

THE POWER OF BELONGING

SUBJECT Citizenship Education; Personal, Social and Emotional Learning

TOPIC Belonging, Friendship, and Loneliness

DURATION 50 minutes

AGE 15+

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, students are expected to:

-  Understand the concepts of belonging, friendship and loneliness.
-  Recognise the importance of healthy friendships for emotional well-being.
-  Reflect on the qualities of supportive and meaningful relationships.
-  Develop awareness of how inclusion and empathy contribute to a sense of belonging.
-  Identify positive actions that can strengthen friendships and reduce loneliness.

MATERIALS

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Internet connection
- PowerPoint presentation or [interactive video](#) on friendship and belonging ([below](#) are the questions used in the video)

METHODS

- Guided class discussion
- Interactive presentation or video
- Pair discussion
- Individual reflection

PREPARATION/OPENING

- Before the lesson, the teacher prepares a short PowerPoint or an interactive video introducing concepts of belonging, friendship and loneliness ([see our example](#) created with EdPuzzle).
- Begin by asking students: "What makes you feel that you truly belong to a group?"
- Invite students to share a few ideas.
- Explain that belonging is a basic human need. During adolescence, friendships play an important role in shaping identity, confidence and emotional well-being, but feeling lonely can happen even when surrounded by other people.

LESSON STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes):

- Introduce the key concepts.
- Explain that:
 - **Belonging** means feeling accepted, valued and included.
 - **Friendship** is based on trust, respect, support and shared experiences.
 - **Loneliness** is the feeling of being disconnected from others and can happen even when people are not physically alone.
 - Healthy friendships contribute to emotional well-being and personal growth, while meaningful connections help reduce feelings of loneliness.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Interactive video & Class discussion (40 minutes)

- Students watch the interactive video “How some friendships last — and others don't” individually or as a class ([see our example](#) created with EdPuzzle).
- The teacher pauses automatically through the embedded questions, encouraging students to reflect before continuing.
- Students discuss:
 - What qualities make a friendship last?
 - Why do friendships sometimes change during adolescence?
 - Why might someone feel lonely even when surrounded by other people, and how could we help them feel more included?
- Invite students to share one idea from their discussion.
- Emphasise that friendships naturally change over time, but kindness, trust and communication help create a stronger sense of belonging.
- Finally, summarise the key messages:
 - Everyone needs to feel accepted and connected.
 - Friendships require care, communication and mutual respect.
 - Small acts of inclusion can make a significant difference in someone's life.

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

- [Interactive video on “How some friendships last — and others don't” created with EdPuzzle](#)

REFERENCES

- Cherry Kendra - “[How to Increase Your Sense of Belonging](#)”, In Verywell Mind
- Robinson Lawrence et al - “[Making Good Friends](#)”, In HelpGuide.org
- Abrams Zara - “[The science of why friendships keep us healthy](#)”, In APA - American Psychological Association
- TED-Ed - [How some friendships last — and others don't](#) - Iseult Gillespie (YouTube Video)
- Mental Health Foundation - “[15 things to do if you're feeling lonely](#)”
- Young Minds - “[What to do if you're feeling left out](#)”
- Reid Sheldon - “[Loneliness and Social Isolation](#)”, In HelpGuide.org
- Joint Research Centre of the European Commission - “[Loneliness risk factors and consequences](#)”
- Mental Health Foundations - “[Kindness matters guide](#)”

CONCLUSION/ASSESSMENT

Assess students through: participation in class discussions; responses to the interactive video questions; ability to identify characteristics of healthy friendships; respectful participation during pair discussions.

HOMEWORK

During the following week, ask students to complete one small act of inclusion for someone at school, in community or online. It could be:

- inviting someone to join a group
- starting a conversation with someone who is often alone
- checking in on a friend
- including someone in a class activity.

At the next lesson, students will voluntarily share: what they did; how the other person reacted; how the experience made them feel.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO QUESTIONS (FOR THE TEACHER)

Below is the set of questions that have been included in the interactive video "How some friendships last — and others don't" created using EdPuzzle:

<https://edpuzzle.com/media/6a6c8c50560898c605d52caf>

The video explores why friendships matter, how they develop and change, and how trust, closeness and communication can help build and maintain healthy relationships.

Question 1 (Multiple Choice)

According to the video, why are friendships important?

- They make us more popular.
- They help us avoid all problems.
- They are only important during childhood.
- They can improve our well-being, help us overcome challenges and support our personal growth. ✓

Question 2 (Open-ended)

The video explains the "liking gap". Why do you think many people underestimate how much others like them?

Question 3 (Multiple Choice)

What is the "acceptance prophecy"?

- Expecting people to dislike you.
- Assuming others will like you, which often makes you appear warmer and friendlier. ✓
- Pretending to be someone else to make friends.
- Waiting for other people to start conversations.

Question 4 (Open-ended)

According to the video, what is the difference between companionship and closeness? Give one example of each.

(Possible answer: companionship is based on shared interests or activities; closeness involves trust, emotional support and sharing personal thoughts or feelings).

Question 5 (Multiple Choice)

According to the video, what is the best way to deal with problems in a friendship?

- Ignore the problem until it disappears.
- End the friendship immediately.
- Talk openly about the situation without judging or accusing the other person. ✓
- Ask other friends to solve the conflict.

Question 6 (Open-ended)

Why is it important to avoid making accusations during a difficult conversation with a friend?

Question 7 (Reflection)

What is one habit you could develop to build stronger and healthier friendships? Explain your answer.