



This article and lesson discuss people who don't have reliable access to food. If the community you are serving experiences food insecurity, this might be a sensitive topic. Feeding America has tools to help you find local hunger resources. Visit ti.me/foodbanks for more information.

LET'S TALK HUMAN NEEDS

In this lesson students will think about human needs and come up with ways to help people in their community get their needs met.

Grade Levels 3–6

Note: Lessons are designed to support multiple grade levels. Modification suggestions and extensions are for alternative pacing and to engage students at various levels.

Standards

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

- SOCIAL AWARENESS
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Social Studies Standards (NCSS)

- Individual Development and Identity
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Essential Question(s)

- What are basic human needs?
- What is empathy? Why is empathy important?
- How are empathy and awareness related?

Learning Objectives

- I can define *empathy*.
- I can list the basic human needs and explain why it's important for these to be met.
- I can think of ways to help meet the needs of people in my community.

What You'll Need

Access to these articles from TIME for Kids: “[Incredible Kids: Za'nia Stinson](#),” “[Incredible Kids: Dylan Capshaw](#),” and “[Incredible Kids: Bellen Woodard](#)”

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Introduce It

Ask students to name some human needs (food, shelter, safety, belonging, etc.) List these on the board as students share. Have students reflect on the following prompt and journal a response:

Choose one of the needs the class discussed. Imagine what it would be like for a person who does not have that need met. How would that person feel? How might it affect them?

- Differentiation: Have students watch the Khan Academy video explaining Maslow’s hierarchy of needs at [ti.me/needsHierarchy](https://www.khanacademy.com/a/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/a/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/a/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs). Discuss the impact on a person of not having their basic needs met.

Explain that by considering the feelings of people who are not getting their needs met, students are developing empathy. Define *empathy* as “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another,” or ask students if they can define the word.

Read About It

Have students choose one of the following articles to read:

- “Incredible Kids: Za’nia Stinson”
- “Incredible Kids: Bellen Woodard”
- “Incredible Kids: Dylan CapShaw”

While students read, have them take note of which need each kid is helping others meet. What inspired them to do that?

Discuss It

Group students based on the article they chose. Ask them to discuss their notes and to write a one-sentence summary of the article to share with the class. Then bring the class together to share their summaries and discuss the following:

- Which need is each kid helping others to meet? Why is this important?
- What experience prompted their empathy in this area?
- How are awareness and empathy related?
- Why is empathy important?
- Has this lesson made you more empathetic toward others? Explain.

Act on It

Return to the list of needs that students made at the beginning of this lesson. Have them consider why these needs might not always be met. Sometimes, there’s a lack of resources. Sometimes, people don’t know how to find help or how to ask for it. Have students brainstorm solutions to these problems and work together to support one or more of the causes. Examples include:

- Creating a map of places and organizations that provide resources for those in need.
- Organizing a coat drive to help people stay warm this winter.
- Working with a community center to organize activities to help neighbors meet new people.