



PRINTABLE LESSON

The Mean Hyena

A lesson in noticing how others feel



One complete lesson from The Sing Me a Fable Lesson Book

Ages 4 to 8 . Printable . 26 lessons in the full book

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The Mean Hyena

Fable M from *Sing Me a Fable* — a lesson in noticing how others feel

AGE	LENGTH	SUBJECT	GROUP
4–7 (Pre-K to Year 2)	30–40 minutes	PSHE · Speaking & listening	Whole class

Learning objective

Children recognise that unkind words leave harm an apology alone does not undo, and can name how somebody felt after something was said.

You will need

The fable, read aloud

Poster M to colour

One paper heart per child

One large paper heart

Cards: HAPPY / OKAY / HURT

Before you start. Name the behaviour, never the child. If someone in the room has been on the receiving end of something this week, the crumpled heart will land hard — decide in advance whether today is the day.

Before the story

3 minutes

Hold up the large paper heart, flat and smooth. Say nothing about it. Put it where everyone can see, and begin.

Read the fable

6 minutes

Each time Hattie says something unkind, crumple the heart a little. Don't explain and don't pause. By the third, somebody will say something — carry on anyway. At the end, hold up what is left of it.

Ask: “Can I make this flat again?”

Then really try, in front of them. Smooth it out properly. The creases stay.

Then: “What if I say sorry to it? Will the lines go?”

How did they feel?

10 minutes

One at a time. The class holds up a card for how that animal felt *as they walked away*.

Who	What happened	Answer
Rabbit	He tripped, and Hattie laughed	HURT
Elephant Cub	She said something about his short legs	HURT
Tortoise	He was too slow, so she took the ball away	HURT

All three are the same answer, and children notice. Ask what they had in common: each was about something the animal **could not change**.

Push once on Elephant Cub. Some vote OKAY, because nobody fell and nothing was taken. Ask whether being laughed at for how you look hurts less than falling over.

Main activity: the crumpled heart

12 minutes

1. Give every child a paper heart, flat.
2. Read the six lines on the back of this sheet: three unkind, three not.
3. On an unkind one, every child crumples their own heart once. On a kind one, nothing happens.
4. After all six, ask them to flatten their heart again. Give them a full minute to try.
5. Then ask: “Nobody’s went back to how it was. So what *can* we do?”

Steer towards the difference between saying sorry, which takes a second, and being kind afterwards for a long time. The heart will not un-crumple; it can be looked after from now on.

Plenary

4 minutes

“Nobody wanted to play with Hattie in the end. She didn't want that — so why did it happen? And what could you say tomorrow that would keep somebody's heart flat?”



Play it together

Put the game on the board. At every choice, stop, let the class vote, then press the card they chose.



Scan to play

OPEN IT

singmeafable.com/arcade/the-mean-hyena

UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

5, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · How Did They Feel?



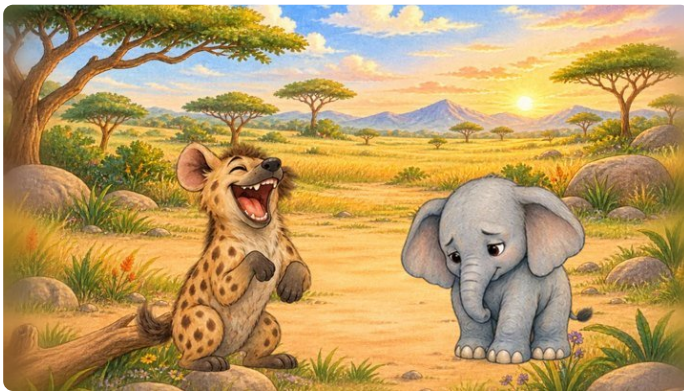
Hattie laughs at three friends, one by one. After each, the child is asked how that friend felt.

“Look at you! You can’t even run!” How did Rabbit feel?

A Happy

B Hurt ✓

Level 2 · No One Wants to Play



All four are playing with the red ball. After each thing Hattie says, the child decides whether it was mean or kind.

“Too slow! Those little legs can’t catch anything!”

A Mean ✓

B Kind



The last level, and what to ask

The tick marks the choice that earns the stars. Keep this page to yourself while the class votes.

Level 3 · Bring Your Friends Back



Rabbit. What should Hattie say?

A "It was funny!"

B "I'm sorry I laughed at you." ✓



Elephant. What should Hattie say this time?

A "Too slow!"

B "Good try! Try again!" ✓



Tortoise. What should Hattie do?

A "Let's start without him."

B "Let's wait for Tortoise." ✓

Ask at every choice

Before pressing: "Which card would you press, and why?"

After it plays out: "What changed because of that choice? What would the other card have done?"

How it joins the lesson

The main activity, **The crumpled heart**, takes the same lesson off the screen and into the room. Play the game first, so the class has already watched both kinds of choice play out before they make one themselves.

Every choice plays out and nothing is timed, so a wrong vote is something to talk about, not a failure. Stars at the end of each level show how many right choices the class made.



Lines for the crumpled heart

The word list, the three cruelties, and how to run it at other ages.

Crumple — unkind

- “Look at him, he fell over again!”
- “Your legs are too short for this game.”
- “You’re too slow. Give me that.”

The fable's own three. Each is about something the person cannot change — the cruel kind, not the careless kind.

Leave it flat — kind

- “That was a good try.”
- “Come on, you’re on my team.”
- “I’ll wait for you.”

If a child crumples on a kind line, don't correct them — ask why. Tone is a real answer and worth the detour.

Adapting for your class

Age 4 · Pre-K. Use the large heart only, crumpled by you. Individual hearts and six lines is too much at once. Do the feeling cards and stop.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written. Expect an argument about Elephant Cub and let it run; working out that words can hurt more than a fall is the lesson itself.

What children take away

Harm outlasts the apology — the creases don't come out, so sorry starts a repair rather than being one. **Naming a feeling** — three friends, one word each. **The behaviour, not the child** — the heart records what was said, not who said it.

Where this fits

One of twenty-six lessons, a letter and a trait each, one a week across a school year. Songs and printable posters are free at singmeafable.com.

Three cruelties, not one

Children rank these differently, and hearing each other's ranking is where the learning is.

- **A stumble** — over in a moment, unless everybody saw.
- **How you look** — you take that one home with you.
- **How you do things** — it says you shouldn't have joined in at all.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** Ask what Hattie is thinking, standing there on her own.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** The browser game has children read three friends' faces, then choose MEAN or KIND.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Add one harder question at the end: was Hattie unhappy *before* she was unkind? Children this age can hold both ideas at once — that she had a reason, and that it does not excuse her.

Keep the hearts. Bring them out weeks later when something real happens, with no lesson attached.

Curriculum links

PSHE / SEL: empathy, impact of words, repairing harm, bystanders. **Speaking and listening:** naming emotions, giving reasons. **Literacy:** letter recognition, character motivation, cause and effect.