What is empathy?

✚ Empathy is the ability to connect to other people's feelings and viewpoint in a meaningful way.

✚ Our brain is so clever, it can learn to identify and create actions that helps us to develop empathy, it does this in three ways:

The Three Elements of Empathy

1. Cognition- we think and use our imagination to work out how someone is feeling.
2. Affect – we are able to share the same feeling or belief with the other person.
3. Empathy – We understand how they feel and can now help or sympathise with them.

Empathy is clearly a human SUPER POWER. Our brains help us to understand what people are feeling, THEN they can work out how someone else sees the world, AND FINALLY we can decide how we react and what we DO next.

FACT: Reading builds a level of real-life empathy. Scientists have identified that our brains react to fictional worlds as if they were real. The empathic emotions we feel for book characters helps us develop the same sort of sensitivity towards real people. Reading gives us a safe way to experience and practise social skills.

Task 1: Look at this image that represents empathy:

Now: Create your own image for empathy?

Task 2: Think about a story you know really well, one where you think empathy has been shown.

- In your workbook create a template like the one below.
- Complete the thought bubble to show the Three elements of Empathy from your story. My example is from a version of Cinderella.

Cognition – The animals in the story can imagine how bad Cinderella must feel. Maybe they can remember a time when they weren't allowed to go somewhere.

Affect – Those horrible stepsisters are being so cruel. How can they get away with it? She will never be able to get to the Ball, she will be stuck in here forever!

Empathy – We must do something to help, let's get the fairy godmother to help her, so she can go to the ball!