

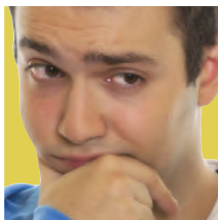
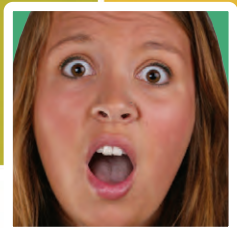
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# EXPLORE Social Skills

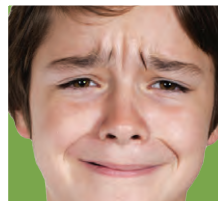
Instructor's Guide

# 2

Understanding Emotions,  
Facial Expressions, and Behaviors



**Pat Crissey**



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# Introduction

## Why Teach Facial Expressions?

*Decades of research and clinical observation have led us to believe that... the ability to utilize nonverbal language effectively is the very basis of solid and satisfying social and vocational success throughout life; the absence of this ability is an identifiable and correctable cause of social difficulties.*

Duke, Nowicki, & Martin, 1996

Facial expressions, along with body language and voice qualities divulge what people are actually feeling much more effectively than the words they speak. Research has established that a reliable association exists between facial expressions and emotions. (Tomkins & McCarter, 1964) And most of us come to realize, without direct instruction, that if we want to know what someone is thinking and feeling, we had better pay attention to the nonverbal clues they are exhibiting.

However, some individuals have difficulty learning this hidden language of nonverbal communication when left to their own devices. There have been a number of research studies that attempt to determine

how individuals on the autism spectrum compare with their normally developing peers in their ability to read facial expressions. Results have varied, but what can be said is that individuals on the spectrum can vary greatly in their abilities, and a fair number do have more difficulty recognizing facial expressions, particularly subtle and partial expressions. (Balconi, Amenta, & Ferrari, 2012) What this book hopes to help you accomplish is an improvement in your students' abilities to recognize and understand the facial expressions they see in their everyday interactions.

## About the Author

Pat Crissey has worked in the field of special education for over twenty years, as a special education teacher and autism consultant. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in special and elementary education from Illinois State University and completed graduate work in special education from Western Oregon University. She lives in McMinnville, Oregon with her husband, has three grown children and four grandchildren.

# Using This Curriculum

## General Organization

### Instructor's Guide

The five chapters below are covered in the instructor's guide and correspond to the five chapters in the student book.

1. Understanding Emotions
2. Recognizing Basic Facial Expressions
3. Variations in Basic Facial Expressions
4. Other Facial Expressions
5. Putting It Altogether

The instructor's guide provides some basic background information for the teacher, along with step-by-step directions for the teaching activities in the student book. Additional activities that do not require the student book are also provided. Students may not need to engage in all activities, or they may need to use them all numerous times.

Additional fun and games activities are provided at the end of each chapter. These include art, video clips, games, and apps to reinforce what was learned. Teacher resources are also provided which include visuals for the teacher to use and lists of relevant books, comics, artwork, and videos.

### Student Book

In each chapter of the student book, brief explanations are written in kid-friendly

language that students can read, or have read to them. There are activity pages with many examples of facial expressions that provide students with a work product and a reference for what they have learned.

## Guide to Individual Chapters


### Chapter 1: Understanding Emotions

We need to recognize facial expressions so we can understand what people are feeling. This enables us to react and interact in a more satisfying manner. Therefore, the first part of this curriculum is devoted to helping students understand emotions in a very personal, experiential way.

No curriculum could possibly include all the emotions that people experience, so which emotions do we cover? This chapter begins with what are considered the basic emotions: happy, sad, angry, and scared. It also looks at different intensities of emotions and different reasons for feeling certain emotions. The other emotions chosen for this curriculum are those that are considered to be most relevant to young students. Certainly other emotions could be included using similar types of activities.

### Informal Assessment

Some students will understand the basic emotions of happiness, sadness, fear, and anger, but may have difficulty understanding more subtle emotions. You may want to



first perform a quick assessment to determine whether a student needs more work on basic emotions or is ready to learn other less obvious emotions. Photos are provided for an informal assessment. If students do not have a solid grasp of the basic emotions, use the activities provided in the Understanding Basic Emotions section to increase their understanding. Students who comprehend basic emotions can begin with activities in Variations of Basic Emotions.

### Teaching Objectives

While you may not need to use all the activities provided, it is important to choose activities that help students meet these objectives.

- Associate different situations with specific emotions. “I feel scared when I hear thunder.” Activities are provided for students to do this using pictures and stories.
- Understand the language of emotions. “What is the word for what I am feeling?” Include activities that introduce the words happy, sad, angry, and scared.
- Express what they are feeling. Include activities that encourage students to tell how they are feeling right now or in a given situation.

## Chapter 2: Recognizing Basic Facial Expressions

It’s important to remember that many students may not know what facial expressions are, nor why it is important to understand what different expressions mean. Chapter 2 introduces facial expressions by demonstrating different expressions and discussing what can happen when someone is unable to read another’s facial expressions.

### Informal Assessment


Page 52 of the Student Book can provide an informal assessment to determine students’ abilities to recognize basic facial expressions: happy, sad, angry, and scared.

### Teaching Objectives

- Recognize what parts of the face change to make different expressions.
- Demonstrate basic emotions with their own face.
- Label facial expressions with the words happy, sad, angry, and scared.
- Label facial expressions in pictures and real life.

## Chapter 3: Variations in Basic Facial Expressions

In Chapter 3 students move beyond the facial expressions happy, sad, angry, and scared, to work on recognizing how expressions change with the intensity of the



emotion. They also learn that a face can look happy or sad for different reasons, and what is happening plays a key role in fully understanding what the person is feeling.

### Teaching Objectives

- Recognize facial expressions that show different intensities of basic emotions, both in pictures and real life.
- Demonstrate different intensities of emotions with their own face.
- Relate different intensities of emotions to different situations.
- Increase students' vocabulary of emotion words.
- Relate their new emotion words to situations that could produce that emotion.

### Chapter 4: Other Facial Expressions

In this chapter, the emotion words introduced in Chapter 1 are reviewed and their associated facial expressions introduced. While facial expressions showing disgust, surprise, interest, lack of interest, and boredom are generally easy to recognize, other emotions can be difficult to distinguish using facial expressions alone. Is the person feeling guilty or sad? Jealous or angry? In this chapter, more emphasis is placed on using one's knowledge of what is occurring to figure out what a person is feeling.

The final challenge of this curriculum is introduced at the end of this chapter – understanding and recognizing mixed signals. Mixed signals occur when a person purposely uses facial expressions to indicate one feeling, when he is actually feeling the opposite. A person may smile to cover up feeling sad, scared, or angry. With mixed signals, generally the facial expression is not consistent. The eyes are not smiling. The smile is tight and tense. Here again, the observer needs to consider what is happening at the time.

### Teaching Objectives

Recognizing and understanding the facial expressions presented in Chapter 3 may be a challenge because they are open to interpretation. There is not always one correct response. The primary objective is to increase students' observational skills and their ability to think about what others are feeling. More specific objectives are as follows:

- Recognize facial expressions that indicate disgust, surprise, interest, and lack of interest, in pictures and real life.
- Determine reasonable possibilities for what feelings a facial expression portrays.
- Understand what mixed signals are.
- Distinguish between a genuine expression and one with mixed signals.



## Chapter 5: Putting It Altogether

In this final chapter, students are given the opportunity to practice what they have learned in a wide variety of activities including books, comics, art, photography, games, video, and drama. Activities involve reading facial expressions in still pictures, on film, and in real life. Much emphasis is placed on reading expressions within the context of what is happening.

### Teaching Objectives

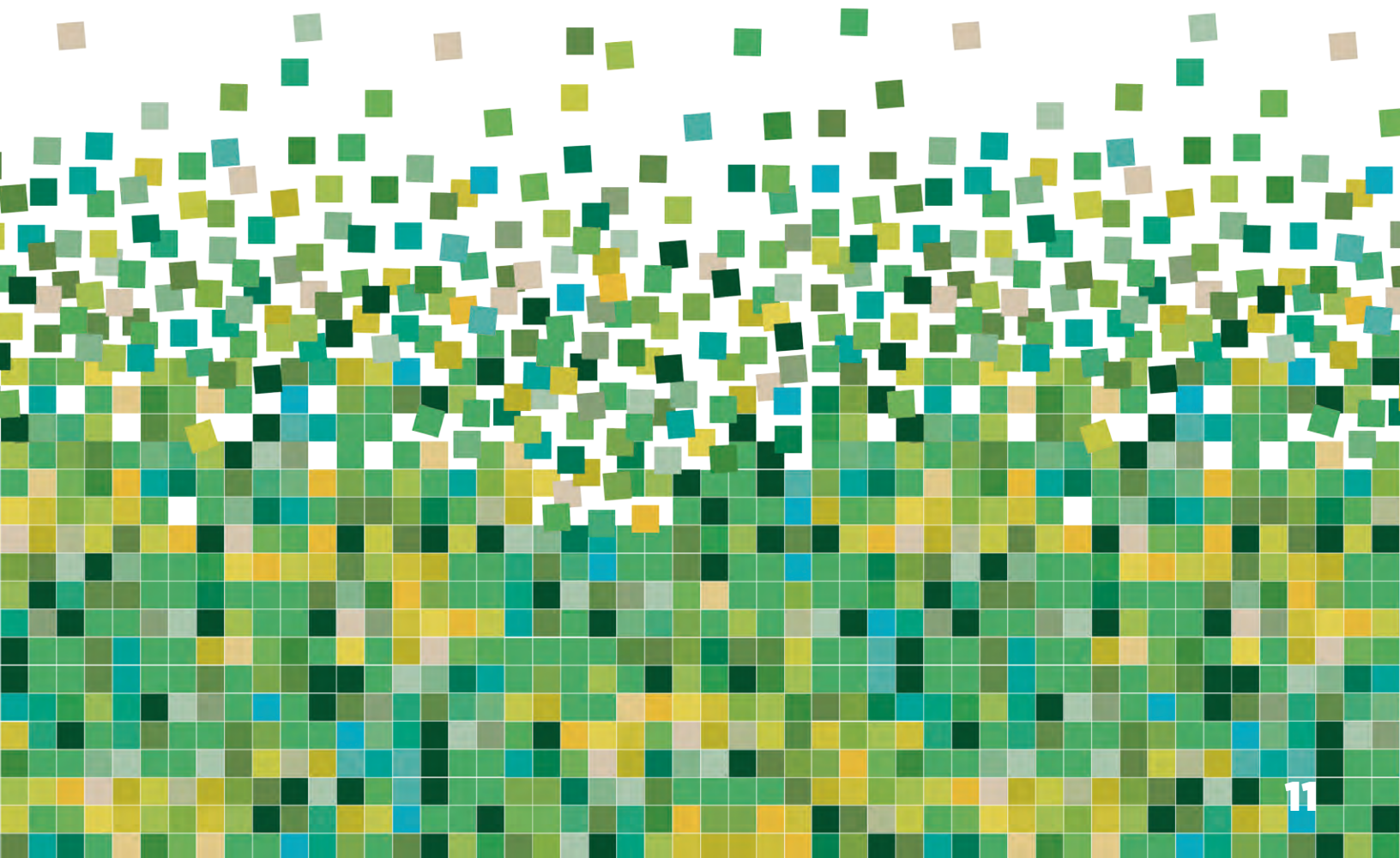
- Increase students' competency in reading facial expressions in pictures, video, and real life
- Increase students' abilities to use context along with facial expressions to determine what someone is feeling.
- Increase students' confidence in reading situations
- Have fun!





# Chapter 1

# Understanding Emotions



# Basic Emotions

## Introduction

A basic understanding of emotions, from a personal point of view, is necessary before learning to decode facial expressions.

Being able to label a facial expression has no value if the student doesn't understand what the underlying emotion is and what it feels like. By understanding what the other person is feeling, he can then begin to adjust what he says and does.

Some students will understand the basic emotions of happiness, sadness, fear, and anger, but may have difficulty understanding more subtle emotions. You may want to first perform a quick assessment to determine if a student needs more work on basic emotions or is ready to learn other less obvious emotions. (See the following section, **Informal Assessment—Basic Emotions.**)

Some students may not be ready to learn about all the emotions presented in this chapter. You may need to choose those emotions that seem most relevant and easily understood. Skipping over some of the emotions covered in this chapter does not mean that the student cannot move on to learning about facial expressions. However, you will want to teach only the facial expressions that display emotions the student understands.

## Informal Assessment— Basic Emotions

Using the **Basic Emotions** charts on pages 39–41, ask the student how each picture makes them feel. If needed, provide the words happy, sad, angry, scared, and calm (neutral), by writing the words on the board or using them in a sentence. For example, “If you were that boy, would you feel happy, sad, or scared?”

If students seem to have a solid understanding of the basic emotions, skip to the section, **Variations of Basic Emotions**, page 17, and begin there. Otherwise, complete the following activities.

## Understanding Basic Emotions

### Picture How It Feels

Collect pictures of items or situations that elicit the basic emotions (happy, sad, scared, angry, and calm), such as an amusement park, a scary monster, or someone being teased. (Google Images or Bing Images are great online sources.) Write the basic feeling words on the top of sheets of paper, one word per page. Have students choose pictures that make them feel that emotion.

Discuss that people may respond differently to the same situation. For example, one person may feel happy

when at an amusement park, while the noise and crowds may scare another. Also, a person may feel more than one emotion at a time. He may feel scared and happy as he rides a roller coaster, or he can feel sad and angry if his friend is mean to him.



### What Do Feelings Feel Like?

Using the pictures students created above or pictures from the informal assessment, ask students to describe what it feels like in their body when they are feeling happy, sad, angry, scared, and calm. Their responses could be written on chart paper and saved for future reference. If necessary, provide an example by sharing how you feel. The following are possible examples of responses:

### Happy

- I feel good. I like how I feel.
- I have lots of energy.
- I like doing things.
- I feel like smiling and laughing.

### Sad

- I feel limp and tired.
- I don't feel like doing anything.
- I feel lonely.
- I feel like crying, not laughing or smiling.
- Nothing seems interesting or fun.

### Angry

- My body feels all tight and stiff.
- I feel like I could explode.
- I have lots of energy, but I don't like how I feel.
- I want to scream.
- I feel like hitting or kicking.

### Scared

- My body feels tight.
- My heart is beating fast.
- My stomach hurts and my hands are sweaty.
- I want to run away and hide.
- I don't like how I feel.

### Calm

- I feel pretty good. I feel relaxed.
- I have enough energy, but not too much.
- I can think about what I need to think about.

## Read About Emotions

An excellent way to help students understand emotions is to read and discuss books describing feelings, beginning with the basic emotions. Choose books from the lists under Basic Emotions, pages 44-45 in the **Resources** section, or use your own favorites. Ask students to describe times they have experienced basic emotions.

## What Makes You Feel?

Using the worksheets on pages 7-8 of the Student Book, have students write down things or situations that make them feel happy, sad, angry, and scared. If needed, have students say these verbally while someone writes them in the student book. Ask students to share the items they wrote on their lists. These lists will be used in later parts of this chapter.

## Basic Feelings Check-In

Scheduling a few minutes each day to ask students how they feel can be a good way to explore emotions. This check-in time will be more meaningful once students are able to use more than the basic emotions. Pictures from the resource disk provided with this book can be used to create a visual for this activity (see chart next page).

### What Makes You Feel?

What things or situations make you feel **happy**?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

What things or situations make you feel **sad**?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

### What Makes You Feel? continued

What things or situations make you feel **angry**?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

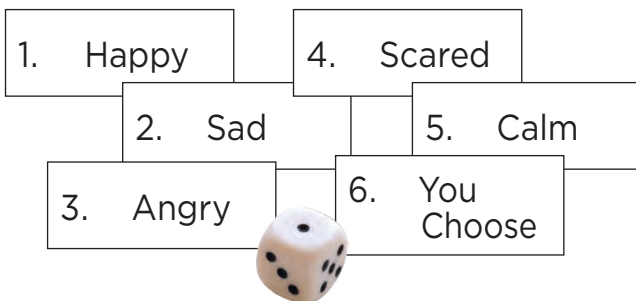
What things or situations make you feel **scared**?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

	happy
	sad
	angry
	scared
	calm

### Dice Game

Have students write the five basic feeling words on cards, one word on each card, plus a sixth card that says, “You Choose.” (See example.) Divide students into small groups, giving each group a die. Students take turns rolling the die and telling about a time when they felt happy, sad, angry, scared, or calm, depending on the number rolled. For example, if a student rolls a ‘4’ he tells about a time he felt scared. After the student answers, he turns that card face down. (If the student rolls the number of a card he has already turned over, he may pass, with play going to the next player.) Whoever turns over all his cards first, wins.



### Interview Questionnaire

Pair up students and have them take turns interviewing each other, using the **Interview Sheet** on page 13 in the Student Book to write down the other’s responses. When completed, have each interviewer read what she wrote down, checking with the interviewee for accuracy.

### How Would You Feel?

Using the worksheets on pages 10-12 of the Student Book, either read the short scenarios to the students or have the students read them on their own, circling the word and icon that expresses how they would feel. Then go over the scenarios, discussing the emotions students selected.

#### Interview Sheet

**Directions**  
Ask your partner the following questions and write what he or she tells you.

- 1** Tell about a time you felt **happy**.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2** Tell about a time you felt **sad**.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3** Tell 3 things that make you feel **angry**.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4** Tell 3 things that make you feel **scared**.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## How Would You Feel?

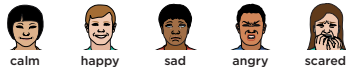
### Directions

Circle the picture and word that best tells how you would feel.

- 1 One of your friends is moving far away.



- 2 You get invited to a really fun party.



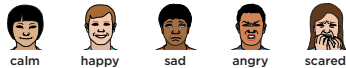
- 3 You hear a loud noise in the middle of the night.



- 4 Your friend won't let you play his new video game.



- 5 You just found out you get to go on a fun vacation.



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## How Would You Feel? Continued

- 11 You made up with your friend after having a big fight.



- 12 Your dad can't take you swimming because he's sick.



- 13 It's the school picnic today. No homework!



- 14 You wake up from a really bad dream.



- 15 Some kids won't let you play ball with them.



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Explore Social Skills 2

- 6 Your parent won't let you go to a movie you want to see.



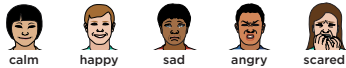
- 7 Someone stole your money.



- 8 Your dog was hit by a car.



- 9 The car you're riding in starts sliding off the road.



- 10 Someone called you a name.



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Chapter One — Understanding Emotions

# Variations of Basic Emotions

## Introduction

People can feel a little happy, or absolutely ecstatic. They can feel happy because they are thankful, proud, or excited about something that is going to happen. Similar distinctions are true when feeling sad, angry or scared. Understanding emotional intensity and the interaction between emotions and what is happening is important to accurately read facial expressions and understand social situations.

However, some of the distinctions between emotions, especially those presented in **Different Types of Happiness, Sadness, Anger, and Fear** sections, may be too subtle for some students and could be left for a later time. For now, you may simply want students to understand that emotions can vary in their intensity. In this case, you could cover the **Emotional Intensity** sections for each emotion and skip the **Different Types** sections.

## Different Ways to Feel Happy

### Emotional Intensity—Feeling Happy

Tell students that you are going to read three scenarios and ask them to tell you how they would feel if it happened to them. Use the scenarios below or create your own.

- You're going on a fun field trip.
- You're eating something you like for dinner.
- You just won a free trip to Disneyland.

After reading the scenarios, ask if students would feel the same in each case. Discuss how people feel happy to different degrees. Select a few words to write on the board that express different intensities of happy, as shown below. More words can be found in the **Feeling Words** list, pages 42–43.

### You may be feeling:

- Good, glad, or content.
- Happy, or in a good mood.
- Terrific, thrilled, or ecstatic.

### How Happy Would You Feel?

Using the worksheets on pages 15–17 of the Student Book, have students read the short scenarios and select the feeling word that best describes how they would feel. Scenarios could be read aloud to students if needed. Discuss which words students chose. In this and following exercises, answers could vary as students may have different feelings about or interpretations of the situations presented.

### Different Types of Happiness

There are also times people feel happy and their faces look happy, but it's a special kind of happiness that occurs for different reasons. Discuss what the following words mean and give examples.

- **Pleased** – You are somewhat happy because of something that happened. You are pleased to meet someone, or pleased that you passed a test.

## How Happy Would You Feel?

### Directions

Circle the picture and word that best tells how you would feel.

1 It finally stopped raining so you can play outside.



2 You just got the best birthday present ever.



3 You play a game with a friend and win.



4 You just became friends with someone you really like.



5 You just got a new puppy.



## How Happy Would You Feel? continued

6 You get to watch your favorite team play.



7 You just got a new DVD that you've wanted for a long time.



8 Your favorite TV show is on tonight.



9 You just met your favorite movie star.



10 You're going out for ice cream.



11 Your best friend moved away but is coming back for a visit.



12 You get to go to a big water park with lots of water slides.



13 Your report card is much better than you thought it would be.



14 You won \$500 and can spend it on whatever you want.



15 It finally stopped raining.



- **Excited** – You are feeling kind of hyper and full of energy. You are really happy about something that happened or is going to happen. You are excited about summer vacation!
- **Thankful or grateful** – You feel happy because of something you have, something you were given, or for something that was done for you. You may be feeling happy that you have a nice teacher or for the birthday present you received.
- **Proud** – You feel happy because of something you accomplished or something that someone you care about accomplished.



- **Silly** – Sometimes you're in a good mood and everything seems funny. It may be because of something good happening, but sometimes you just feel silly for no reason.

## What Kind of Happy?

Using the worksheets on pages 28–29 of the Student Book, have students read the short scenarios and select the feeling words that best describe how they would feel. Scenarios and feeling words could be read aloud to students if needed. Discuss the words chosen. Words may be used more than once, but encourage students to use all the words provided in the word bank. Answers may vary.

## Different Ways to Feel Sad

### Emotional Intensity—Feeling Sad

Explain that just as we feel happy in different ways, we also feel sad in different ways. Give examples of situations when someone might feel different degrees of sorrow, such as getting a stain on a new shirt, missing a field trip you were excited about, or having someone you love die.

Ask students to think of words that describe different types of sadness, and write these words on the board. Use the **Feeling Words** list on pages 42–43 to help students think of additional words. Include the words feeling down, unhappy, and miserable, as these words are used on the corresponding pages in the Student Book.

### What Kind of Happy?

#### Directions

Choose a word from the Word Bank to tell how you feel. Write it in the blank.

#### Word Bank

excited pleased proud thankful silly

- 1 You just won 1st place in the contest.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 You got just what you wanted for your birthday.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 You just finished all your homework. Now you can watch TV.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Your friend keeps making really funny faces, and it makes you laugh.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Someone found the wallet you lost and returned it to you with all your money still in it.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 You just saw a famous movie star at the mall.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Explore Social Skills 2

#### Word Bank




excited pleased proud thankful silly

- 7 It was supposed to rain today, but it's sunny instead.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Your teacher said you did an excellent job on your project.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Your friend is coming to your house today.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10 You were just thinking about how lucky you are to go on a fun vacation.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11 You don't know why, but everything seems funny and makes you laugh.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 12 You are having so much fun at the carnival.  
\_\_\_\_\_




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11 You don't understand how to do the math assignment.



  
 annoyed    angry    furious




12 Some kids deliberately kicked your sand castle over.



  
 annoyed    angry    furious




13 Your friend borrowed money and hasn't paid you back.



  
 annoyed    angry    furious

14 You can't open the wrapper on your candy bar.



  
 annoyed    angry    furious

15 Your friend forgot to bring a game he said he would loan you.



  
 annoyed    angry    furious

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**Word Bank**  
frustrated    impatient    grouchy

6 I can't hit the stupid ball! I hate baseball!

7 Look at the line for the movie. I hate to wait in lines.

8 Hurry up! You've been in the bathroom for hours!

9 I hate math! I don't understand out how to do these problems.

10 I keep messing up this art project. It's making me mad!

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### What Kind of Angry?

**Directions**  
Choose a word from the Word Bank to tell how the speaker is feeling. Write it in the blank.

**Word Bank**  
frustrated    impatient    grouchy

1 I'm tired and everyone keeps bothering me. I wish they would leave me alone.

2 This stupid game is too hard. I hate it!

3 Hurry up! I'm tired of waiting for you.

4 She said she would call as soon as she got home. What's taking her so long?

5 Go away! I'm in a bad mood!

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### What Kind of Angry?

As described in **What Kind of Happy?**, complete the worksheets in the Student Book, pages 32-33.

### Different Ways to Feel Scared

#### Emotional Intensity—Feeling Scared

Give examples of situations when someone might feel different degrees of fear, such as feeling worried about how you'll do on a test, being afraid because you're hearing strange noises at night, or being terrified because the car you're riding in is about to crash.

Ask students to think of words that describe different types of fear and write these

**Informal Assessment—Basic Emotions**



# Happy Faces

