self-obsessed individuals'

Neil Gaiman

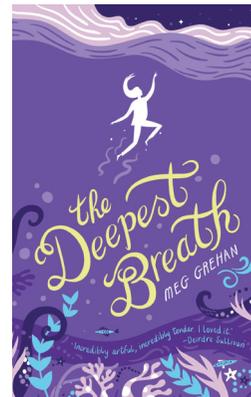
Graphic and verse novels, poetry and novels



New Kid Jerry Craft

Jordan is one of the very few black students at his new posh school, and he could hardly feel more out of place. A superbly crafted, hard-hitting graphic novel with an empathetic take on issues of race, privilege and changing schools.

HarperCollins



The Deepest Breath Meg Grehan

11-year-old Stevie is deeply confused by the emotions she feels towards a girl in her class. We feel great empathy for her anxiety and cheer on the sensitive librarian who listens and understands. A short, magnificently written verse story for young teenagers.

Little Island Books

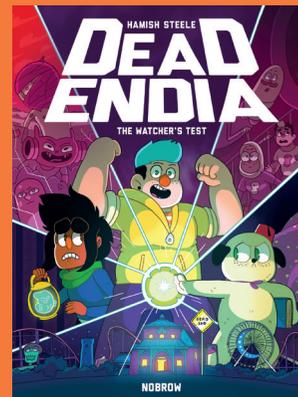
Keep an eye on www.empathylab.uk for extra resources



Kick the Moon* Muhammad Khan Illustrator Amrit Birdi

Ilyas is 13, trying to understand what it means to grow up as a Muslim boy in a tough community. His world is defined by gangs, intimidation and misogyny. Cleverly written so that we share his feelings and the values that give him the courage to make a stand.

Macmillan Children's Books



Dead Endia: The Watcher's Test* Hamish Steele

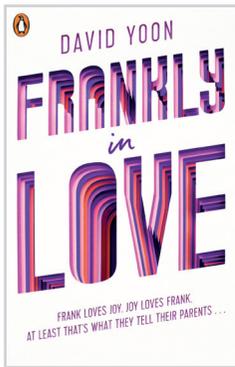
A graphic novel for all sci-fi fans with a sense of humour, set in a weird theme park where a group of ordinary teenagers fight monsters from other worlds. Funny, quirky, dark and delightful, the story encourages young people to fight for what they believe in and to care for others – no matter who or what they are.

Nobrow

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

Barack Obama

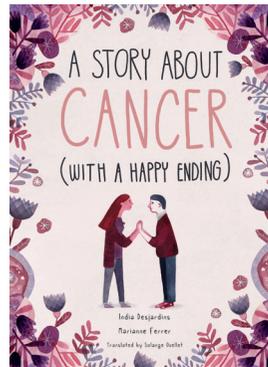
Graphic and verse novels, poetry and novels



Frankly in Love David Yoon

A refreshingly honest look at prejudice and stigma and the divisive nature of in-groups and out-groups (in this case different ethnicities) woven into a sensitively handled love story.

Penguin Books



A Story About Cancer (with a Happy Ending) India Desjardins

Illustrator Marianne Ferrer
Translator Solange Ouellet

Cancer seen from the perspective of a 15-year-old who longs for people to see beyond the illness to who she really is. Wonderful illustrations enhance the text and it ends on a reassuringly positive note.

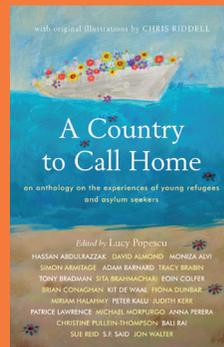
Frances Lincoln Children's Books



The Unexpected Find Toby Ibbotson

William, a boy with autism, and Judy, whose father has disappeared, find themselves on a quest. In many ways a traditional adventure story, this has real warmth as this troubled pair find healing through love and kindness.

Scholastic



A Country to Call Home* Lucy Popescu (ed.)

Illustrator Chris Riddell

Powerful insights into the lives of refugees and asylum seekers compelled to leave home, and their fearful feelings about an uncertain future. A high-quality anthology with poetry and prose by some renowned writers, including Michael Morpurgo, Patrice Lawrence, Simon Armitage, and Kit de Waal.

Unbound



Jemima Small Versus the Universe Tamsin Winter

Many readers will empathise with Jemima, whose fragile self-esteem is knocked by casually cruel remarks about her size. We cheer her on as she refuses to be defined in this way.

Usborne

Five top tips

Empathy in 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 – what are they afraid of? What might they do next? Which was most interesting? This builds understanding of how other people are.

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.

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

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.



Using picture books creatively

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

<p>Identity</p>	<p>Refugees</p>
<p>Coping with dementia</p>	<p>How others see you</p>

EMPATHY DAY 9 JUNE 2020 - GET INVOLVED!

READ	CONNECT	ACT
Find and start an empathy-boosting book	Practice listening 100%, especially to someone you don't know well. Use our Empathy Switch exercise	Put empathy into action. Make an Empathy Resolution – special cards available in March
For great ideas, use #ReadForEmpathy and our Guides www.empathylab.uk/read-for-empathy-guide	Link up - share your favourite empathy reads using #ReadForEmpathy	Teachers, librarians, community leaders: be empathy evangelists! Use our training and Empathy Day toolkits
Check out your local library's empathy books and activities	Watch <i>The Empathy Conversation</i> with Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell. Happening 9 June	Talk to everyone about the importance of empathy. Sign up for updates at www.empathylab.uk

Go to www.empathylab.uk [@EmpathyLabUK](https://twitter.com/EmpathyLabUK) to find out more, and be sure to share your **#ReadForEmpathy** recommendations on the day!

EmpathyLab

Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

Empathy is a beacon of hope. Join our 2020 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.

To find out more, go to www.empathylab.uk

For training enquiries contact miranda@empathylab.uk

How to order the books in this Guide

To buy the Read For Empathy book collection, please contact your local independent bookshop or Peters, and explore how you can develop empathy through the power of books. Primary schools buying the collection also receive a free EmpathyLab resource containing four assembly outlines.

- Independent booksellers: find your local shop here www.booksellers.org.uk/bookshopsearch to see if they are involved in Empathy Day
- Peters: Visit www.peters.co.uk/empathy2020. 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

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- Print: Penguin Random House



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