

Sympathy

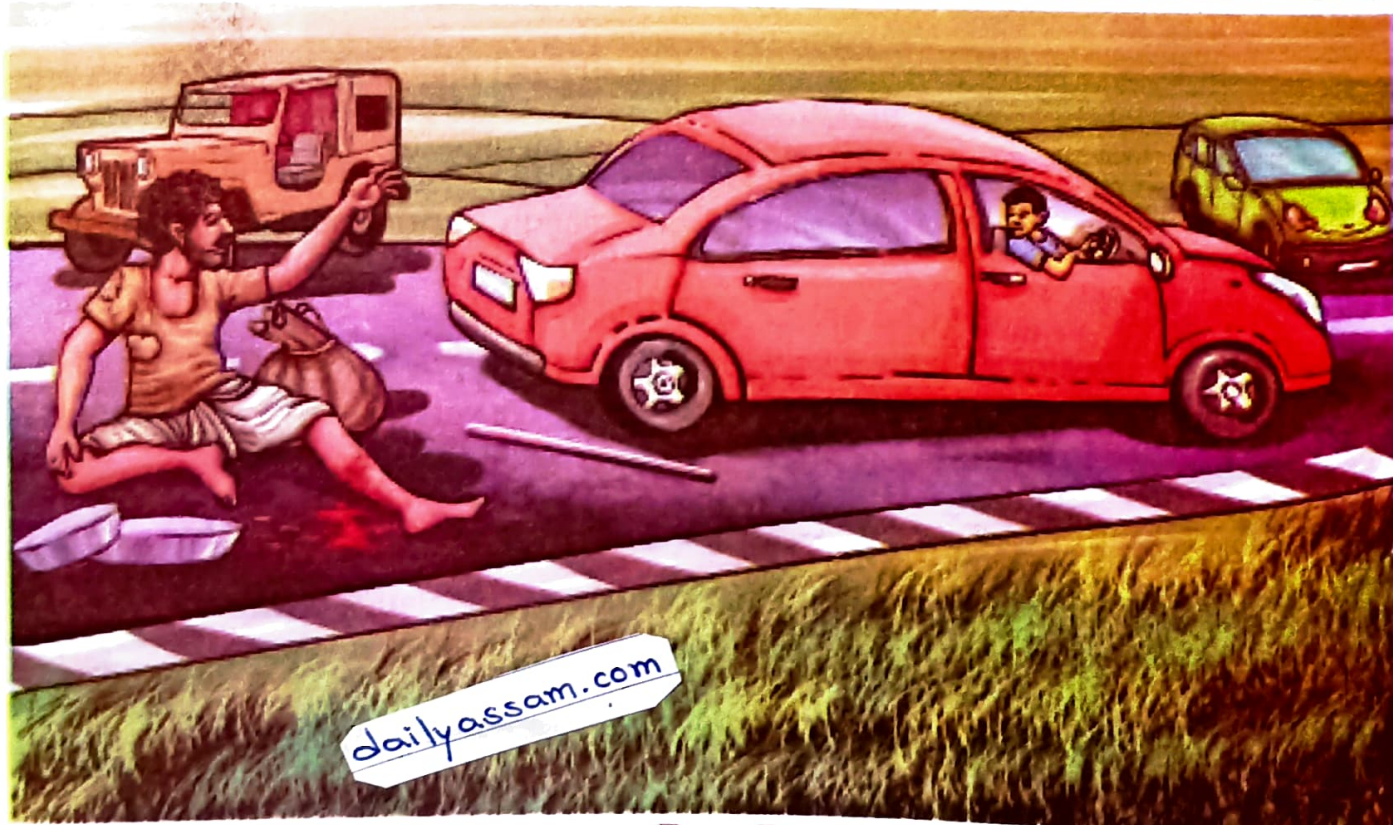
We all need the help of others at times, don't we?

Here are a few situations where a person needs help. With a partner, decide what kind of help you can offer. Then share your ideas with the rest of the class.

- 1. A beggar has been hit by a passing car, and has injured his leg.*
- 2. An elderly lady is waiting to cross the street, but there is too much traffic.*
- 3. You are buying some fruit, and a dirty little child is standing near you watching you without a word.*

What kind of help do you think people prefer - money or physical help? Why?

Think about what kind of help you yourself would prefer.



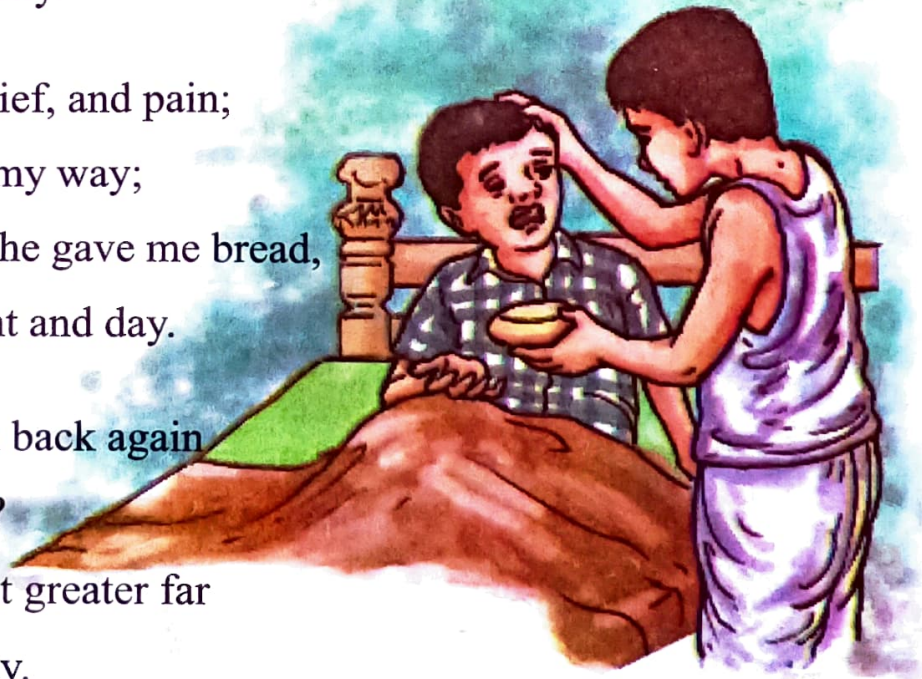
Now read the poem “Sympathy” and see a similar situation through the poet’s eyes.

I lay in sorrow, deep distressed;
My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold;
But not a kindly word.



My sorrow passed - I paid him back
The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks
And blessed his charity.

I lay in want, and grief, and pain;
A poor man passed my way;
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
He watched me night and day.



How shall I pay him back again
For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly sympathy.

– Charles Mackay

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ACTIVITIES

1. Read the poem and choose the correct options to complete the sentences.
- (a) The poet was in deep sorrow. A proud man came and helped him by
- (i) offering him kind words
 - (ii) ignoring him
 - (iii) giving him gold
 - (iv) giving him pleasant company
- (b) When the poet lay in want and grief, the one who helped him was
- (i) a rich man
 - (ii) a poor man
 - (iii) a proud man
 - (iv) a holy man
- (c) The poor man gave the poet
- (i) a cold look
 - (ii) sympathy
 - (iii) gold
 - (iv) not a kind word
- (d) When the poet's sorrow passed, he went to the proud man and
- (i) gave him back the gold
 - (ii) ignored him
 - (iii) didn't give back the gold
 - (iv) helped him
- (e) The poet refers to sympathy as 'heavenly' because sympathy
- (i) is a feeling found in proud people
 - (ii) is found only in rich people
 - (iii) is an ordinary human feeling
 - (iv) is a blessing from God

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2. (a) Here are some questions to help you find out how much you have understood the poem:

- (i) How did the proud person help the poet when the poet was unhappy?
- (ii) What did the poor man do when he found the poet lying in pain and sadness?
- (iii) Why does the poet think that he cannot help the poor man back in the same way?
- (iv) Why is the poor man's help greater than gold?
- (v) "Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly sympathy."
Why does the poet think so?

(b) Find in the poem lines that match the meaning of the following sentences.

- (i) I was sad and very unhappy.
- (ii) I was in need and was sad and hurt.
- (iii) He fed me and took care of me.
- (iv) Gold is valuable but sympathy and love are far more valuable.

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(c) Make sentences with the following phrases:

- (i) looks were cold : _____
- (ii) night and day : _____
- (iii) pay him back : _____

3. Below are some lines from the poem with some words underlined. Choose the correct meanings of the words from the options given in brackets.

- (a) I lay in sorrow, deep distressed
(tired/unhappy/angry)

Answer : _____

(b) He gave me gold
(money/jewellery/sheets)

Answer : _____

(c) And blessed his charity
(money/kind help/pride)

Answer : _____

(d) A poor man passed my way
(to move past/stopped me)

Answer : _____

(e) Is heavenly sympathy
(selfishness/godly goodness/pride)

Answer : _____

(f) Greater far is heavenly sympathy
(the feeling of being sorry at another's sadness/the feeling of pain/a superior feeling)

Answer : _____



4. Let's have fun with words!

The jumbled words below have been taken from the poem. Spell the words correctly. List their antonyms (if any) alongside. Mention whether the words are nouns or adjectives. One has been done for you.

Jumbled Words	Correct Words	Antonyms	Nouns/Adjectives
wsoror	sorrow	joy	noun
ymsapyth			
dkiynl			
ifeqr			
rdupo			
ycahirt			
lcod			

5. As you know, the lines of a poem are not always written like prose. Here are some of the main ideas of the lines of the poem, but in a jumbled order. Rearrange each set of words to get a complete sentence. Remember to start the sentence with a capital letter and end it with a full stop.

- (a) deeply/distressed/was/he
- (b) heard/a proud man/of/his grief
- (c) looks/cold/were/his
- (d) didn't offer/he/a/kindly word
- (e) the gold/him/back/paid/to/he
- (f) even/thanked/him/I
- (g) gave him/bread/the poor man/and/him/looked after
- (h) than/the poor man's/is/gold/greater/sympathy

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6. Read the paragraphs and then match them to the appropriate stanzas of the poem:

The poet was lying in sorrow and in pain. A poor man saw him and took care of him. He also offered him food to restore the poet's health. He took great care of the poet until the poet regained his health.

When the poet recovered, he went back to the man and repaid all the gold. He also stood straight, offered the man thanks, and blessed him for his help.

Once the poet was full of grief and very depressed. A rich and proud man heard about the poet's problems and came to help him. The proud man offered him money, but did not offer any words of sympathy.

The poet wonders how to repay an act of selfless kindness. He realises that having money to repay a debt is a great thing, but kindness is a heavenly act that cannot be easily repaid.

7. (a) Look up the dictionary to find out what is meant by the word 'values'.
 (b) Discuss what is meant by the term 'human values'.
 (c) Make a list of different types of human values. Taking the help of the dictionary, write the meaning of each of the human values you have listed. Also, write at least one synonym and antonym for each human value you have selected. One example has been worked out for you.

Human values	Meaning	Synonym	Antonym
kindness	The quality of being kind, gentle, friendly and generous	care, concern	unkindness
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8. In groups, turn the theme of the poem "Sympathy" into a story. You can write about four men in a village – one who is very rich, one who is very poor and two who are neither too rich nor too poor.

Hints:

- One man fell into deep distress (describe the type of distress)
- Approached a rich man; rich man gave money.
- He repaid the rich man's money when he recovered from his problems.
- Later he fell sick; was nursed back to health by a poor man.
- Conclusion

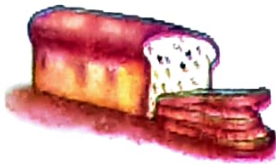
9. Let's learn some grammar:

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Read the following sentences-

(a) Give me some bread.

(b) Take me to the doctor.



We can say these sentences in a polite way by using could and would as shown below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) (i) <u>Could/Would you</u> give me some bread? | (b) (i) <u>Could/Would you</u> take me to the doctor? |
| (ii) <u>I wonder if you could</u> give me some bread. | (ii) <u>I wonder if you could</u> take me to the doctor. |
| (iii) <u>Would you mind</u> giving me some bread? | (iii) <u>Would you mind</u> taking me to the doctor? |

Now let's practise saying these sentences. Divide the class into two groups and give them names. Let one group ask questions beginning *with will/would/can/could*. The other group will give answers.