

Hope: wellbeing and literacy activities

Key Stage 2

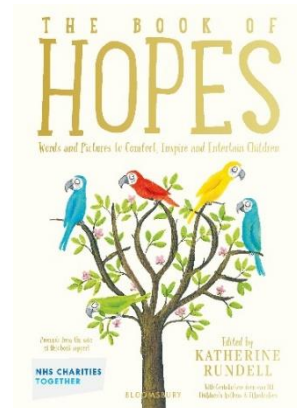
Introduction

Hope is an important element of mental wellbeing. By exploring the theme of hope through these literacy activities you can help the children to build coping mechanisms for when times are tough. You can use these pages 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 reconnect with peers and teachers. The group activity of creating a Tree of Hopes mural will develop a sense of classroom togetherness and contribution, even if they are working separately in pods or bubbles.

Lever 2 Community: Asking children to bring back diverse stories of hope from their families, and weaving them together into a book of poems or a display will demonstrate the value of community during this time. 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, such as writing poems or stories that won't be assessed, and to reflect 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 kickstart the conversation.

Starter questions

What does hope mean to you? Gather a few suggestions, and provide the definition in the accompanying PowerPoint.

What is the difference between hope and happiness?

What kept you hopeful during lockdown?

Has there been a time during lockdown when you have felt that you didn't have hope? How did that feel?

How did hope make you feel?

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.

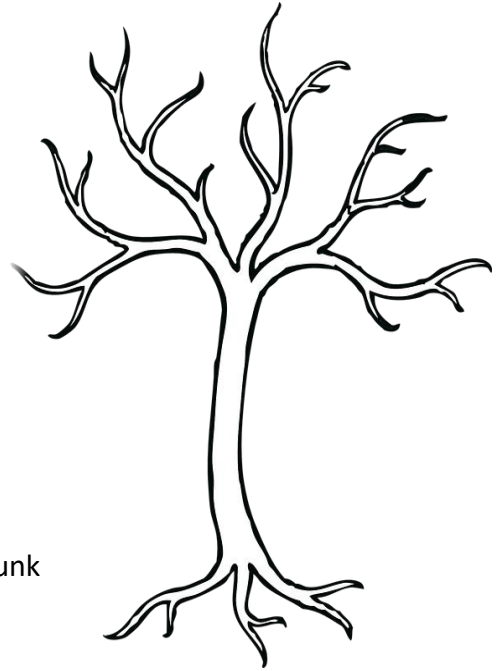


Tree of hopes mural

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.

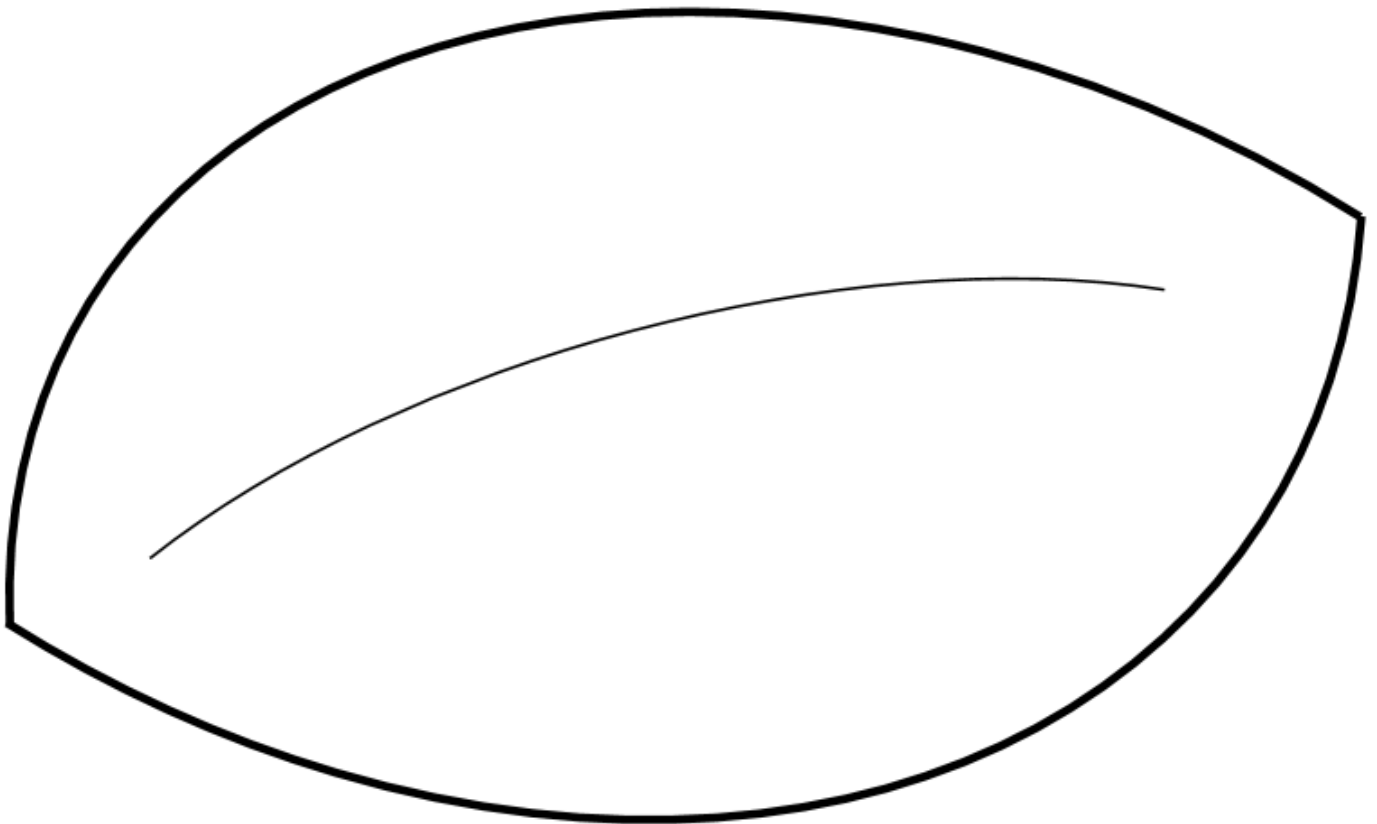
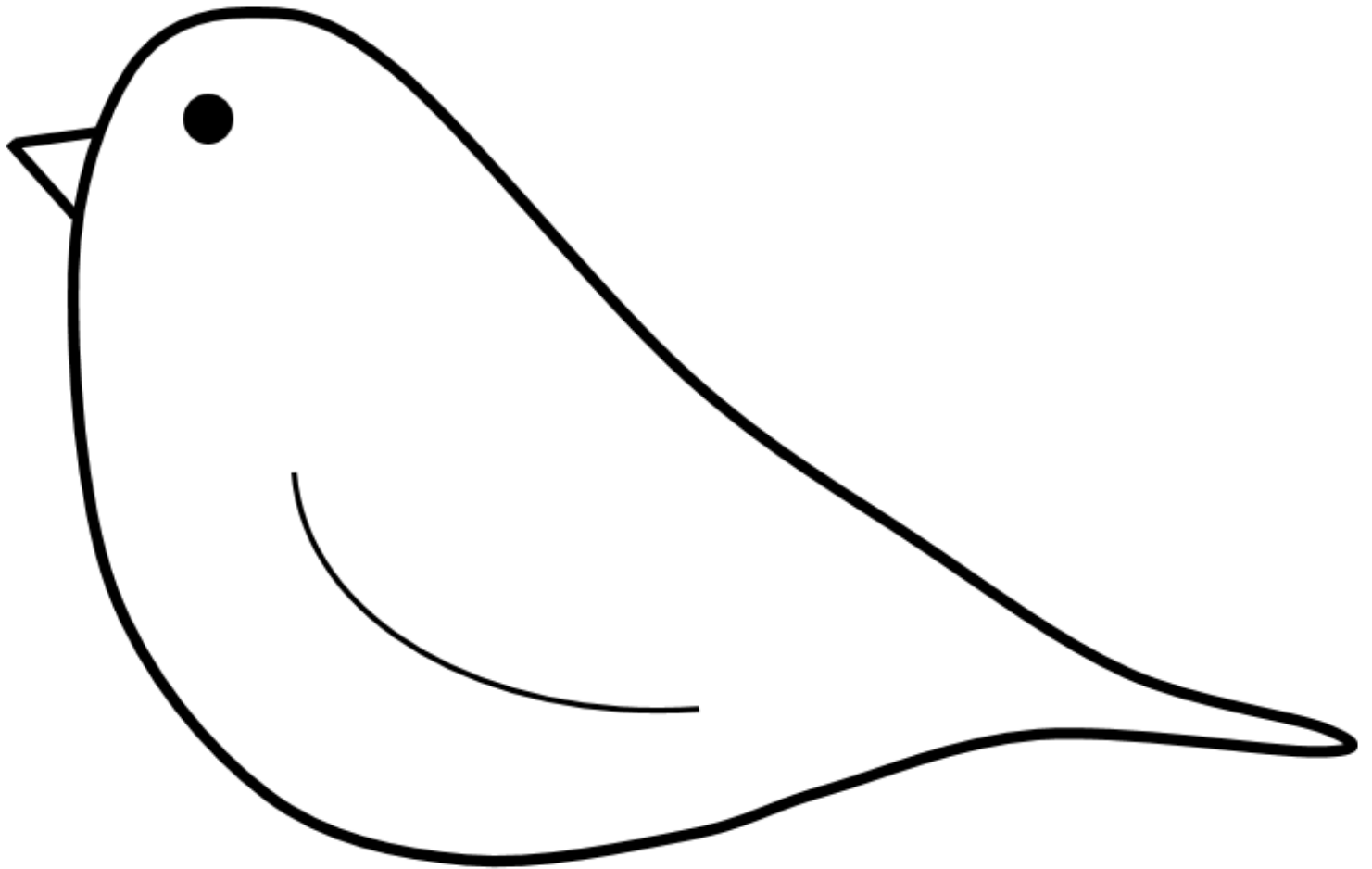
Step 4 – putting the mural together

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?

Who was in the poem? This can lead into a discussion about the narrator's voice and who 'we' and 'us' refers to.

Are there any parts you particularly liked?

How did the poem make you feel?

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.

What poetic techniques can you spot in the poem? You can remind them of how to identify metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, symbolism, etc. It's good to keep the conversation light and make it into a spotting game rather than a test.

Are there new words you didn't understand? 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 translate?

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 and why he might have moved.

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

How does Mr Umbo feel at the end of the poem?



Writing your own hope poem

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. Use the poem as inspiration for the children to write their own poem of hope. If they have a good understanding of metaphor or symbolism they can use this in their poetry, just like Patience Agbabi.

A few gentle ways into poetry writing

You can choose one of these prompts for the whole class, or choose a different prompt for each group.

- **Five words:** Choose five words from Mr Umbo's Umbrellas that you like and use these as the start of your poem.
- **Brain dump:** Write on a big sheet of paper things that make you feel hopeful, then weave them together into your poem.
- **Animated object:** Choose an object that represents hope to you, or makes you feel hopeful, then describe it as if it were a living thing. How would it move? Would it make a noise? Where does it live?
- **Colour:** What colour makes you feel hopeful? Write a poem that starts with this colour and repeats it throughout.
- **Thought bubbles:** Draw three circles on your paper. In one bubble write words that describe the hard parts of lockdown. In the second bubble write down things you were or are looking forward to after lockdown – things that you hope for. In the third bubble write words that describe how you feel when you think about these things. You can weave these together into a poem that charts how hope helped you in lockdown.
- **Poetry relay:** each child in the group or class contributes a word or a line to a poem that you create together.



Performance and Display

Children could perform their own poetry, or in groups could create a recital of Mr Umbo's Umbrellas with sound effects and hand actions. You can video this and share with parents and carers or on social media if you have permission. You can make a lovely communal display of hope poems as a reminder for when things feel difficult. **Find more tips about poetry writing and performance here:** literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/9-12/write-poem-about-thing-you-really-love/

'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. Use these ideas to weave into new poems and stories that you can share with your wider school community. You could 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.

Bag for Life by Joseph Elliott

Read the story to the children, or they can read it independently. You can find it on page 30 of *The Book of Hopes*.

Discussion about the Story

Discuss the children's reaction to the story. You can use the questions here and in the PowerPoint as starting points.

What did you think was in the bag?

Why was Amila's dad carrying stones?

What does Amila suddenly 'understand' at the end of the story?

What kept Amila and her dad walking for so long?

Where are they going and why?

Where are they coming from?

Bring the discussion round to how hope can keep you going even when things are tough. Hope is represented by the stones which they carried with them the whole way. Although they didn't have any food, the hope of food and shelter kept Amila and her dad walking when they were hungry and tired.



Creative writing – developing character voice

Spotting writing techniques

With your class, look at the techniques the writer uses to develop a distinctive character voice – what are they? For example: first person, colloquial language like ‘ump-teenth’, personal details, getting cut off mid-thought. You can circle these techniques on your interactive whiteboard, or take notes on a flipchart for later. Discuss how these techniques help you understand more about the character.

Role on the wall

Now explore what you know about Amila’s dad.

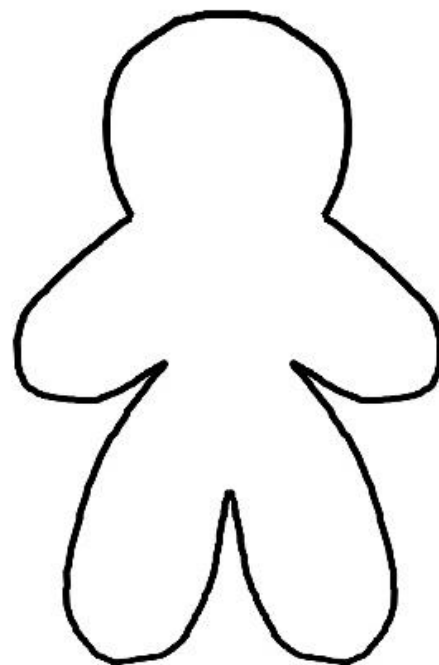
You can do this ‘role on the wall’ exercise to understand his character better, either as a class on the board, or individually.

Draw a gingerbread-like human figure, like the one here.

Outside the figure write down words to describe how Amila’s dad seems on the outside, to us and to Amila.

Then, inside the figure ask the children to imagine how Amila’s dad feels and thinks on the inside.

It might paint a very different picture



Writing from Amila’s dad’s perspective

Using their new-found understanding of Amila’s dad, and the writing techniques from earlier, the children can write a short story or diary entry from his perspective of the journey. How does his experience differ from Amila’s? He knows what is in the bag the whole time – how does he feel about keeping this secret from Amila? Why does he keep this secret?

