

Hope: wellbeing and literacy activities

Key Stage 1

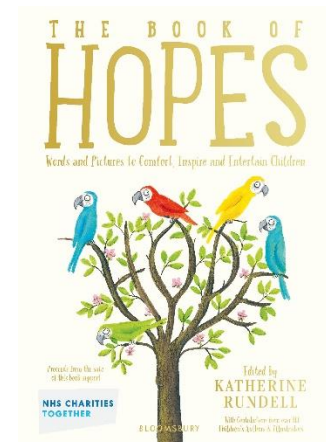
Introduction

Hope is an important element of mental wellbeing. By exploring the theme of hope through these literacy activities you can help children to build coping mechanisms for when times are tough. You can use these teacher notes in partnership with the PowerPoint presentation, or as inspiration to plan your own lessons.

The activities are linked to poems and stories from *The Book of Hopes* (published by Bloomsbury), which you can access at the National Literacy Trust Website: literacytrust.org.uk/bookofhopes.

Recovery Curriculum links

The activities in this resource link to the following Recovery Curriculum 'Levers' (Barry Carpenter, 2020) evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/#mentalhealth



Lever 1 Relationships: Sharing what they are hopeful for and their experiences of lockdown will allow children to re-connect with peers, and the group activity of creating a tree of hopes mural, or a cress-seed hope-garden, will develop a sense of classroom togetherness and contribution, even if they are working separately in pods/bubbles.

Lever 2 Community: Gifting cress seedlings with messages of hope to members of their family is a lovely way to show that the school is thinking of the wider community and the challenges they might face. Emphasising the connection between school and community is important for the children's transition back to school, and to re-forge strong teacher/parent relationships.

Lever 5 Space: Allowing children time to work on their own creative activities that won't be assessed, such as making hopeful umbrellas, and reflecting on their feelings as they are engaged in the task will provide a sense of space for children to find their voice, settle in to the school environment and encourage self-expression.



What is Hope? Discussion

Start by having a discussion with your pupils about what hope means to them. You can use the questions and comments below and in the PowerPoint to kick start the conversation.

Starter questions

What does hope mean? Gather a few suggestions to gauge levels of comprehension, and provide the definition in the accompanying PowerPoint.

What is the difference between hope and happiness? Help your children understand the difference between what makes them hopeful and what makes them happy. This can be a tricky concept for very young children.

What keeps you hopeful when you are sad? For example, looking forward to something exciting: activities, friends, food, nice thoughts, imagining what it will be like when lockdown is over.

Has there been a time during lockdown when you have felt hopeful? What did you hope for?

How does hoping make you feel? Better or worse?

Key points

Hope is:

- A sense or a feeling that things could change or get better
- A sense that, although things may not turn out how we want them to, we will find a way to cope

Sometimes the challenges we face feel really difficult, but the important thing is to stay hopeful as best we can.

Being hopeful is not about denying the tough times. It's about knowing that you feel challenged and remaining hopeful despite this.

Even though lockdown was really difficult, and it may still be quite challenging at school, we can be hopeful for a time in the future when we can share toys, hug our friends, and visit our relatives. Having these hopes will help to make the tough times a bit easier.

Sometimes it can be beneficial to remember that feelings come and go – 'this too shall pass' – and to talk to a friend or trusted adult if we feel we are losing hope.

Sometimes talking to people who are still feeling hopeful can help us feel hopeful – or we can talk about remaining hopeful to a friend who seems sad.

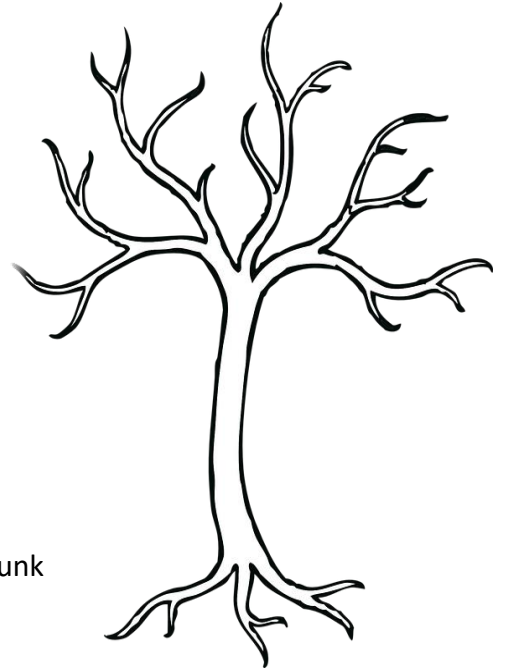


Tree of hopes mural

This activity is great to kickstart the term, involving the whole school and allowing them to connect with each other after the long break. It would be exciting to welcome children back to school with a mysterious, wintry-looking tree, then introduce, as one of their first activities, the opportunity to fill the tree with colour and hope.

You will need:

- Brown paper for the tree trunk – corrugated card or torn strips of sugar paper make a really nice bark-like texture
- Lots of multi-coloured paper for birds and leaves
- Pens or pencils
- Glue/staple-gun/blu-tac
- Optionally: sequins, feathers and other craft decorations



Step 1 – teacher preparation

Create your tree trunk and branches using the brown paper. You can copy the shape here. It's easiest to use a collage technique, rather than trying to cut it out of one piece of paper. Put the tree trunk up in a communal place – on a door, in a corridor, or school hall.

Step 2 – discussing hope

Show the children 'The Hope Tree' Illustration by Axel Scheffler on page xii of *The Book of Hopes*, or 'The World Through a Window' illustration by Lauren Child on page xv, and explain that you will be making your own Tree of Hopes, which will help you as a class/school when times are difficult. You can explore the illustrations further using the questions on the PowerPoint. Have a discussion with the children about hope, using the starting points above.

Step 3 – making birds and leaves

Guide the children to cut out a leaf or bird shape from their choice of colourful paper. You can use the templates below, or children can draw their own. Ask children to write on their bird or leaf one thing that makes them feel hopeful. This can be related to life at school or at home. They can now decorate or colour their bird or leaf.

Step 4 – putting the mural together

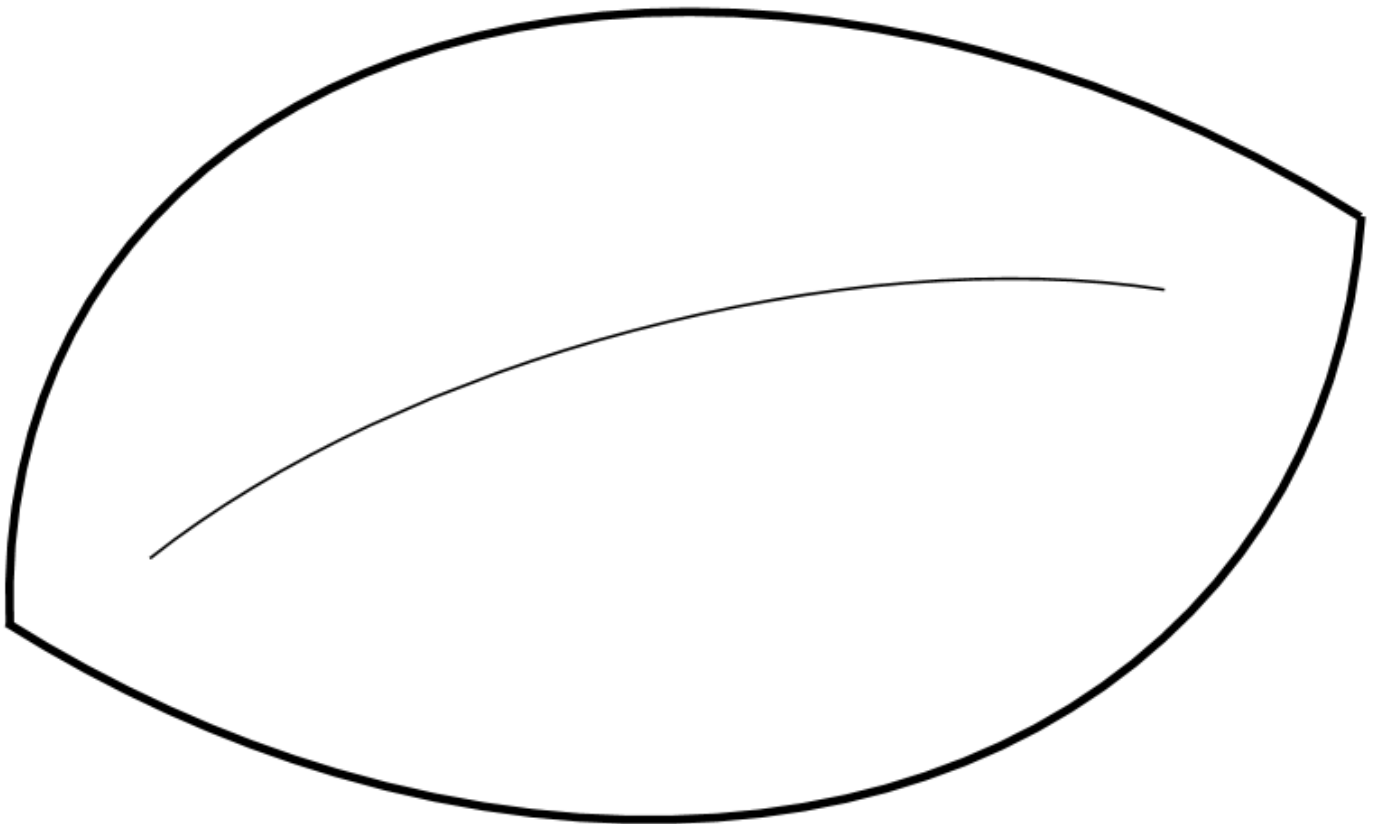
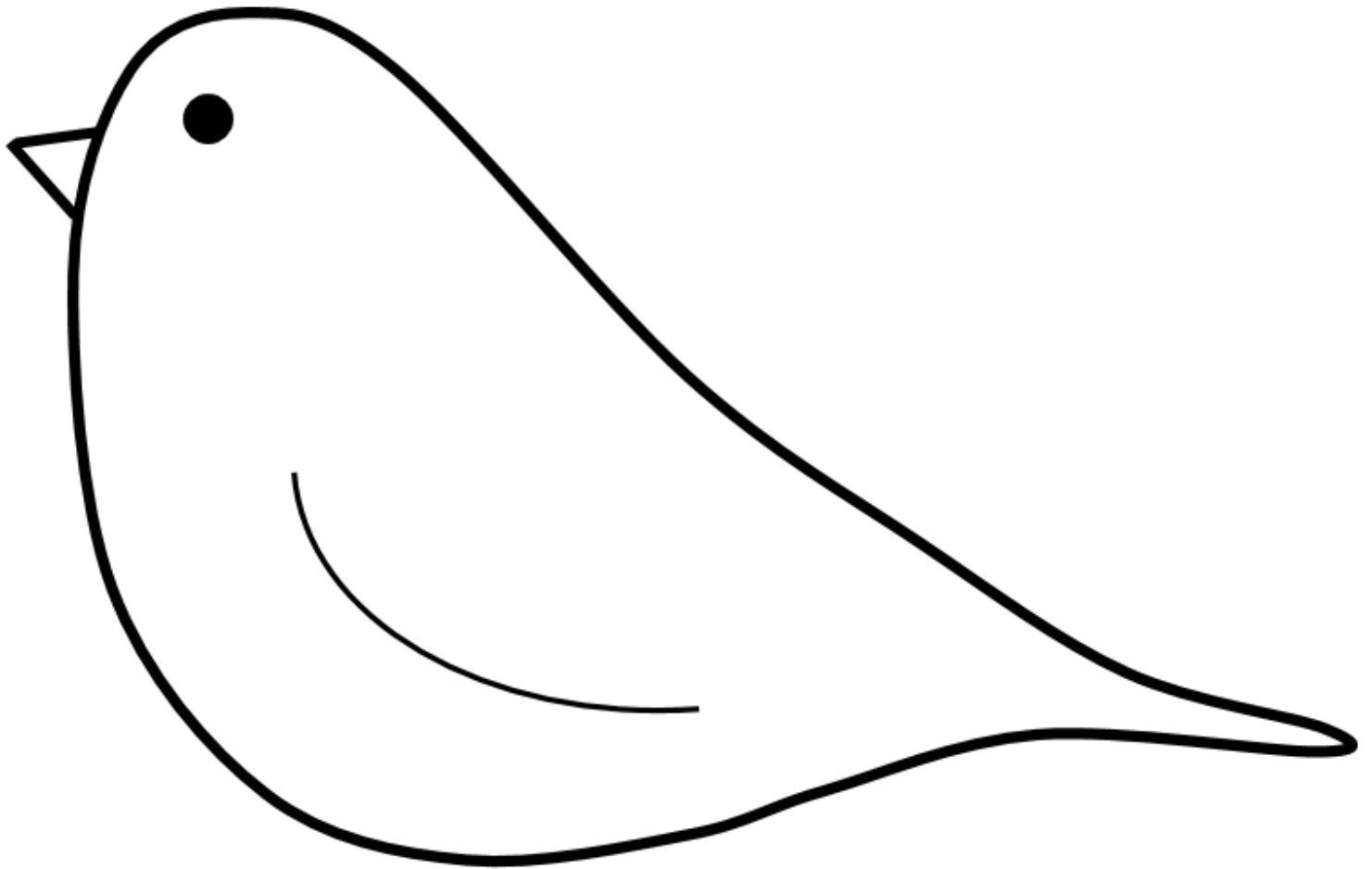
If possible, it's nice to invite each child to stick their bird or leaf up on the tree so they can see how it fits in to the whole picture, and foster a sense of community.

Take a moment to read and share each other's hopes and reflect together on how this activity made everyone feel. Knowing what makes their peers feel hopeful will help children to support each other through tough times. Remind the children that they can come back to the tree whenever they want.

Share a picture of your Tree of Hopes with us!

Tweet us @Literacy_Trust and @Place2Be





Mr Umbo's Umbrellas by Patience Agbabi

Read the poem to the children, on page 27 of *The Book of Hopes*.

Discussion about the Poem

Talk to the children about their reaction to the poem. You can use the questions below and in the PowerPoint as a starting point.

What was the poem about?

Are there any parts you particularly liked?

Are there any pictures that come to mind when you hear the poem? You could ask the children to close their eyes while you read it a second time and share what they imagine as they listen.

Are there new words you didn't understand? There are some tricky ones in this poem. You can write these up on the board, or if you have the poem on an interactive whiteboard you can circle them, and have fun guessing at their meaning and looking up definitions together.

Are there words from different countries and languages? Can anyone have a guess what they mean or translate them?

Where is Mr Umbo from and where is he living now? Cameroon originally, then France, then London. You might like to do a bit of research into his journey, the different countries, and how the weather is different.

How might Mr Umbo feel about the move? What might he miss from France and Cameroon? Does the poem give us clues?



Making your own hopeful umbrellas

Mr Umbo's brightly coloured umbrellas are a symbol of hope when it rains. They brighten up the sky and also brighten the lives of passers-by. You can bring this symbolism into your classroom by making a colourful host of umbrellas that help children talk about the positives and negatives of lockdown life.

You will need:

- Print outs of the template below
- Pens or pencils
- Optionally: collage materials e.g. tissue paper, sequins, etc.



Step 1 – writing

Ask the children to write one thing that they miss from before (or even during) lockdown on their umbrella, and one thing that they are looking forward to about coming back to school, or lockdown being over. These can be as serious, fun or flippant as the children are comfortable with.

Step 2 – decorating

Now decorate your umbrellas in colours and textures that make you feel happy.

Step 3 – display (optional)

If you have more time, you can turn the umbrellas into a colourful hanging mobile, complete with raindrops and clouds that represent fears, or times when lockdown was difficult. Rather than sharing their fears and negative experiences by writing them down, children can whisper it to the cloud or raindrop, then it is 'set free' by being hung from the ceiling.

'Hopework'

As homework or 'hopework', ask children to interview their parents/carers and family members about what makes them feel hopeful. They can record audio snippets, or take written notes. You could create more hopeful umbrellas, and bind them into a special book, create a display, or email round a digital compilation.

Valuing your school's diverse community and stories during this time is important for helping children readjust, and reforming the parent-teacher relationships that will support children's learning.



I miss...

I am looking forward to...



Planting hope seeds

Mr Umbo's umbrellas are like plants in the springtime, they unfurl and bloom even though it is cold and rainy. Remind the children and the community that 'this too shall pass', and hope can grow in the toughest and barest of places – just like these cress seeds.

You will need:

- Containers/trays (these can be made out of takeaway containers or other recycled materials, and don't have to be very deep)
- Compost, kitchen paper towel or cotton wool
- Cress seeds
- Water
- Lollipop sticks, card, tape or glue and pens



Step 1 – preparation

Put an inch or two of compost, or a couple of layers of paper towels or cotton wool in your container, and sprinkle with water so it's nice and damp.

Step 2 – scatter the seeds

Scatter your cress seeds into the tray. Children might like to say something they are hopeful for as they do this, or think about someone they would like to send a message of hope to. Your cress should start to sprout in a day or two!

Tip: Make sure you keep the soil or paper towels damp as they can dry out quickly. To start with it might be a good idea to cover the containers with lids or cling film to keep moisture in.

Step 3 – label

The children can write their name and a message of hope on the card, and glue or tape it to a lolly stick to make a label for their container.

Step 4 – share

Your mini hope-garden can be displayed in school, or given as gifts to families and friends who are going through a tricky time.

