

WORLD
BOOK
DAY

AGES
9-11

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MASTERCLASSES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

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EmpathyLab

GREG JAMES & CHRIS SMITH

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL HEROES



BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

GET IN THE ZONE!

In their film, Greg and Chris talk about the importance of friendships in our daily lives. 'Friendships', they say, are at the very heart of the *Kid Normal* series. Friends help us to be heroes!

To get children thinking about friendship and the importance of friends during the school day, create a Friendship Venn Diagram as a whole class.

First, push all of the tables and chairs to the sides of the classroom to create a large space in the centre. Put three hoops or circles on the floor in the centre of the room. Place a piece of paper or card with the following headings at the top of each of

the three hoops: "At Breaktime"; "At Lunch"; and "In Class". Explain to children that they are looking at friendship throughout the school day.

Next, ask pupils to write down an idea to put into each different hoop. What does a good friend do at Breaktime, at Lunch, or in Class? Discuss the different ideas together and how they all intersect.

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

Taken from pages 21-26 of Kid Normal (you can download the extract at worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses/weird-and-wonderful-heroes).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences between Murph's old school and his new one?
2. Why do things begin to 'cross the line into weird' on page 21?
3. How does Murph feel about his new school? How can you tell?
4. How do Greg James and Chris Smith use comedy on pages 21-23?
5. What is the effect of the large text written in a different font on page 23? Why do you think the authors have chosen to include this text?
6. How does the illustration on page 24 help you to understand Murph and Mary's relationship?
7. How does Mary help Murph to feel at ease in the extract? List two ways.
8. Who or what is the 'lemon-coloured thing' or 'giant canary' that Murph saw at the beginning of the extract?

FUN ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: FRIENDS ARE HEROES

Greg James and Chris Smith discuss how relationships and empathy are very important in their books. Chris Smith explains that the friendship between Murph and Mary is the central relationship of the whole series.

- Consider your most important friendships. How do they help you on a daily basis? Do different friends provide you with different things? How?
- Draw a large outline of a human figure on A3 paper. Around the outside of the outline, write down the different things that you look for in a friend. For example, do you want your friends to be good listeners? Do you want them to make you laugh? Or do you want them to make you feel confident?
- Inside the human figure, write down lots of words describing how a good friend makes you feel deep down inside. Share your Friendship Figures with each other – how similar are your ideas?

ACTIVITY 2: A LETTER TO A FRIEND

When Chris goes into more detail about Murph and Mary's friendship, he describes the small things that they do for each other. For example, Mary takes Murph 'under her wing' when he feels at his loneliest.

- Think of one of your most important and special friends. Take some time to consider the small things that your friend does for you every day.
- When you have made a note of your ideas, draft a letter to your friend. In it, list all of the things that you are grateful for as well as all the ways that you hope to be a good friend in return.
- Send your letters via Friendship Post and share your positive thoughts with one another.

ACTIVITY 3: MY DIFFERENCE MAKES ME UNIQUE

Greg James says that the Kid Normal series is all about inclusivity and tolerance of people who are different – and the importance of celebrating everyone's unique "superpowers".

- Create a Superhero Passport by thinking more deeply about who you are. Include illustrations of you, your hobbies, special skills and interesting facts! What is your special superpower?
- You should also include how you would describe yourself on the inside and the outside. For example, on the inside, you could use words or phrases to express your personality or important values you believe in. For the outside, you could describe unique things about your appearance or unique style.
- Put these Superhero Passports on display in the classroom so that you can celebrate each other's differences. Remember: everyone is cool, everyone has a superpower!

SHARE A STORY

Who are your favourite weird and wonderful heroes? Why? Choose a passage from a story that you're reading or that you've recently read and share it with your friends, classmates and family members. How does your chosen passage present a weird and wonderful hero? What makes a hero weird, anyway? Make a note of all the heroes you want to learn more about – add those books to your reading lists!

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION...

AN INSPIRING SHARE A STORY CHALLENGE FOR YOU from Greg James & Chris Smith...

Create a totally unique SUPERPOWER! Come up with a name, an action, how the superpower is useful (or not!) and who knows about it. Share your new superpowers with your friends, classmates and family. Try not to simply use the superpowers that we've already heard of (flying, invisibility, strength), but let your imaginations run wild! For example, Greg suggests a superpower of muffins coming out of your knees...

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more brilliant Masterclass films and resources featuring amazing authors and illustrators over at worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses. Don't miss out, download them today!