



# kindness

a Talking Points English  
lesson plan for reading,  
speaking, writing and  
vocabulary

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## Introduction

What is kindness? Give some examples.

Are you kind? When was the last time you were kind to someone?

Do we need more kindness in the world? Why/why not?

## Be Kind

***Read Clive's account below:***

When I was younger I was selfish. I didn't care about others and I had no sympathy for what other people might be going through.

Then something changed in me. I don't know what it was but I just changed overnight.

I made a vow to myself that I would start helping people. Just small things here and there.

I am not a religious man but I just thought that by doing this — by being kind to others — that it would make me feel happier about my own life. That somehow I would get some kind of reward for it.

So that's what I did.

After I made the decision I quickly put it into action.

There's this elderly woman who lives next door to me. She's ancient — she must be eighty if she's a day. Anyway, I went and knocked on her door and I asked her if she needed anything from the supermarket.

I think she was a bit taken aback by me just turning up at her door unannounced. She said she didn't need anything but she said thank you and that was it.

I knew she was just being polite so I left it a few days and went to her house and asked her again. This time she invited me in and made me a cup of tea. Then she gave me a list of things she needed — it wasn't a lot of things. Eggs, milk, bread — stuff like that.

I went to the supermarket and got all her stuff for her. She was over the moon!

I told her anytime she needed anything she could just give me a call and I would go and get it for her.

I've been going to the supermarket for her for the past eighteen months now. I cut the grass in her garden and help her out with some other things.

Then there's this youth club in my town. I go and help out there three evenings a week now.

I really like doing it. There's a lot of teenagers that go there that come from poor backgrounds. In the youth club, we help them learn skills to help them later in life.

I'm an electrician so I teach the kids how to do simple things in the house — change a fuse, fix appliances. I even taught them how to install a light switch.

I hope it's useful for them.

But I think I get more out of it than they do. I leave at the end of the evening and I feel like I've done something useful. I am helping them learn useful things and it can help them have a better life.

Being kind to others and helping others is one of the best things I have ever done in my life.

I feel like a new person and I feel grateful to be on this earth.

I know it sounds stupid but I really do feel like that. It costs nothing to help others. Sometimes it can be a very simple act — but it could mean the world to the person who you are helping.

## Reading Comprehension Questions

What was Clive's attitude to life before?

What promise did Clive make to himself?

Does Clive believe in God?

What were his reasons for helping others?

Who was the first person he helped? Describe this person.

What offer did Clive make to his neighbour?

How did she respond to his offer?

When did Clive talk to her again?

How did she respond the second time?

What was on her shopping list?

Was Clive's neighbour happy that he helped her with her shopping?

How long has Clive been going to the supermarket for his neighbour?

What was the second thing that Clive did to help others?

What skills does Clive teach teenagers?

## Essential Vocabulary

|                   |                  |                |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| selfish           | sympathy         | overnight      |
| vow               | religious        | reward         |
| decision          | into action      | elderly        |
| ancient           | if she's a day   | taken aback    |
| unannounced       | stuff like that  | over the moon  |
| youth club        | poor backgrounds | skills         |
| electrician       | change a fuse    | fix appliances |
| install           | grateful         | a simple act   |
| to mean the world |                  |                |

### Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

**Notebook**—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

***“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”***



## Discussion Questions

At the beginning of the story, Clive says: Something changed in me. What was it that made Clive change do you think?

Do you think Clive is right to start helping people? Or is he being foolish? Explain your reasoning.

Why do you think Clive's elderly neighbour rejected his first offer of help?

Clive talks about helping out at the youth club. He says: I think I get more out of it than they do. What do you think he means by this?

Do people help strangers in your country?

Do you commit random acts of kindness? Who do you help?

Have we become too selfish in society? Why has this happened?

Do people volunteer their free time to help in your country? For example, in a hospital or a school?

Have you ever helped someone? How did it make you feel?

When should we stop helping others?

What is empathy? How can we improve this in ourselves?

If you are kind to a person, but they are mean in return, how would you feel about it?

Who is the kindest person you know? Why are they kind? What lessons can we learn from this person?

What act of kindness could you perform today? Why don't you do it?

## **Brainstorming: Kindness**

Using the chart on the following page, fill in as many of the balloons as you can.

The words must be related to the word 'kindness'. Other words may have other related words.



## Quiz: Kindness

Look at the following statements and say if you have done any of these random acts of kindness.

If you have, tell the class about it.

There are no right or wrong answers – this is just a way to find out how kind you are.

1. Smiled at a complete stranger on the street.
2. Made someone laugh.
3. Helped an old lady trying to cross the road.
4. Held the door open for someone.
5. Wished your neighbour a good day.
6. A stranger dropped something outside, you picked it up and returned it to them.
7. Given someone you don't know too well a compliment.
8. Told a joke to someone to make them laugh.
9. Comforted someone when they were crying.
10. Sent flowers to someone to cheer them up.
11. Ran an errand for someone.

12. Told someone you know that they are special.
13. Read a book to an elderly person.
14. Let someone in the supermarket in front of you, because they only had one item.
15. Picked up some litter in the park and put it in the garbage bin.
16. Did someone a favour.
17. Thanked your teacher!
18. Given up your seat on the bus or subway.
19. Donated old clothes to charity.
20. Helped some elderly people in your community.
21. Given someone a hug – because they needed it.
22. Made your parents breakfast in bed.
23. Given someone 10 minutes to listen to their problems.
24. Taught someone a skill for free.
25. Planted a tree.
26. Called your mother.

***Do you have any experience of the acts of kindness above? If so, tell the class the story of what happened.***

## **Debate: To be kind of not be kind?**

**This is a debate activity.**

There are two teams in the debate – divide the class into two teams of equal number. Choose a student or ask for a volunteer to be the chairperson. This student should ensure there is order during the debate and to allow every person the chance to speak.

### **Team A**

You believe that being kind to others is a sign of weakness. The person being kind receives nothing in return and often the person receiving the act of kindness is ungrateful and sometimes suspicious of the kind person. Acts of kindness should be earned – not handed out for free.

### **Team B**

You believe that being kind to others is a sign of strength. In a modern society, people should be kind to others. And it makes the person committing the act of kindness feel good! Acts of kindness are vital for a progressive society.

In your team, spend some time to think about what you want to say in the debate. Think about your lines of argument and also the opposing team's lines of argument.

***When you are ready, begin the debate.***



## Writing

You are going to write a letter to someone in your class. Or someone you don't know very well.

In this letter, you are going to tell them all the good things about this person.

Try to use the following phrases in your letter:

- One thing I have noticed about you is...
- I really appreciate it when you...
- Some words that come to mind to describe you are...
- I look forward to seeing you every day because...

When you have finished your letter, you can read it out loud in class. Or show it to your teacher for review.

***Or – send it to the person you wrote the letter for!***

## Credits

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