



Emotions Vocabulary Packet

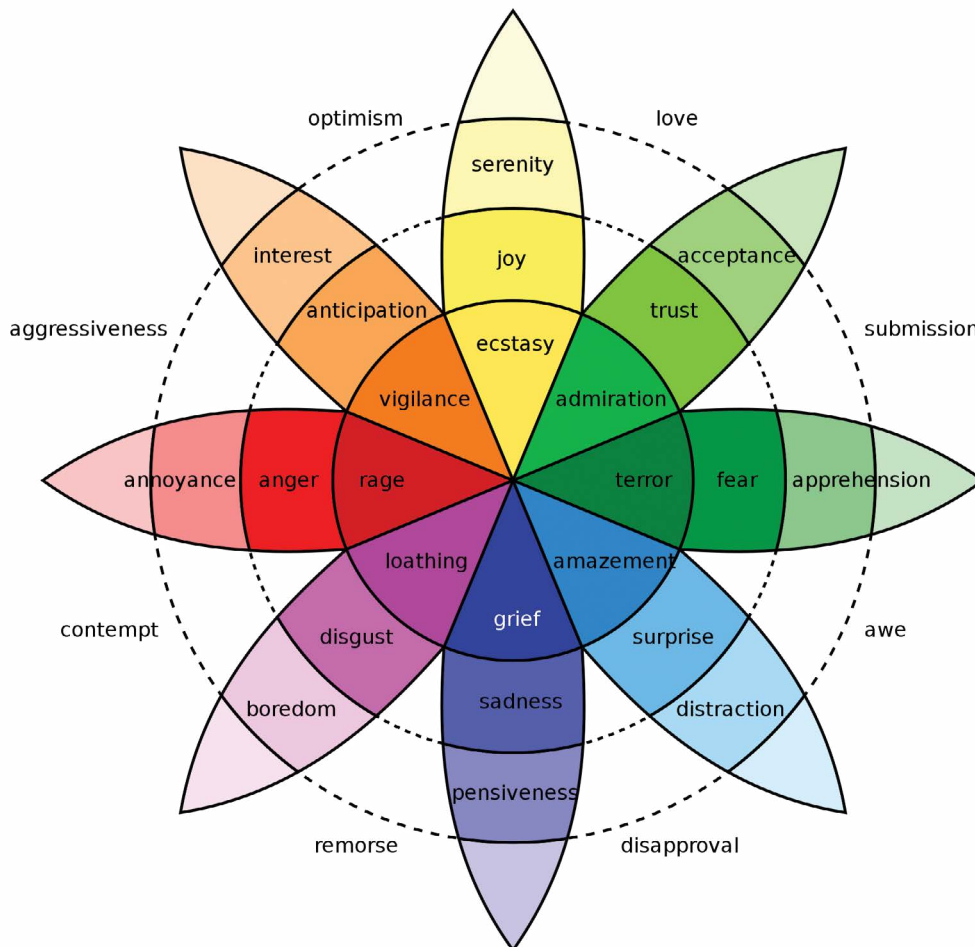


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Building Emotions Vocabulary

Students, and especially younger children, typically tend to only use a handful of emotions (happy, sad, mad, scared) to express how they are feeling. Part of building social-emotional competence includes expanding students' emotions vocabulary. In the 1980s, the psychologist Robert Plutchik developed the Theory of Emotion to expand on the eight generally accepted primary emotions (anger, fear, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust, joy). The wheel below demonstrates that understanding.



By Machine Elf 1735 - Own work, Public Domain.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13285286>

Today, scientists still can't agree on exactly how many emotions there are, but one we all can agree on is the need for students to build a deeper vocabulary and understanding of precisely how they are feeling. Read on for some ideas and resources for how to do so!

10 Activities to Build Emotions Vocabulary

- 1 Have students keep a Feelings Journal. See our sample pages at the end of this guide.
- 2 Model sharing how you're feeling using precise vocabulary. For example: *I'm feeling frustrated because it's almost time for recess and we still have some stuff to get through.*
- 3 Do emotions coaching in your classroom. Ask a student how they're feeling. When they respond with simple answers, such as happy or sad, encourage them to expand on those basic words. *Are you excited because it's almost time for recess? Are you worried about an upcoming test?*
- 4 Create an emotions vocabulary word wall in your classroom.
- 5 As students build their own vocabulary, encourage them to add them to their Feelings Dictionary. See the sample page at the end of this guide.
- 6 Use the Feelings Flash Cards (at the end of this guide) with students to help them identify ways that feelings can make us feel but remind students that not everyone has the same reactions to the same emotions all the time.
- 7 Use a Frayer Model to help students identify synonyms and antonyms for specific feelings. You can find a sample at the back of this guide.
- 8 Encourage students in your class who are fluent in other languages to share words for feelings that may not exist in English. For example, *gigil*, which means "the irresistible urge to pinch or squeeze someone because they are loved or cherished" in Tagalog.
- 9 Encourage students to create an original story and use made-up words for emotions and then challenge their peers to guess what the emotion might be using context clues.
- 10 Challenge your students to list as many emotions as they can in a minute. As their emotions vocabulary grows, so will their list.

Additional Readings and Resources

American Scientist, *The Nature of Emotions*: www.jstor.org/stable/27857503

BBC, *The Untranslatable Emotions You Never Knew You Had*: www.bbc.com/future/article/20170126-the-untranslatable-emotions-you-never-knew-you-had

Edutopia, *Boosting Young Students' Emotional Vocabulary*: www.edutopia.org/article/boosting-young-students-emotional-vocabulary

Greater Good Magazine, *How Many Emotions Are There?* greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_many_different_human_emotions_are_there#:~:text=A%20new%20study%20identifies%2027,together%20in%20our%20everyday%20experience.&text=Psychology%20once%20assumed%20that%20most,surprise%2C%20fear%2C%20and%20disgust.