

A DAY AFTER A DISASTER: WRITING WITH EMPATHY



Engaging in an art form can be highly beneficial during the recovery and normalization process after a disaster. Art provides a safe outlet for expressing emotions, reducing stress, and processing trauma. Whether through painting, music, dance, or theater, creative activities help individuals regain a sense of control and stability. Additionally, art fosters social connections and community healing by bringing people together in a shared experience. By focusing on creativity, individuals can rebuild their emotional resilience and find hope in the face of adversity.

Lesson

Language

Grade

5

Learning Objectives

Students will create essays, stories, and poems with appropriate grammar and vocabulary to clearly express their ideas and enhance social intelligence.

Duration

40 Minutes

Required Materials

Paper, pen or digital writing tools,
A short story or news about a natural disaster,
Pictures or cards describing the emotions that may be felt after the disaster.

Preparation and Implementation

Bring pen and papers for students who may not have one.
Print emotion cards or pictures of emotions. (See in Annex)
Make your laptop or digital tool ready to show story or news to all students.

PROCESS

1 INTRODUCTION (10 Minutes)

- Start a discussion with students on the emotions experienced in the aftermath of a disaster and how communities are coping
- While they are discussing, support them with vocabulary and your personal opinions and experiences.
- Show pictures that symbolize emotional states after a disaster. Students share their feelings (e.g., fear, seeking safety, courage) through these pictures. (See in Annex)
- Introduce activity by saying "You're going to write a story, a poem or an article about a day after a disaster. In this article, it's important to explain the character's feelings and the changes they're going through."
- **Empathy Reflection (Optional):** Encourage students to consider their feelings by explaining: "Empathy means understanding how someone else feels and showing care and kindness. But empathy is not only for others — we can also show empathy to ourselves."

"After a natural disaster, like the one we all experienced, many different feelings can come up — fear, sadness, anger, worry, or confusion. These feelings are normal, and you are not alone in having them."

"You might also wonder how your friends or other children in your community are feeling. Maybe they had similar or different experiences. Empathy helps us connect. It helps us care for one another."

2 CREATIVE WRITING (25 Minutes)

- Ask students to read the news article about earthquakes. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64544998>)
- Ask students to choose one of three different types of writing:
 - Story: A child's experiences and emotions after a disaster.
 - Article: An article about the effects of disasters on people and the importance of social solidarity.
 - Poem: A poem about the togetherness and hopes of a community after a disaster.
- To encourage their writing, ask students to describe the character's feelings and the behaviour of people in their social circle.

3 PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION (10 Minutes)

- Students present their texts with the class.
- During presentation, while the grammar and vocabulary of the articles are emphasized, empathy and social solidarity are also discussed in terms of social intelligence.
- It evaluates the important elements in the writings as a teacher and emphasizes the development of both grammar and emotional intelligence of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 You can present examples of poems, stories or articles to show students to think and create their own work.

2 You can just show the emotion cards on the screen, or you can print them and hand them out to the students.

ANNEX

1. News about an earthquake.

Link : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64544998>

2. Emotion Cards :



Teacher's Facilitation Script

“Sometimes when we imagine the day after a disaster, different feelings come up. You might feel scared, worried, confused, or even hopeful. All of these feelings are normal.

There are no right or wrong emotions. What matters is that we can notice them and share them in a safe way.

If you'd like, you can express your feelings by:

- Saying a word or short sentence,
- Drawing a picture,
- Or just showing it with a simple gesture or face expression.

Remember, when we talk about our feelings, we understand ourselves better and we also help others feel less alone.”