**Objective**
Students will develop empathy and vocabulary through narrative writing that incorporates background information about cancer.

**Time**
40 minutes

**Materials**
- Worksheet 1: What Is Cancer?

**1** Distribute Worksheet 1: What Is Cancer? to students. Give the following example: Imagine you are at an amusement park with your friends. Everyone wants to ride a roller coaster or ferris wheel. You were excited to ride and now you are not sure if you want to get on the ride. Maybe you start to feel nervous, unwell, or worried about it. Use the following questions to help students brainstorm:
  - What is a sudden change you have experienced at home, at school, or in an activity?
  - What did you do in this situation?
  - How did the experience make you feel?
  - How did other people react?

Ask students to write about their experiences. Remind them to show, not tell, how they felt. Use the chart on the worksheet to brainstorm “showing” details. Discuss an example from your own life, if possible, to model this process, or draw on another real-life story. After students write their narratives, invite them to share their stories with the class.

**2** Tell students that today they will be talking about a particular type of sickness called cancer. Explain to students that cancer is a group of more than 100 diseases that attack parts of people’s bodies. Assure students that you can’t catch cancer from someone who has the disease. Cancer makes people very sick, but it can be treated with medicine. People who have cancer can still live normal lives.

**3** Inform students that there are certain words that are often used when talking about cancer, and it’s important to understand what these words mean. Use a concept web to show the relationships between the bold words defined in Steps 4 and 5. (Cancer would be at the center of the web. Lines would lead from cancer to diagnosis and treatment. Lines would lead from treatment to the three types of treatment: chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery.)

**4** Explain to students that when someone is given the diagnosis (identifying a disease by its signs or symptoms) of cancer, a doctor will try to get rid of the cancer in the person’s body. Three common treatments for cancer are chemotherapy (a method that helps kill cancer cells by a doctor’s use of drugs or a combination of drugs), radiation (a method that helps kill cancer cells by using high-energy rays), and surgery (an operation performed in a hospital to remove cancer).

**5** Tell students that different types of cancer need different types of treatment (a method by which a doctor will help you to continue to live “normally” with cancer). A person may receive only one or two types of treatment, or all three. Each person is different, so it is important that cancer patients work with their doctors to find the treatment that is right for them.

**6** To help reinforce the lesson vocabulary, instruct students to complete Part 2 of the worksheet. It may be helpful to write an example sentence as a class (e.g., A person might go to the hospital for surgery to remove cancer). Review the answers as a class and clarify any misunderstandings.

**Extension Activity**
As a class, read an excerpt from a book about someone diagnosed with cancer. Then guide students to reflect and discuss:
- How is this person’s experience similar to or different from the experience you wrote about?
- How does the person feel about the experience?
- What words or techniques are used to show this feeling?
What Is Cancer?

PART 2: UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS

Read each definition below, then unscramble the letters that follow to discover what word is being defined.

1. A method by which a doctor will help you to continue to live “normally” with cancer. **tmtetarnte**

2. A method that helps kill cancer cells by using high-energy rays. **nordaitia**

3. A method that helps kill cancer cells by a doctor’s use of drugs or a combination of drugs. **myhepehnoorh**

4. The act of identifying a disease by its signs or symptoms. **sodagni**

5. A group of more than 100 related diseases that begin in your body’s cells. **acerc**

6. An operation performed in a hospital to remove cancer. **ryrgue**

PART 1: WRITE ABOUT IT

THINK: Has anything ever kept you from doing what you wanted to do? Were you unable to join friends outside for a certain reason that seemed out of your control? Was there something you wanted to do, but were unable to do it because you were too sick, or in bed?

WRITE: Write about your experience. How did you deal with this? How did it make you feel when you weren’t able to play or do what you wanted to do?