

# World Autism Acceptance Month



## Pick and Mix Activities Guide



Autistic  
Young  
Experts



Autism  
Education  
Trust



National  
Autistic  
Society

# Activities Menu

The activities menu describes a number of activities that you can choose from to support learning around the key themes as launched in the assemblies.

## Level of Challenge

The activities are arranged from those that are more accessible (blue) through to those that are more challenging (red):



The activities menu is organised in this way rather than according to age / phase, so that you can choose your activities according to which you feel are most appropriate for your class or group of learners. This is just a guide, and your choice of activities may depend on a number of factors:

- Learner literacy
- Learner cognition
- Learner interests / strengths
- Preferred ways of learning
- The time you have available
- The space you have available

## Activity Types

Icons will be given to indicate the types of skills involved in each activity, at a glance. This will enable you to plan an engaging and varied programme of activity across the month, play to the strengths and interests of your group and identify and develop core skills :

Creativity



Communication



Literacy



Collaboration



Wellbeing



Thinking



## Resources

Any resources required to complete an activity are listed. Any specific resources can be found at the back of this guide, in the resources section.

## Completion Time

Within the activity descriptions, you will be given an estimated time for completion and an explanation of what concepts each activity is intended to develop. You will also be given instructions about what you will need to complete the activity and a clear learning sequence.

## Adaptive Teaching

**It is important to remember that any of the activities can be adapted, structured and / or supported to make them accessible for all of the children and young people you are working with.**

These activities can be used as stand alones or combined to make a longer session. They can be used to supplement the lesson plans provided as part of this year's resource pack or they can be instead of... Whatever works best for you, your setting and your learners.

## Celebrate and Share

These activities are designed to be varied and lend themselves to creating displays and opportunities to capture learning and build further awareness. There will be plenty of photo opportunities...

- Why not grow the acceptance further by sharing your World Autism Acceptance Month celebrations in your communications with parents?
- And do join with us by posting and tagging us on social media (making sure you have secured the appropriate permissions):

**LinkedIn:** @Autism Education Trust (AET)

**Facebook:** @The Autism Education Trust - AET

**X:** @AutismEducatio1

**X:** @autism

**Threads:** @nationalautisticsociety

**Instagram:** @nationalautisticsociety

**LinkedIn:** @NationalAutisticSociety

**Facebook:** @NationalAutisticSociety

# Activities Menu

## One Page Profile (OPP)



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand own strengths and differences
2. Understand others' strengths and differences
3. Appreciate the importance of individuality
4. Promotes inclusion as everyone participates, has and benefits from having a OPP

### What?

- Resources Needed: One Page Profile Template, visualiser and whiteboard (optional)
- Expected Time: 20 minutes

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Teacher introduces One Page Profile Template.
3. Teacher demonstrates completing the template for themselves, using a visualiser and modelling for pupils, if possible.
4. Teacher shows pupils the template can be completed with words and / or images.
5. Pupils complete the template for themselves.
6. Pupils can be given images to choose from and stick down to make the task more accessible.



## Our Inclusion Promises



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Develop understanding of what it means to be inclusive.
2. Understand that everyone is responsible for inclusion.

### What?

- Expected Time: 20 minutes
- Resources Needed: Example Inclusion Promises, Inclusion Promises Template, visualiser (optional)

### How?

1. Discuss the meaning of 'inclusion.'
2. Create a mind map of what being inclusive would look and sound like in school.
3. Class discussion around which examples are most important.
4. Class shared writing of Inclusion Promises onto Template, using the example as a guide.
5. Display Promises and refer to regularly.

## All Different, All Important



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learners understand that everyone is different and that different does not mean less than.
2. Develop understanding that whilst they are all different, they are all part of one class, one school and one community. (Link back to the launch assembly).

### What?

Expected Time: 20 minutes

Resources Needed: Communications to parents re. learners wearing different colours on a chosen day and the purpose of the activity.

### How?

1. Invite learners to attend school wearing a top of their choice in a favourite colour.
2. Group learners into colours and create a rainbow with learners stood or laying down.
3. Take a photo (check permissions).
4. Display photo with the words: 'One Class' or 'One School' at the top and, at the bottom, the words 'All different, All Unique, All important.'
5. Permissions permitting, share photo with parents with messaging around World Autism Acceptance Month and the purpose of the activity and share and tag us on social media.

# Diversity Quilt



## Why?

### Learning Objectives:

1. Learners understand what is meant by diversity.
2. Learners understand that diversity is positive.

## What?

- Expected Time: 20 minutes
- Resources Needed: Fabric squares or paper squares

## How?

1. Discuss the meaning of diversity with learners - discuss how we all have our likes and dislikes, our strengths and our challenges.
2. Each learner designs a square that represents their identity—this could include their hobbies, family, culture, likes, dislikes, personal strengths and / or challenges.
3. Stitch or glue the squares together on backing paper to create the 'Diversity Quilt.'
4. Display in the classroom and - permissions permitting - share with parents / on social media, tagging us in.

# Picture This



## Why?

### Learning Objectives:

1. Learners understand the meaning of acceptance and what acceptance looks and sounds like in school.

## What?

- Expected Time: 20 minutes to introduce the activity.
- Resources Needed: Paper, coloured pens / pencils / paints / selections of images and glue.

## How?

1. Discuss / explain the meaning of the word 'acceptance.' (Link back to the launch assembly).
2. Ask learners what acceptance would mean for them (ask what it would look and sound like).
3. Ask learners how they could demonstrate acceptance to others in school - what could they do to show acceptance, what sort of things could they say to show acceptance, what kind of language and words could they use to show their acceptance?
4. Explain that each learner will produce a piece of art over the course of World Autism Acceptance Month. The theme of the artwork is 'Acceptance.' Learners can draw, paint or stick images.
5. Take photos and display these in school and - permissions permitting - via social media, tagging us.

## Word of the Day / Week



### Why?

Learning Objectives:

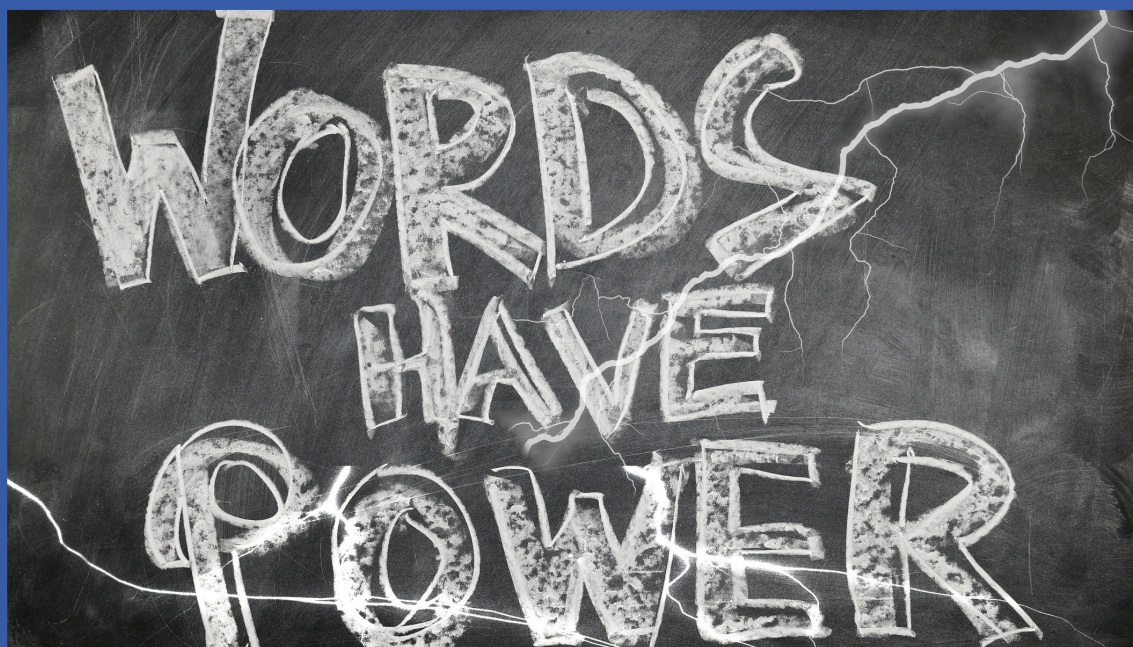
1. Learners understand how language can impact positively or negatively.
2. Learners develop understanding of positive language choices that promote inclusion.

### What?

- Expected Time: 15 minutes (each word)
- Resources Needed: Word list; vocabulary strategies; AET Terminology Guide

### How?

1. Read the word aloud and ask if learners are familiar with it or whether they can guess what it might mean.
2. Introduce the word further using images, sentences containing the word and / or definitions.
3. You could look at connections with Greek / Latin root words if this is applicable and ask learners to think about other words which contain the same root.
4. Use graphic organisers (such as Frayer models) which prompt learners to define in their own words; get them to draw the word; get them to write sentences using the word; get them to list synonyms and antonyms.
5. The words should be added to a 'Word Wall' and learners should be repeatedly encouraged to keep looking at and using the words in their talk and in their writing.
6. Play vocabulary games to increase exposure to vocabulary and reinforce meaning and correct usage in context. Games such as: word bingo; alphabet soup; word association; charades; pictionary; word searches; word pairs.



## All About Me Collage



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives:

1. To support pupils in understanding that they and others are unique individuals.
2. To encourage pupils to view themselves and others positively, recognising strengths and celebrating differences.

#### What?

- Expected Time: 30 minutes
- Resources Needed: Person Templates, wall space to create a display of Templates.

#### How?

1. Hand out a copy of the Person Template to each pupil and ask them to fill out their names on it.
2. Pupils write their strengths in the heart on the Template.
3. Pupils swap their Template with someone else, who adds more strengths about their partner within the person but this time around the heart. If in a group, Templates could be passed around and added to till they arrive back at the person they belong to.
4. Teacher encourages pupils to reflect on recognising strengths and celebrating differences in ourselves and others.

## World Autism Acceptance Month Wordsearch



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives:

1. To teach / reinforce vocabulary linked to the themes of World Autism Acceptance Month. (Consider using Wordsearch to reinforce vocabulary after completing blue word level activities).



#### What?

- Expected Time: 15 minutes
- Resources Needed: Copies of wordsearch

#### How?

- Use this activity during some downtime in lessons, throughout registration and form time or as a way to revisit World Autism Acceptance Month as a topic.
- Pupils can complete the activity by themselves or it can be completed as a classroom wide activity to go alongside other Autism Education Trust World Autism Acceptance Month activities and lessons.



# My Ideal Classroom



## Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. To learn about how the environment can impact on an individual's wellbeing, particularly when they experience sensory differences.
2. To consider how the classroom could be adapted to make it a more enabling environment for all learners.

## What?

- Expected Time: 30-45 minutes
- Resources: Depending on how you want to run the activity, the following resources may be useful: Paper, pencils, colours, magazines to cut up, photocopied floorplan of the classroom, paints, crayons, computer software

## How?

1. The activity can be completed as a whole class, as a group or by individuals.
2. It is important to discuss and consider the strengths and differences of the group as a whole, how the environment could be adapted to support them and the impact this could have on learning and wellbeing.
3. Pupils should then paint and/or draw, the ideal school or classroom space for the group, based on the previous discussion.
4. Create a gallery walk displaying designs and have the group walk around, observing.
5. Learners could be given 3 star post its each to put next to designs they think are most inclusive / accessible. Learners could comment as to why they have chosen to place their star on a particular design.
6. Lead a discussion of designs, making references to features included that make the environments inclusive. Refer to the 'star comments' if you have completed this part of the activity.
7. Reiterate the impact of inclusive design in terms of how it lowers barriers and supports the learning and wellbeing of everyone in the school community.
8. Take photos of designs and display and / or share them - permissions permitting - on social media, tagging us.

# Visual Timetables



## Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. To understand how individuals process communication in different ways
2. For pupils to gain an understanding of how visual communication can be inclusive for all
3. For pupils to adapt classroom timetables and create a whole class visual timetable for everyone to follow

## What?

- Expected Time: 30 - 45 minutes
- Resources Needed: Timetable Grids (enlarged onto A3) with space to add symbols, symbols (if using), scissors and glue, drawing pencils, coloured pencils

## How?

1. Give out the Timetable Grids, symbols, scissors and glue.
2. Explain they will be making a Visual Timetable and what this is using the example. A Visual Timetable is a Timetable that has symbols on it as well as words so it is easier to understand . You may wish to give some examples of how symbols are often used to help us understand information more quickly: the symbols on toilet doors, road signs, brand logos.
3. Demonstrate choosing a symbol to match text on the Timetable Grid or, as a class, design a symbol to match text on the Timetable Grid.
4. Ask learners to complete the activity, by either choosing symbols or designing them, or doing a combination of the two.
5. Encourage learners to use their Visual Timetables in practice and have a version of the Visual Timetable displayed on the classroom wall.
6. This activity can be done at the beginning of each day for a week, or at the beginning of a week. Consider completing this activity at the beginning of World Autism Acceptance Month and encourage learners to use it throughout the month and beyond.



# Jar of Stereotypes



## Why?

- Learning Objectives:
  1. Understand stereotypes people may have about autism.
  2. To think about and challenge our own stereotypes about autism.
  3. Understand that every autistic person is unique.

## What?

- Resources Needed: Cut-up strips of paper or card.; A jar or container.
- Expected Time: 15 minutes + 20 minutes

## How?

### First stage:

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Before the group participate in WAAM, ask them what they think they know about autism – depending on time and the group, they could discuss this in pairs.
3. Each pupil writes something they know about autism onto their strip of paper or card.
4. Each strip of paper is put into the jar or container – the examples written on them are not discussed at this point.

### Second stage:

1. After the group have participated in some of the other WAAM activities, attended the launch assembly or participated in learning/discussion about autism, revisit the activity.
2. The teacher can read comments from the jar or container with the group to begin to challenge some stereotypes, or confirm prior knowledge that was accurate.
3. The teacher and group discuss whether any of the thoughts and ideas included within the jar or container have changed, and why.
4. The teacher may decide to summarise the activity with five things the group now know about autism.



## In Their Shoes



### Why?

#### Learning Objectives

1. Explore different perspectives.
2. Understand the challenges faced by autistic individuals.
3. Consider how to support autistic people.

### What?

- Resources Needed [Can you Make it to the End video](#)
- A3 Paper
- Coloured pencils or pens.
- Expected Time: 20 minutes

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Watch the video as a group and discuss how pupils felt as the video progressed to the end. (It is important to be aware of autistic pupils within the group as this video is overwhelming.)
3. Pupils work in pairs, groups or individually.
4. Pupils create empathy maps that illustrate what someone who is autistic might see, hear, feel, and think in various situations.
5. Teacher discusses with the group how this understanding can impact how they interact with others.

### Considerations for the In Their Shoes Activity:

- The aim of this activity to feel what it is like to be autistic rather than only learn. For example, videos that trigger overs stimulation.
- For this activity, teachers need to consider those who are autistic in the classroom and how this activity could negatively impact them.
- An option could be to have two activities taking place at the same time so those that are uncomfortable can leave the room.



## Find Someone Who ...



### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand and value individuals' strengths and differences.
2. Understand that every autistic person is unique.

### What?

- Resources Needed: Treasure Hunt Sheet with different likes, dislikes, strengths, differences.
- Expected Time: 15-20 minutes

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Pupils walk around to talk to others and find someone who fits each description on the Treasure Hunt Sheet
3. They cannot use the same person more than once!
4. Teacher can lead a debrief after the activity, highlighting how everyone has different likes, dislikes, strengths and differences.
5. This can then be linked to strengths and differences experienced by autistic people and how each autistic person is unique.



## And Relax ...



### Why?

- Learning Objectives:

1. Promote emotional awareness and regulation.

### What?

- Resources Needed: None.
- Expected time: 15-20 minutes

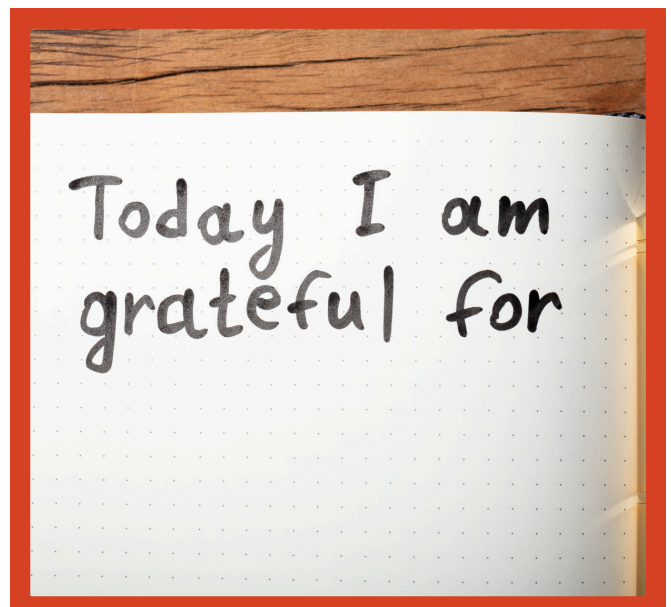
### How?

1. Teach pupils mindfulness exercises that can help them understand the importance of creating calm environments for autistic peers.
2. Some suggestions are included below – teachers should choose activities which suit the pupils in their group.
3. Discuss how these techniques benefit everyone.

### Suggested Activities Include:

- The Five Senses Grounding Exercise
- Hand Tracing Exercise
- Daily Gratitude Exercise

*Instructions for completing the above activities can be found in the resources section.*



## Myth Busters



### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**
  1. Recognise and understand truths and myths about autism.
  2. Understand that every autistic person is unique.

### What?

- Resources Needed: Statement list resource
- Expected Time: 15 minutes

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Teacher reads each statement and the group decide if each is a truth or a myth.
3. Teacher debriefs with information about each statement.

## This Way, That Way



### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**
  1. Understand how there can be different ways of doing the same thing.
  2. Understand and appreciate difference.

### What?

- Expected Time: 15 minutes.
- Resources Needed: A simple drawing or sentence to copy.

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Teacher shows pupils a sentence or simple drawing.
3. Pupils try to recreate the sentence or drawing but are not allowed to use their hands.
4. Teacher discusses with the group how easy or difficult they found the task, what the challenges were and how they went about finding different ways to do things.

## Lets Play



### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. Develop empathy and understand different perspectives.
2. Improve communication and active listening skills.
3. Reflect on emotional responses and personal growth.

### What?

- Expected Time: 40-50 minutes
- Resources Needed: Scenario Cards, Pen and Paper for Reflection, Space for Role-Playing

### How?

1. Teacher explains the activity and learning objectives.
2. Teacher introduces scenario cards and explains optional role-playing or observing.
3. Students are divided into groups, each with a scenario to role-play or observe.
4. After the role-play, students discuss the scenario and then write a reflection on key learning and emotions from the role playing or observing.
5. Teacher leads a discussion on insights gained from the activity.





## Say What?



### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the difference between literal and idiomatic language.
2. Improve comprehension skills by distinguishing between phrases with direct and figurative meanings.
3. Enhance critical thinking by interpreting language in context.

### What?

- Expected Time: 30-40 minutes
- Resources Needed: List of Idiomatic Phrases, Whiteboard/Markers, Pen and Paper

### How?

1. Teacher introduces the concept of literal vs. idiomatic language and explains how phrases can have different interpretations.
2. Teacher presents a list of idiomatic phrases (e.g., "I'll be there in a minute") and discusses their literal and figurative meanings.
3. Students work in pairs or small groups to interpret additional idiomatic phrases and identify their literal and idiomatic meanings.
4. Students share their interpretations with the class and discuss how context changes the meaning of each phrase.
5. As a challenge, have students create their own idiomatic phrases and share them for others to interpret.
6. Conclude with a reflection on how understanding both literal and idiomatic meanings can improve communication and comprehension across subjects.



## Making Communication Clear

### Why?

- **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand different ways of communicating beyond spoken language.
2. Develop the ability to express ideas using symbols and visual aids.
3. Enhance awareness of communication needs and alternatives.

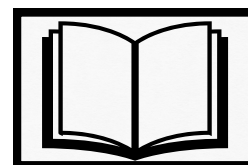
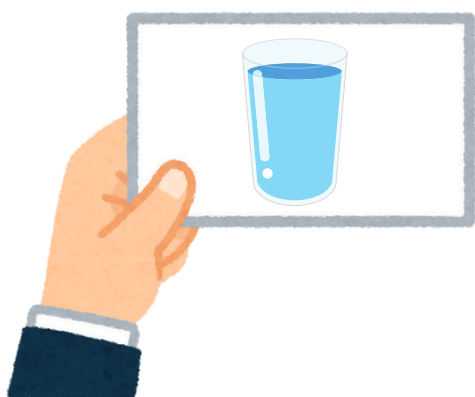
### What?

Resources Needed: Communication Symbols, Blank Cards for Creating Symbols, Pens

Time Expected: 30-40 minutes

### How?

1. Teacher introduces the concept of communication symbols and explains their use.
2. Teacher can choose a list of words for pupils to create communication symbols for or allow pupils to choose their own linked to 'A Day at School.'
3. Students create their own set of communication cards using agreed-upon symbols.
4. Students practise using the cards in place of verbal communication during class.
5. Challenge pupils to identify phrases or expressions related to learning and school that they haven't considered before.
6. After the activity, have a brief reflection on the experience and discuss any new insights on communication.
7. For a challenge, you can task the class to communicate only using the cards for the next lesson or break time (no speaking).



# Resources



I like:

I don't like:

I am good at:

Name:

Things I find  
hard are:

You can help  
me by:

My hopes  
and dreams are:

Things I would like you to know are:

# The Eight Inclusion Promises

## As Professionals, we promise to:

- 1** Understand what you are good at, what you like doing, and when you might need help.
- 2** Listen to and act upon your ideas about how we can help you if you need it.
- 3** Listen to and work with the people who know you best and who you trust.
- 4** Make sure we are always progressing towards your goals and aspirations.
- 5** Make sure all staff know the best way to support you, both in and out of lessons.
- 6** Help you to get involved and be included in the activities you wish to participate in.
- 7** Work together to set achievable goals that are important to you, and that help you see how well you are doing.
- 8** Help you to feel safe, secure, empowered, and able to learn.



**Autism  
Education  
Trust**

# Our Inclusion Promises

We promise to:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8





# Word of the Day / Week

**Possible focus words include:**

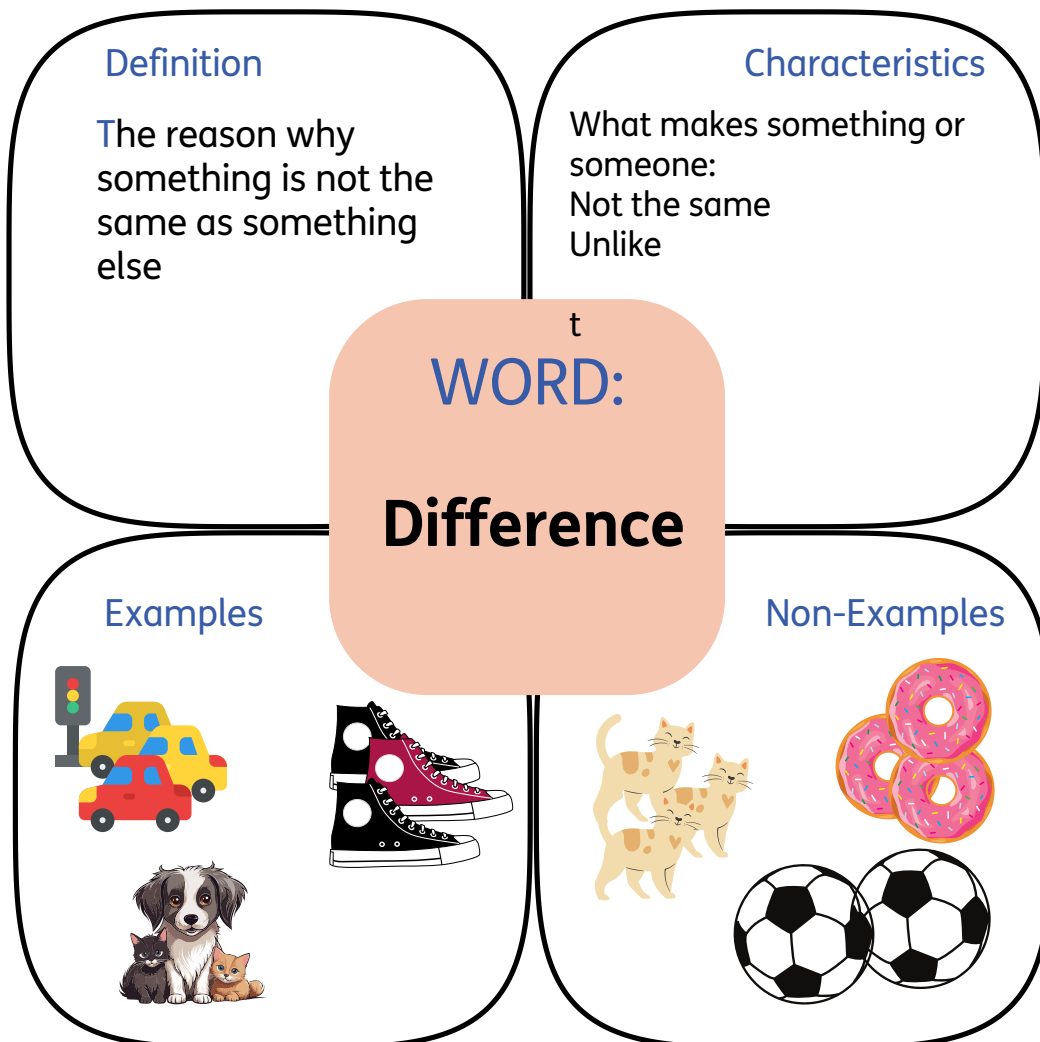
- Acceptance
- Similarities
- Differences
- Strengths
- Support
- Kindness
- Understanding
- Friendship
- Celebrate
- Encourage
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Thoughtful
- Connect
- Comfort
- Patience
- Generosity
- Unique
- Inclusion
- Equity

# Activities to Develop Vocabulary

## 1. Frayer Grids

Explicitly teach the definition, identify the characteristics of the word, list examples and non-examples:

For Example:





# Activities to Develop Vocabulary

2. Can you spell it? Can you put it in a sentence?



3. Word wall - Key words and definitions with visuals displayed in the classroom.

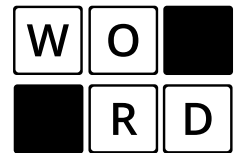
4. Box of Words: Flashcards with key words on. Learners invited to take out a word and: define it, give an example, a non example or a characteristic (useful for revision after completing Frayer Grids).



5. Read a story that contains key words and exemplifies the meaning of key words.



6. Ask learners to create their own stories containing keywords and / or demonstrating the meaning of the word e.g. stories on the theme of acceptance, being an individual, diversity etc.



7. Wordsearches and crosswords where the clue is the definition.

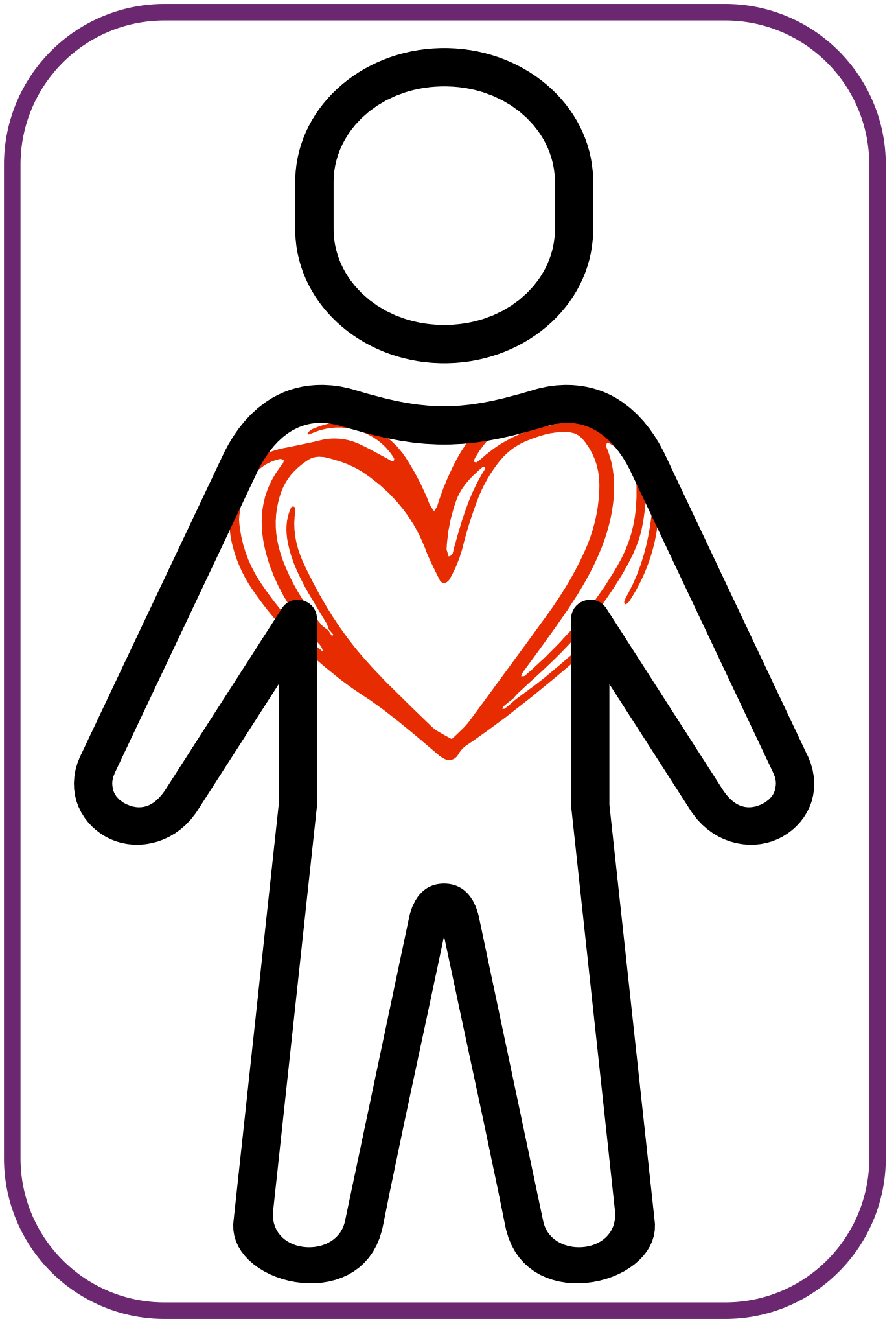
8. Pictionary where learners are given a key word secretly and they have to draw it for their team to guess correctly to score a point against an opposing team.



9. Word charades where learners are given a word in secret and they have to act it out for their team to guess correctly to score a point against an opposing team.

10. Key word BINGO! Learners are given 3 x 3 grids or draw their own. Each square on the grid contains a key word, the caller pulls out definitions at random, when they hear the correct definition for a word on their 'card' they can cross it off.





## World Autism Acceptance Month Wordsearch

K A S R O C J Q P J D Y Q O Q  
S E S T D H E K M T X V W Z W  
U H R C R I U L S J S H Y U D  
S N F L F E F B E N W J M N L  
U X D C N R N F M B Y Z W I K  
P C D E S M I G E N R P Y Q I  
P A N R R C K E T R Q A A U N  
O R K Q P S H Q N H E A T E D  
R I P X Z Y T T C D S N F E P  
T N H T K G A A Y H Z A C B Z  
O G R W F C R V N D Z U Q E O  
E J W Z B B R K G D O I W J S  
A C C E P T A N C E I Z K S I  
S M E G Q I L B J Z B N F J J  
L S S T G D W O D M C C G X T

Understanding

Strengths

Support

Differences

Celebrate

Friend

Acceptance

Caring

Unique


























Kind







# Visual Timetable: Example










## Examples of Visual Timetables

### Weekly Timetable

| Day/Time  | Morning   | Afternoon   | After School  |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| Monday    |  English<br> Maths        |  Religious Education<br> Information Technology |  Football          |
| Tuesday   |  English<br> Maths        |  Science<br> Music                              |  Homework Club     |
| Wednesday |  English<br> Maths        |  History<br> French                             |  Construction Club |
| Thursday  |  English<br> Maths        |  Geography<br> Physical Education               |  Swimming          |
| Friday    |  Assembly<br> English |  Maths<br> Art                              |  Guitar practice |

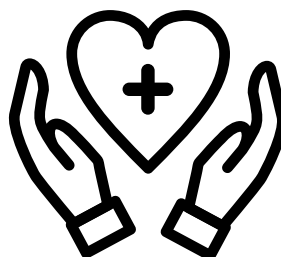
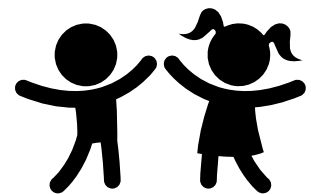
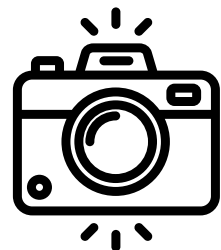
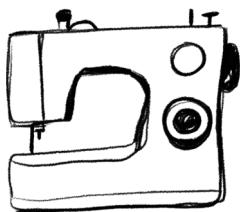
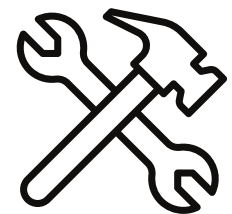
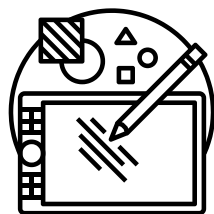
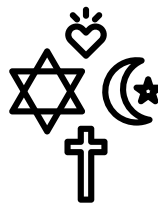
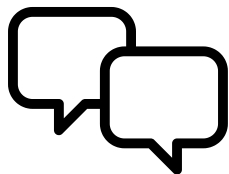
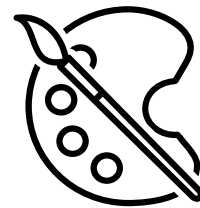
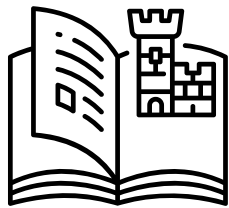
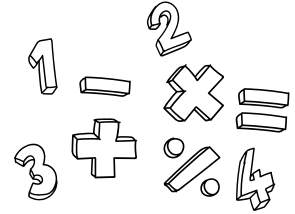
### Daily timetables

|   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Maths   | Playtime  | Literacy  | Lunchtime   | History  | PE  | Home time   |

|   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9am   | 10am  | 11am  | 12pm  | 1pm  | 2pm   | 3pm   |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Maths   | Playtime  | Literacy  | Lunchtime   | History  | PE  | Home time   |

|           |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Monday    |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tuesday   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wednesday |  |  |  |  |  |
| Thursday  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Friday    |  |  |  |  |  |

## Visual Timetable: Symbols (Optional)





## Find Someone Who...



1. Likes gaming:

2. Doesn't like baked beans:

3. Plays for a sports team outside of school:

4. Has lived in a different town or city:

6. Can play a musical instrument:

7. Is left handed:

8. Likes Music or Art:

8. Likes Maths:

9. Has a cat:

10. Doesn't like fizzy drinks:

11. Has more than one brother or sister:

12. Loves listening to or reading stories/books:

**And write their name in the box!**

**Who will fill in all the boxes first?**

# Myth Busters

## Statement List:

All autistic people have the same support needs, challenges and strengths.

- **FALSE** – every autistic person's needs are different. Some may have greater sensory sensitivities than others, some may communicate in different ways. Just like the non-autistic population, their strengths and skills will be different from each other.

All autistic people like the same things.

- **FALSE** – All autistic people are different and just like the rest of the population, they all like different things. There are lots of stereotypes in media representations about all autistic people liking trains, Maths or Science – some autistic people might like these things, but not all autistic people.

Autism is a mental health condition.

- **FALSE** – Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition. The Autism Education Trust considers autism a 'different' way of being, as opposed to a 'deficient' way of being.

All autistic people are brilliant at maths.

- **FALSE** – Autistic people all have different strengths and differences to each other – just like anyone else. Some are exceptionally talented at Maths, others have strengths in Art, Music or other areas. There is such a thing as 'Savant syndrome' this is present in less than 1% of the autistic population. Having a particular, focused interest on something may mean that autistic people are incredibly skilled or knowledgeable in one area. However it doesn't mean that they are geniuses. Like the rest of the population, IQ varies in autistic people.



People of all genders can be autistic.

- **TRUE** – although historically thought of as a ‘boy’s condition’, anyone of any gender can be autistic. There is still a big diagnostic gap between boys and girls though, as girls are more likely to ‘mask’ their autistic traits or may present differently to boys.

We should always consult specialists and professors who study autism if we would like to get a good perspective on what it’s like to be autistic.

- **FALSE** – If we would like to understand autistic people, we need to ask autistic people themselves. They are the true experts.

Autistic people prefer to be on their own.

- **FALSE** – Autistic people are all unique. Some will prefer to be alone at times – for example, if working on a task, but the majority enjoy the company of other people who understand and accept them. It is important to give choice. Some autistic people will find that socialising makes them more tired than neurotypical people and will need to take some time to recharge after.

Autistic children grow up to be autistic adults.

- **TRUE** – People do not ‘grow out of’ autism. Autistic children grow up to be autistic adults and will have strengths, differences and support needs relating to their autism.

# And Relax...

## Three Suggested Activities:

### Five Senses Grounding Exercise:

1. Ask the group to notice five things that they can see that they might not normally notice (encourage them to look for small details).
2. Ask the group to notice four things that they can feel – such as the surface of the table in front of them.
3. Ask the group to notice three things that they can hear.
4. Ask the group to focus on two things that they can smell.
5. Finally, ask the group to notice one thing that they can taste - this may mean pupils take a sip of a drink, or eat a sweet or part of a snack. You may want to have something prepared for this, but be aware of allergies or feeding difficulties within the group.

### Hand Tracing Exercise:

Give the following instructions to the group:

1. Place your hand out, on a surface, with your fingers outstretched.
2. Trace around the outside of your fingers and thumbs, using the index finger of your opposite hand.
3. As you trace, concentrate on your breathing. Breathe in, 1,2, breathe out, 1, 2.

Repeat this exercise, modelling controlled breathing.  
You could then switch hands.

### Daily Gratitude Exercise:

1. Ask the group to think about, or write down one thing that they are each grateful for that morning.
2. These can be shared with the rest of the group, or pupils can reflect on them personally for a period of time.
3. If the group wanted to, they could have their ideas displayed on a wall in the room or in a Gratitude Book. Alternatively, each pupil could have their own Gratitude Book that they add to over a period of time.

# Let's Play!

## Are you ok?

Scenario: One child doesn't like it when it is very loud. They sometimes cover their ears with their hands. Another child asks if the friend is okay, offer a hand, and comfort them if they are upset.

**Empathy Focus:** Helping others in distress and offering comfort.

## Sharing Resources

Scenario: Two children are both drawing and one needs a certain colour to complete their picture. Unfortunately, have a pencil of that colour, but the other child does. The child that has the coloured pencil offers to share it with the other child.

**Empathy Focus:** Helping others, being kind, sharing.

## Cheer Up

Scenario: A child feels left out during break time because they weren't picked for a team. Another child notices and asks them why they're sad, then suggests a new game or activity they can do together to cheer them up.

**Empathy Focus:** Understanding and comforting someone who feels left out and sad.

### **Caring About Someone Else's Feelings**

Scenario: One child is feeling nervous about an upcoming test. The other child listens attentively, nods, and then offers encouragement, telling them that they can do it and that it's okay to feel nervous sometimes.

**Empathy Focus:** Active listening and offering support to those who are feeling anxious.

### **Being Kind When Someone is Different**

Scenario: A new child arrives in the class and feels a little shy because they are not familiar with the routine. Another child notices and invites them to join a group activity, making them feel welcome and included.

**Empathy Focus:** Welcoming and understanding people who may feel out of place.

### **Celebrating Someone Else's Success**

Scenario: One child wins a race, but another child didn't do as well. Instead of feeling upset, the second child congratulates the winner and says, "You did a great job! Maybe next time we'll both win!" The child who wins doesn't make the other child feel bad, they tell them they did a good job too.

**Empathy Focus:** Celebrating others' achievements, not letting competition create hard feelings and understanding that we won't win every time. This scenario is also a reminder that effort is as important as winning.

# Say What?

**You can say that again**

**What does this mean?**

1. Repeat that please I didn't hear you.
2. I disagree.
3. I agree.

**On the ball**

**What does this mean?**

1. When a player has the ball in football.
2. Keeping up to date with new ideas.
3. Having a great time.

**It takes one to know one**

**What does this mean?**

1. You don't understand.
2. You're just as bad.
3. People who cause trouble always hang around together.

## **They are cutting corners**

### **What does this mean?**

1. They are cutting the corners off a piece of paper.
2. They are driving fast around corners in their car.
3. They are doing a poor job of something to save time and money.

## **It's raining cats and dogs**

### **What does this mean?**

1. The rain is really heavy.
2. There is wind along with the rain and it is making howling sounds like cats and dogs.
3. Cats and dogs are falling from the sky.

## **Bite the bullet**

### **What does this mean?**

1. Get something done quickly.
2. Acting braver than you feel.
3. Eating a hard sweet.

# Making Communication Clear



pencil



lego



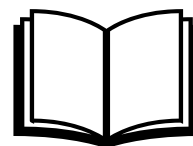
packed  
lunch



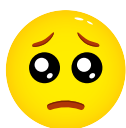
toilet



happy



book



upset



Art



PE



coat



bag



pencil  
case



pen



ruler



friend

