

## LESSON 3 | Building Empathy Through Reading



During National Reading Month, get students reading an informational text and developing empathy for those in need.

### Objective

Students will determine the main idea of a text and locate supporting evidence while practicing empathy.

### Time

Two 15-minute lessons (start day 2 with step 8)

### Materials

- What You Can Do to Help Fight Poverty activity sheet
  - version A for grades 2–3
  - version B for grades 4–5
- Videos about child poverty at [rednoseday.org/videos](https://www.rednoseday.org/videos)

### REMOTE VERSION

Get a step-by-step version of this activity for students in Google Doc form at [RedNose DayinSchool.org](https://www.rednoseday.org).

**1 Tell students** When we read informational texts, we learn facts. We can use those facts to understand other people's experiences and feelings better.

**2 Distribute** the Everyday Heroes reading passage.

**3 Ask** What do you think you are going to learn about in this passage? Based on the first paragraph, what do you predict the main idea is? Have students underline or highlight the sentence that they think states it.

**4 Remind** students that they may encounter unfamiliar words as they read, but they can use clues around the word to figure out the meaning. Have students identify the context clues surrounding these words and work in pairs to figure out the definitions.

- **poverty** (paragraph 1)
- **illiteracy** (illiteracy section title)
- **vulnerable** (sickness section, version B)
- **nutritious** (sickness section)

**5 Read** the rest of the passage, choosing the method that meets the needs of your class.

- Read the passage aloud.
- Have students read the entire passage independently.

- In pairs, have one student read the problem and the other student the solution. Repeat.

**6 Ask** Now that you have read the whole passage, was your guess about the main idea correct? Write the main idea on the board. Then have students list specific supporting details.

**7 Reflect** As appropriate for your class, have students make connections between the passage sections. For example, how are hunger and sickness interconnected? Homelessness and illiteracy?

**8 Say** Now that we have learned facts about poverty, let's try to understand people's experiences better. Have students write or draw a journal entry from the point of view of a child experiencing one of the problems included in the reading passage. Invite students to share their work.

**9 Go Further:** Share the videos and ask students: Can you identify the problems and the solutions presented in the videos?

# How You Can Help Fight Poverty

There are millions of kids in the U.S. and around the world who are living in *poverty* and do not have what they need to feel safe, stay healthy, and learn. Poverty is a big problem made up of smaller ones that need solutions. Follow the steps below to help other kids like you!



## Fight Illiteracy

**Problem:** Some kids don't have books at home and are not able to go to preschool, so it can be harder for them to learn how to read.

**Solution:** Write a letter to your town government. Ask them to make sure all kids can have books and early education. If you have books at home, you could pick some to donate.



## Fight Sickness

**Problem:** Many families aren't able to visit the doctor or get medicine. That makes it hard for kids to stay healthy.

**Solution:** You can help keep yourself and other kids from getting sick by washing your hands so germs don't spread. Write to your principal asking for *nutritious* food options at school to help keep kids healthy.



## Fight Homelessness

**Problem:** When kids don't have a home to go to after school, it is hard for them to feel safe and cared for. They are also less likely to have all the supplies they need for class.

**Solution:** Make all students feel safe by always being kind. If your family is able to, volunteer at a homeless shelter to help those in need.



## Fight Hunger

**Problem:** One in five U.S. children don't have enough nutritious food to eat that can help them stay healthy. That can make it hard to pay attention in school.

**Solution:** You could host a canned food drive, then deliver the donations to a local food pantry that feeds hungry kids and families.

# What You Can Do to Help Fight Poverty

Millions of kids in the U.S. and around the world are living in *poverty*. They may not have what they need to feel safe, stay healthy, and learn. Poverty is a big problem made up of many smaller ones that need solutions. Follow the steps below to help make a difference for kids in need. These small acts add up!



## Fight Illiteracy

**Problem** Some kids don't have books to learn how to read, and many families in the U.S. are not able to send their kids to preschool, so they fall behind in learning.

**How you can help** Use your writing skills to write to local lawmakers, encouraging them to act quickly to make sure all kids have access to early education programs. If you have books at home, you could pick some to donate to a local charity center.



## Fight Sickness

**Problem** Many families don't have access to doctors or medicine. That makes some kids more *vulnerable* to getting sick.

**How you can help** Be sure to wash your hands regularly to prevent germs from spreading at school and getting other kids sick. You could also write a persuasive letter to your principal asking for *nutritious* food options at school to help keep all kids healthy.



## Fight Homelessness

**Problem** When kids don't have a home to go to after school, it is hard for them to feel safe and cared for. They are also more likely to miss school and not have basic school supplies.

**How you can help** Make all students feel supported by always practicing kindness. If your family is able to, volunteer at a homeless shelter to help those less fortunate than you.



## Fight Hunger

**Problem** One in five U.S. children faces hunger at some point during the year, meaning they don't have enough nutritious food to eat. That can make it hard to concentrate in school.

**How you can help** You could host a canned food drive and then deliver the donations to a local food pantry that will feed the hungry.