

The #SadBookChallenge – Reflective Activities for Students

Inspired by Michael Rosen's 'Sad Book', this worksheet helps students explore emotions, empathy, and creative expression. Suitable for KS2–KS3 (ages 7–14).

Disclaimer: The #SadBookChallenge is a reflective educational activity inspired by Michael Rosen's Sad Book and is designed to support emotional literacy and wellbeing in children. This resource is for educational use only and is not intended to replace professional mental health support or counselling. Some children may find topics related to sadness or grief emotionally triggering — please use discretion and ensure a safe, supportive environment. For any concerns, consult with a school counsellor, SENCO or safeguarding lead.

LearningTutor.co.uk[®] is not affiliated with Michael Rosen or his publishers. This challenge is an independent, teacher-created initiative to encourage meaningful classroom discussion.

Instructions for Teachers:

- Read the book 'Sad Book' aloud or together as a class.
- Give students time to reflect and then respond to the prompts below.
- Use discussion to reinforce emotional vocabulary and empathy.

Activity 1: Drawing Feelings

Draw a picture that shows what sadness looks like to you. It could be a face, a moment, or something abstract. Use colours that match how the feeling makes you feel.

Activity 2: My Sad Story

Write a short story or poem about a time you felt sad. You can share how you dealt with it, or who helped you feel better.

Activity 3: Dear Michael Rosen

Write a letter to the author Michael Rosen. Tell him how his book made you feel, and why you think it's important to talk about sad feelings.

Activity 4: My Sad and Happy List

Make two lists. In the first, write or draw things that make you feel sad. In the second, write or draw things that help you feel better.

- Things that make you feel sad
- Things that help you feel better

You can use words or drawings to express your thoughts.

Activity 5: Helping a Friend

Imagine your friend is feeling sad. What would you say or do to help them feel supported? Write a script or draw a comic strip showing your ideas.

Whole-Class Activity: Helping a Friend Display

(Extension of Activity 5)

Each student contributes to a class display, wall board, or assembly presentation. Ask students to write a short sentence or list of ways to support a friend who may be feeling sad.

Emotional Vocabulary for the #SadBookChallenge

Use this word bank to support discussion, writing, or drawing. Encourage students to pick words that match their feelings.

Feelings Words (Sadness & Related Emotions)

- Sad
- Worried
- Upset
- Nervous
- Scared
- Lonely
- Frustrated
- Disappointed
- Angry
- Hurt
- Embarrassed
- Overwhelmed
- Confused
- Regretful
- Tired
- Anxious
- Miserable
- Unloved

Support & Recovery Words (Positive Emotions)

- Safe
- Calm
- Hopeful
- Relieved
- Encouraged
- Comforted
- Loved
- Supported
- Strong
- Braver
- Confident
- Listened to
- Understood
- Healed

Helpful Sentence Starters

- “I feel sad when...”
- “Sometimes I cry because...”
- “When I feel down, it helps to...”
- “A time I felt supported was...”
- “If I saw someone feeling upset, I would...”

Inclusive SEND Adaptations

For learners with SEN, SEMH or communication needs, use these strategies:

Visual & Sensory Tools

- Use emotion cards or emojis to identify feelings
- Allow drawing instead of writing
- Offer textured materials or colour codes to match emotions (e.g. blue = calm, red = angry)

Communication Support

- Use Widgit symbols or Makaton signs for emotional terms
- Allow verbal dictation to an adult or peer
- Provide sentence starters with visuals
- Offer AAC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication) options if needed

Emotional Safety

- Set up a calm corner or “reflection station”
- Give breaks between activities
- Allow children to opt out of sharing personal details and express through story characters instead

Activity Differentiation Examples

- Instead of writing a full story: draw a cartoon or pick from picture choices
- Letter to Michael Rosen: fill in sentence gaps (e.g. “Your book made me feel ____ because ____.”)
- “Helping a friend” activity: role-play with puppets or dolls

We’d love to see your work!

Please share your students’ #SadBookChallenge responses with us (please kindly do not include photos of students): ✉ Email: hello@learningtutor.co.uk

📱 Tag us online:

- Instagram / Facebook: [@LearningTutorUK](https://www.instagram.com/LearningTutorUK)
- X (formerly Twitter): [@LearningTutor](https://twitter.com/LearningTutor) You can also tag @MichaelRosenYes to show your appreciation for his incredible book.

Use the hashtag **#SadBookChallenge** to join the conversation and inspire others!