

# RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Activities for teachers, students, groups and individuals, kids and grown-ups

THIS IS A SELECTION, NOT A LESSON PLAN: PICK AND CHOOSE, OR USE A FEW ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BUILD ON EACH OTHER.

## A kind person

- Collection: Collect words that describe a kind person (nice, friendly, polite, helpful, caring, inclusive, grateful, considerate, courageous...).
- With prompts: Give students word pairs and ask them to pick the "kind" one (polite/impolite; nice/mean etc), or let students select "kindness" words in a wordcloud.
- Discussion: Discuss similarities and differences between different concepts (kind/nice; responsible/reliable; helpful/caring; inclusive/tolerant; grateful/appreciative).
- Display: Collect kindness words or actions and write them around a figure on a poster.
- Personal Kindness Profile: Students draw themselves, or an outline of their hand, or they make a collage out of pictures of people who are important to them. They write: "I am kind when/because...."



ARE YOU A GROWN-UP, WORKING WITH A TANDEM PARTNER, IN A GROUP OR BY YOURSELF? THAT'S GREAT - SEE IF YOU LIKE SOME OF THESE ACTIVITIES, TOO! LOOK OUT FOR THE SPLASH - THESE ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT.

## Show, don't tell

- Collection: Let students give examples of kind people (real or fictional). How do they know that a person is kind? Collect actions which show kindness.
- With media as prompts: Watch a short clip from a film or a TV series - How do film makers show us that a person is kind, rather than tell us?
- With text: Read an extract from a book in which a character is introduced. How do we decide if they are kind or unkind? Use examples of characters you like.

## Be kind

- Collection: Collect kind actions that we can do ... at school / on the bus or train / for our friends / for our families / for strangers / on social media / at work ... You can practice lots of grammar points with this.
- + Gerund: Collect actions and explain the gerund while you're at it (Opening doors is kind; Letting someone have the last piece of cake...).
- Connect to other people by finding common ground (and practice the gerund): Write 5 things you like/enjoy/love doing or that you are good at doing. Walk around the classroom and tell other people about your "likes". Feedback: Did you learn something new about someone? Who likes the same things as you?
- + if-sentences: If I see a friend who is sad ... ; If I see a person who is left out ...
- + Present Perfect: Use the list of kind actions to ask "Have you ever...?". Combine this with Kindness-Bingo.
- `At work: Extend this into a discussion amongst colleagues or a reflection about your workplace: where do we experience kindness in our daily working lives or our company culture?



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## Kindness-Bingo

- Select kind actions and fill a bingo grid. There are lots of templates online, but creating your own grid might work better in your context. Students aim to complete their bingo grid within a week, with feedback in class ("So far, I have ...")
- Mingle: Students walk around the class with their grids, talking to each other: A: "Have you opened a door for someone (today/this week)?" B: "Yes, I have" - A (writes B's name in the field). Students try to fill a line or the whole card with names and shout "Bingo!" when they are done.
- Collaborative: Create a massive grid and aim to complete it as a class by the end of the week/month. Again, make sure to catch up regularly with speaking practice, for example to practice the difference between the present perfect and the simple past: "So far, we have done the following: x has helped the art teacher to tidy up, y has made a cake for the class, z has ...." - Combine with "When did you do this?"

## Listen, really listen to another person

- Back to back drawing: Students draw simple images with geometric shapes. Sitting back to back, student A describes their picture while student B tries to draw it.
- Copy some art: Go and see some art as an act of kindness to yourselves. Do the back to back drawing exercise, but use artwork such as abstract paintings. Student A describes the picture, student B draws it.
- Kindness chain: Make a kindness chain like in "Ich packe meinen Koffer". A: "It is kind to help a friend." B: "It is kind to help a friend, and to let someone stand under your umbrella at the bus stop." C: "It is kind to help a friend, ...." (You can practice pronouns, too, and learn something about others in the group: A: "I am kind when I help my grandma up the stairs." B: "A is kind when he helps his grandma up the stairs, and I am kind when ..." - You can also use categories like kindness "at school", "at work", "towards strangers" or "towards myself".
- Collaborative story-telling: Collaborative story-telling is always great, so why not now? You could also introduce a set of words that have to be included (such as kindness words) or kind actions or concepts.

## Talk about it

- Use video clips to spark a discussion: Watch a video about a Random Acts of Kindness initiative. Describe the actions people take. Describe people's reactions. How would you react in these situations? Have you ever done something similar? What would you like to do in the future to bring kindness into the world? Some people are suspicious when another person does a Random Act of Kindness. Why do you think people react that way?
- Use texts to spark a discussion: There are plenty of "kindness"-stories on the internet that you can use.

## See good things and write about them

- Write a thankfulness-diary full of acts of kindness that you observed, that others did for you, or that you did.
- Contribute: If you like social media, look for hashtags related to kindness and share your ideas.

## Agree to disagree

- Discuss questions around kindness that allow for disagreement. Examples: Can it be kind to tell a white lie, or should we always tell the truth? Is it kind to keep secrets at all times? What do people mean when they say "It comes from a place of kindness" - and how do you feel about the expression? Are Random Acts of Kindness just a marketing tool that allows companies to make themselves look better (like greenwashing)? Is kindness actually selfish? Is it inspiring when people post acts of kindness online? Or is it vain?
- There are articles online which will help you to find tricky questions. Evaluate the sources you find: Are they following journalism standards (truthfulness, accuracy, impartiality, accountability, objectivity and transparency when offering opinions)? Why do these standards matter when we aim for kindness?
- Discuss questions around kindness that don't have an easy answer - these are the best ones if you want to engage your brain and flex your language muscle!

*Be kind, learn a language!*

