

Walk in Another's Shoes

This activity helps participants explore a different point of view or perspective and have an opportunity to re-think their assumptions about a person or a situation.

What to Know

Perspective-taking is considered a social-cognition skill because when people engage in it, both the social and cognitive parts of the brain are being used. Being able to understand the perspective of another person is a key skill in resolving conflicts. Perspective taking, however, is a developmental skill and will emerge gradually over time, so you will need to provide young students (K-5) lots of practice.

Encouraging students to discuss their own feelings and those of others, as we have in previous lessons, helps build readiness for the skill of perspective-taking. In everyday conflicts, make it a habit to ask students to identify and explore *why* another person might have a different perspective.

Objectives

Participants will:

1. be able to analyze a story and determine its point of view;
2. practice taking the perspective of another person;
3. appreciate the value of taking the perspective of another person; and,
4. explore the effects of teasing.

Common Core Standard Alignment

- Anchor Standards for Literacy: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 - Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
- Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3-Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric
- Anchor Standards for Language: Conventions of Standard English
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1-Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Anchor Standards for Language-Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.4-Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5-Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6-Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Preparation and Materials:

- Copy of “The Maligned Wolf” or *Honestly, Red Riding Hood was Rotten* by Trisha Speed Shaskan
- Signal bell or other way to note beginning and ending times
- Scripts for “Walking in Another’s Shoes”
- Optional: Picture book of [Little Red Riding Hood](#)

Gather Together/Warm Up/Bell Ringer: Retell Red Riding Hood (Integrated Arts) (15 minutes)

Introduce the lesson:

“Today, we’re going to think about what it means to ‘Walk in Another’s Shoes.’ Let’s start by trying to remember together the story of “Little Red Riding Hood.” By doing so, we will be putting ourselves in her shoes.”

Have students stand in a circle and begin to retell the story. One student begins and each student will add one sentence at a time until the story is told. (Use the plot points below or the picture book you have chosen to interject if the story becomes too rambling.)

Encourage students to (silently!) act out the different parts of the story that are shared. Students can silently tiptoe when the wolf is racing to grandma’s house, pretend to tie grandma’s cap around their heads, shiver with fear, etc.

There are a number of versions of the story, but here's summary of the original story:

Little Red Riding Hood is walking through the woods to deliver food to her sickly grandmother. A Big Bad Wolf wants to eat the girl and the food in the basket. He follows her and approaches her, and she tells him where she is going. He tells the girl to pick some flowers so that he can get to the grandmother's house first, which he does. He goes to the grandmother's house and pretends to be the girl. He locks the grandmother in the closet and waits for the girl, disguised as the grandma. When the girl arrives, she notices that her grandmother looks very strange. Little Red then says, "What a deep voice you have!" ("The better to greet you with"), "Goodness, what big eyes you have!" ("The better to see you with"), "And what big hands you have!" ("The better to hug/grab you with"), and lastly, "What a big mouth you have" ("The better to eat you with!"), at which point the wolf jumps out of bed, chasing Little Red Riding Hood around the house. Suddenly, a woodcutter or a hunter or a lumberjack comes to the rescue. Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother emerge unharmed. The wolf runs away and everyone lives happily ever after, except for the wolf.

NOTE: To summarize, here are a few key plot points to be sure students include:

- *Red Riding Hood is sent to deliver a basket to her grandmother.*
- *She travels through the woods and meets a wolf.*

- *The wolf would like to eat the little girl and what's in the basket.*
- *The wolf races ahead to the grandmother's. (In some versions, he ties up and hides the grandmother, in others he eats her.)*
- *The wolf impersonates the grandmother, trying to trick Red into coming closer.*
- *Just as the wolf is about to eat Red, a woodsman hears her cries and comes to rescue her and her grandmother.*
- **If Needed:** Use a picture book of Red Riding Hood as a prompt

Main Activity: The Wolf's Story (15 Minutes)

Introduce the main activity: *"Now that we have retold the story of Little Red Riding Hood as a group, I want you to listen to another version of this story. While you're listening, think about the ways these versions are the same and how they are different. Ask yourself how you are feeling about each character and whether those feelings are different from before."*

Tip: This story also can be used for the Conflict Escalates activity to analyze what causes conflict to escalate.

The Maligned Wolf

The forest was my home. I lived there and I cared about it. I tried to keep it neat and clean. Then one day, while I was cleaning up some garbage someone had left behind, I heard some footsteps. I leaped behind a tree and saw a little girl coming down the trail carrying a basket. I was suspicious of her right away because she was dressed strangely—all in red, and with her head covered up so it seemed as if she didn't want people to know who she was.

Naturally, I stopped to check her out. I asked who she was, where she was going, where she had come from, and all that. She turned up her nose and told me in a snooty way that she was going to her grandmother's house. As she walked on down the path, she took a candy bar out of her basket and started to eat it, throwing the wrapper on the ground. Imagine that! Bad enough that she had come into my forest without permission and had been rude to me. Now she was littering my home. I decided to teach her a lesson.

I ran ahead to her grandmother's house. When I saw the old woman, I realized that I knew her. Years before, I had helped her get rid of some rats in her house. When I explained what had happened, she agreed to help me teach her granddaughter a lesson. She agreed to hide under the bed until I called her.

When the girl arrived, I invited her into the bedroom where I was in the bed, dressed like her grandmother. The girl came in and the first thing she did was to say something nasty about my big ears. I've been insulted before so I made the best of it by suggesting that my big ears would help me to hear her better. Then she made another nasty remark, this time about my bulging eyes. Since I always try to stay cool, I ignored her insult and told her my big eyes help me see better. But her next insult really got to me. She said something about my big teeth. At that point, I lost it. I know I should have been able to handle the situation, but I just couldn't control my anger any longer. I jumped up from the bed and growled at her, "My teeth will help me eat you better."

No wolf would ever eat a little girl. I certainly didn't intend to eat her. (She probably would have tasted bad anyway.) All I wanted to do was scare her a bit. But the crazy kid started running around the house screaming. I started chasing her, thinking that if I could catch her I might be able to calm her down.

All of a sudden the door came crashing open and a big lumberjack was standing there with an ax. I knew I was in trouble so I jumped out the window and got out of there as fast as I could. And that's not the end of it. The grandmother never did tell my side of the story. Before long, word got around that I was mean and nasty. Now everyone avoids me. Maybe the little girl lived happily ever after, but I haven't.

At the end ask, "What makes "The Maligned Wolf" story different from the "Little Red Riding Hood" story?"

Form Concentric Circles: The inner ring faces out and the outer ring faces in, so that the two circles are facing one another. A person from the inner ring is paired with a person from the outer ring for one question. *After each question* you'll have the outer ring rotate one person to his or her left, so that everyone has a new partner. Both outer- and inner-ring students will answer each question. (Signal after a minute when to switch who is answering in the pair and after each question when to shift partners by rotating to the left.)

Ask for a few volunteers after each question to share:

- *What are your feelings toward Little Red Riding Hood in the original story?*
- *What are your feelings toward the wolf in the original story?*
- *Why do you think you felt that way about the wolf in the original story?*
- *In what ways are the two stories different?*
- *In the story told today, why did the wolf decide to teach the girl a lesson?*
- *What does the wolf do when he can't control his anger any longer?*
- *Do you believe the wolf?*
- *Have your feelings toward the wolf have changed since you first heard the original story? Why or why not?*
- *What would our feelings be toward the wolf if we only heard his side of the story?*
- *Share a time when you had a different point of view about something from your mother or father or another important adult in your life.*
- *What is something that you and a friend have different points of view about?*

Discuss the concept of point of view:

"According to Little Red Riding Hood, the bad wolf was trying to eat her. According to the wolf, he was merely trying to teach her a lesson."

Explain that in a conflict each of the people involved has his or her own point of view. Often we assume that one side (usually our side) has all the truth and goodness and that the other side is all wrong and bad. But it is not usually that simple. Before deciding who is right and who is wrong, it is important to understand both sides of a conflict.

Do a Role-Play: Walk in Another's Shoes (15 minutes)

Break students into pairs and have students each trace and cut out two pairs of shoes on chart paper. Label them Child (1) and Child (2)—or alternatively, if class is held

outdoors, students can draw the outlines of shoes in the dirt. The two pairs of shoes should face one another.

One child will step into the role of Child (1) and the other the role of Child (2). Give the children their respective role-play cards and have them silently read them. Have the children step into the outlined feet. Explain how these feet have magic powers to make the person standing in them understand one child's point of view about the conflict. Have each student take a turn being Child (1) and Child (2). Child (1) first explains her perspective while Child (2) listens. Child (2) then explains his perspective. The children then switch their positions.

When it looks like all the pairs have shared both Child (1)'s and Child (2)'s perspectives, Ask:

- *How do you think each child is feeling right now? Why do you think Child (2) is angry? Why is Child (1) angry? Do you think that Child (1) knew that Child (2) didn't like to be called "nerd"?*
- *What's something Child (1) would like to say to Child (2), now that you have a better understanding of how Child (1) was feeling? (Some possible options include: "I'm sorry," "I didn't realize how you felt," "I didn't mean to hurt you," "I won't call you nerd" anymore," etc.)*
- *What's something Child (2) would like to say to Child (1)? ("I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner it bothered me to be called that name," etc.) Brainstorm with the children some other ways that Child (2) could make amends to Child (1).*

Bring the group back together. *"Is it ever okay to tease someone?"* Students will usually say they know whether someone is just good-naturedly joking or not. But, as this activity points out, sometimes it's difficult to know if your joking or well-intended kidding around is received as funny or as a put-down. When something hurts another person, then it's not very funny. What could students do to make sure that their jokes aren't hurting someone?

(Optional) If you have time, have children in pairs discuss the following. Give each person in the pair two minutes to respond to each question.

- What are some conflicts you've had or seen that were caused by different points of view? What happened? What were the two different points of view?
- How could a better understanding of the other person's point of view have helped solve these conflicts?

Closing: Go Round (5 Minutes)

Go Round: Why is being able to "walk in another's shoes" important?

End by singing "Don't Laugh At Me" together.

Grade Level Modifications

K-1

As an alternate to having students retell the story themselves, read a short picture book of *Little Red Riding Hood* to the students. ([James Marshall's Red Riding Hood](#) or [Jerry Pinkney's Little Red Riding Hood](#))

Follow the instructions for grades 2-5 for the rest of the activity.

For the role-play, use puppets to perform the role-play as a whole class. Follow up with processing questions.

- *How do you think each child is feeling right now? Why do you think Child (2) is angry? Why is Child (1) angry? Do you think that Child (1) knew that Child (2) didn't like to be called "Nerd"?*
- *What is something you think Child (1) might like to say to Child (2), now that you have a better understanding of how Child (2) was feeling? (Some possible options include: "I'm sorry," "I didn't realize how you felt," "I didn't mean to hurt you," "I won't call you a nerd anymore," etc.)*
- *What is something Child (2) might like to say to Child (1)? ("I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner it bothered me to be called that name," etc.)*
- *Brainstorm with the children some other ways that Child (1) could make amends to Child (2).*

Grades 6-12

Instead of having the group tell the story of Little Red Riding Hood, have two student volunteers act out their version of the story. Now have them do it a second time through, only this time the rest of the class can pantomime the feelings they believe the character of Little Red Riding Hood is having. Ask for a few volunteers to share what feelings they were pantomiming.

For the Trouble with Teasing role play, have students write a script in pairs where a student is teased and does not like it (read them the script provided for grades 2-5 in the instructions as a model.) Student pairs will then use that script for role-play and processing.

In addition to the processing provided, discuss cultural differences with teasing. Explain: Some families and cultures use teasing to show affection. Ask: What role does teasing have in your home? In your culture? Why might it be important to understand someone else's experience of teasing (or perspective) on it? What agreements would we like to have in our classroom about teasing? Add anything new to your group agreements and ask for commitment or buy-in from the students.

Curricular Connections

K-5 Literacy: Most literature presents an opportunity to explore point of view and its relationship to conflict. Look for conflicts between two characters where students can role-play the two different points of view. Fairy tales present a wonderful opportunity. For example, [*The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs*](#), by John Sceiszka, humorously explores the story of the Three Little Pigs (Puffin, 1996) from the wolf's perspective. (This book is also available in Spanish, [*La Verdadera Historia de los Tres Cerditos*](#), Viking, 1991.)

K-5 Literacy: Have children do creative writing activities around point of view.

- Write as a Martian coming to your school for the first time.
- Write as a fish looking out of a fishbowl
- Write or dramatize a version of Jack and the Bean Stalk or another fairy tale from the perspective of the giant.

K-5 Literacy: Use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast differences in the two stories.

K-5 Literacy: Have students play a perspective-taking game. Pairs of students sit back-to-back or face-to-face with an object (a folder standing upright, for example) blocking the view of each other's work space. Use about ten blocks, have one person begin to build a design or structure. As that person builds, he or she gives instructions to the other person to do the exact same thing. For example: *"Put the red block over the blue block. Now put the green block next to the red block."* When first partner is done, have partners look at each other's creations. The creations will be very different. Ask: *Why did your designs come out so differently? Did one partner misunderstand the instructions? Was one partner unclear on their directions? How could partners have understood one another better?* Repeat the activity as often as there is student interest. This activity also helps improve communication skills.

K-12 Social Studies/History: Look at historical events from the points of view of all the players. Have students think about the point of view of Columbus arriving in the "new world" and the point of view of the Native Americans seeing him arrive in their world. The book [*Encounter*](#) by Jane Yolen illustrates this concept well.

Grades 6-12 Literacy Arts/Art: Have students create comic strips from different points of view to tell a more complete story. This can be an activity for each student or you can assign this as a cooperative story telling assignment with each student taking a different perspective.

Grades 6-12 Social Studies: Examine all the influences on a person's perspective through the lens of current events: age, race, gender, religion, social class, experience, etc. Discuss bias as it relates. See the [Anti-Defamation League's](#) website for some excellent curricular resources.

Handout 1 Walking in Another's Shoes

The Maligned Wolf

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“Trouble with Teasing” Conflict Skit Script

Child (1): *(in the cafeteria in front of a long table of friends):* We're over here *(waving)*, nerd. Come sit with us.

Child (2): *(Pretending not to hear . . .)*

Child (1): Nerd! *(laughing)* C'mon, we're over here.

Child (2): I'm sitting with someone else . . .

Child (1): C'mon, we saved you a seat. It's a nerd seat.

(friends laughing)

Child (2): I don't want to sit with you. You're a big jerk!

Child (1): Look who's being the jerk! I saved you a seat, but forget it. We don't want you to sit here . . .

Handout 3: Walking in Another's Shoes

Role-Play Card: Child (1)

The Conflict: Child (1) and Child (2) are good friends. Child (1) calls Child (2) a name in a friendly teasing kind of way, but Child (2) is insulted and the conflict starts to get worse.

Child (1)'s Point of View: You think it's awesome that Child (2)'s always gets great grades and you kiddingly tease her about it by calling her "Nerd."

You're not best friends, but you're good enough friends that you're sure she knows you're kidding. You've been calling her that name for a long time. And it always makes all your other friends laugh. You don't know why she's acting so touchy about it all of a sudden and you think she might just be putting on a big show to get the teacher's attention.

Role-Play Card: Child (2)

The Conflict: Child (1) and Child (2) are good friends. Child (1) calls Child (2) a name in a friendly, teasing kind of way, but Child (2) is insulted and the conflict starts to get worse.

Child (2)'s Point of View: You've always hated it when Child (1) called you Nerd, but you played along with it because you didn't want her to know it bothered you. But now you've noticed that other friends are starting to call you Nerd, too. And you can't help but feel like everyone is making fun of you. You can't believe how mean Child (1) is being and now you're angry and going to tell on her to the teacher.