

Activity 1: What is Homelessness?

This activity determines pupils' knowledge or awareness of homelessness and begins to explore any early misconceptions or negative labels or stereotypes they may have. Repeat or review this activity after your pupils have completed all activities to evaluate how their understanding of and attitudes to the issue of homelessness may have changed.

Learning Intentions

Pupils will:

- be aware of homelessness as a societal issue;
- begin to develop empathy for people experiencing homelessness;
- realise the importance of shelter as a basic need;
- begin to appreciate that a home is more than just a building;
- begin to appreciate the difference between needs and wants;
- begin to link cause and effect; and
- recognise their own and others' feelings and emotions.

Vocabulary

Homeless, labels, stereotype

Ask your pupils to draw a picture of what they think about when they hear the word homeless.

Then ask your pupils to discuss their drawing. Record their feedback on a board, dividing it into positive, negative and neutral descriptions.

As a class, discuss the similarities and differences between the drawings. Did pupils have any stereotypical views or labels such as men that sleep rough on the street, it's their fault or choice to be homeless, lazy, jobless or dirty.

Ask your pupils to keep their drawings in a folder, as they will refer to these after completing the activities on homelessness.

Reflection

Use a **Know – Want to Know – Learned** (KWL) method to establish pupils' knowledge of homelessness and what they want to know more about. Keep your pupils' feedback from this activity, as you will refer to this at the end of this lesson.



Realities of Homelessness

Conclude the activity by highlighting to the class that nearly anyone can lose their home and become homeless. This includes families, women or men, rich, poor, young or old. Highlight to your pupils that help and support is available for people who become homeless. People can recover from homelessness and move on to have happy and fulfilling lives.

Extension



As a follow-up activity, pupils could create a [Graffiti Board](#) related to the issues they have discussed.