

The *Wizards of ONCE* SERIES

Resources for KS2 Teachers & Librarians

Cressida Cowell's aim as [Waterstones Children's Laureate](#) is to encourage EVERY child to read for fun and get something out of books. Her latest series, *The Wizards of Once*, will certainly achieve that in your classroom! It is full of magic and wonder, adventure and danger, friendship and family ... and lots more!

Cressida has a passion for developing the creative intelligence of children and she believes that reading allows the reader to grow three superpowers:

- Creativity
- Empathy
- Intelligence

Cressida explains that the magic of books is partly about the words, but also, importantly, what happens in the reader's imagination.

These classroom ideas aim to focus on those three superpowers and to explore and enjoy the reader's own imagination.



The *Wizards of ONCE*
CRESSIDA COWELL

About

The **Wizards of ONCE** Series

The Wizards of Once is an exciting high-adventure series set in an ancient, magical time, full of Wizards, Warriors, Giants and Sprites from the author of *How To Train Your Dragon*, Cressida Cowell.

The Wizards of Once (Book 1)



Once there was Magic, and the Magic lived in the dark forests. Until the Warriors came ...

Xar is a Wizard boy who has no Magic and will do anything to get it. Wish is a Warrior girl, but she owns a banned Magical Object, and she will do anything to conceal it.

In this whirlwind adventure, Xar and Wish must forget their differences if they're going to make it to the dungeons at Warrior Fort. Where something that has been sleeping for hundreds of years is stirring ...

The Wizards of Once: Twice Magic (Book 2)



Witches are creating havoc in the Wildwoods and danger lurks behind every tree trunk.

Wish is in possession of a powerful, Magic Spelling Book; Xar has a dangerous Witchstain on his hand. Together they can save the Wildwoods from the curse of the Witches but they are separated by the highest wall imaginable, and time is running out ...

It was unlikely that these heroes should meet in the first place. Is it possible they are destined to meet TWICE?

The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)

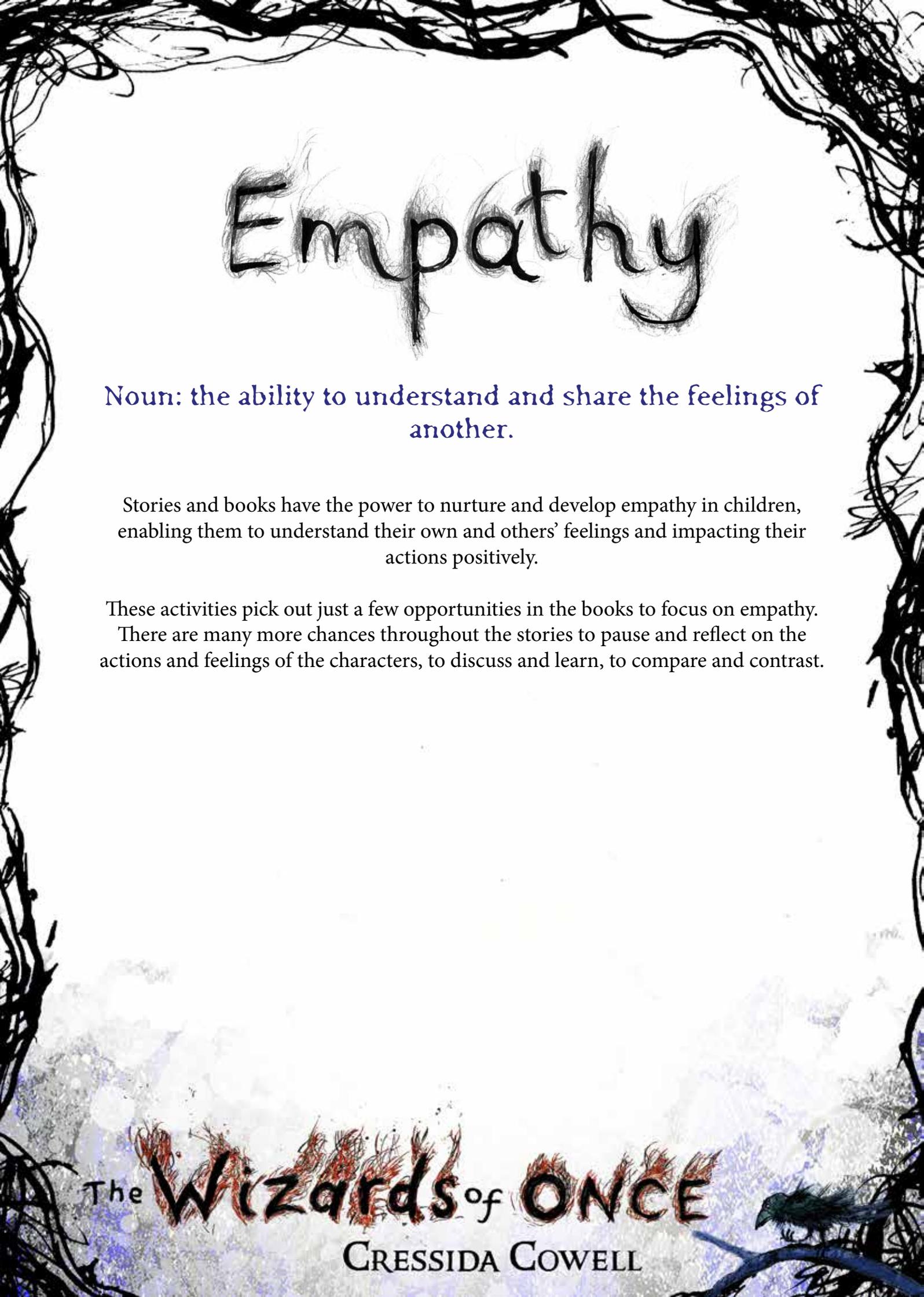


Wish and Xar are now outlaws on the run, hunted by Warriors, Wizards and worst of all, by WITCHES ...

Can they find the ingredients for the Spell to Get Rid of Witches before the Kingwitch gets his talons on Magic-that-Works-on-Iron?

Their next Quest is the most terrifying and treacherous of all ... And someone is going to betray them ...

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Empathy

Noun: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Stories and books have the power to nurture and develop empathy in children, enabling them to understand their own and others' feelings and impacting their actions positively.

These activities pick out just a few opportunities in the books to focus on empathy. There are many more chances throughout the stories to pause and reflect on the actions and feelings of the characters, to discuss and learn, to compare and contrast.



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Meet the Heroes

This activity can be linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

At the beginning of each book, Cressida introduces us to Xar and Wish.



The boy, Xar, is from a Wizard
Tribe, but he has no Magic, and
he will do ANYTHING to get it.

The girl, Wish, is from a
Warrior Tribe.



but she owns a banned
Magical Object, and she will
do anything to conceal it.

Part 1: Take a moment to consider children's previous ideas on what a hero is and how they should look. Ideas can be jotted on a flip chart or large sheet of paper. Children can draw on ideas from other books, films, games and real-life heroes.

Now begin to compare these ideas. Are some of them 'stereotypes'? Discuss what this means. Are Xar and Wish typical heroes?

Part 2: Lead the discussion into reflection. Who can be a hero? Do children have the capacity to be a hero themselves? What would they like to be a hero of?

Part 3: As you follow Xar and Wish's adventures, revisit this discussion as a class. Consider when they behave heroically and when they don't. Is a hero always strong, courageous, just? What can children learn from this?

It may be good to keep a record of this on a working wall.

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The Same but Different

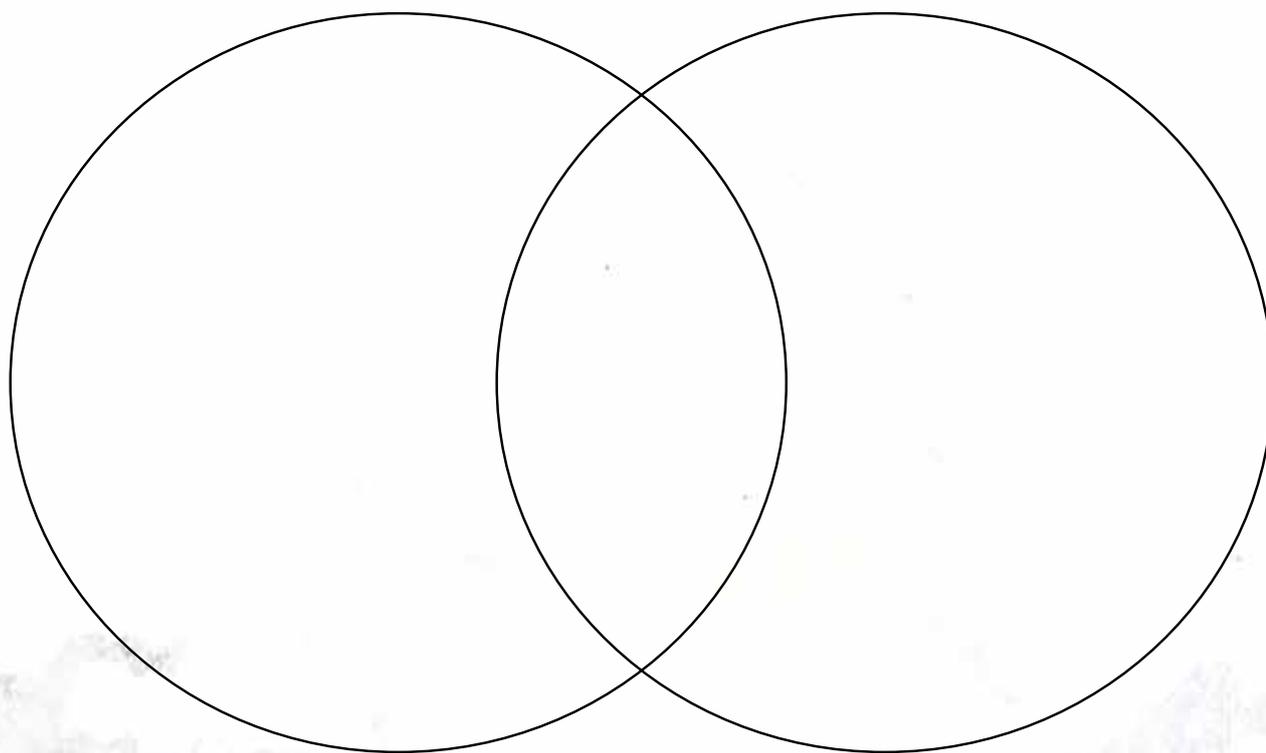
This activity can be linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

As you read about Xar and Wish, keep a track of the ways that they are different and the same in this Venn diagram. Try printing it on A3 paper (or create an even bigger one yourself) and add sticky notes to it with evidence from the books written on them. This could be a time they agreed, times they show a similar attribute such as courage, or when they show attributes on separate occasions.

As you come across these attributes, try to label and recognise them: fear, courage, hesitancy, disregard for others. Get underneath the reasons the characters choose to behave this way. Ask children if they would behave the same or think the characters could/should have chosen a different response.

XAR

WISH



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Focus on Your Strengths

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Twice Magic (Book 2)*.

Extract – begin reading from page 364 ‘I can’t fight this ...’ up to ‘... with what you DON’T!’ on the same page.

Part 1: In this tricky situation, while Xar and Wish are battling the Kingwitch, Xar begins to lose faith in himself, thinking he can’t do it. Ask children to discuss occasions when they haven’t felt good enough or have given up. Can they link the feelings and experiences they have had to those of Xar?



Part 2: Wish gives Xar the advice to focus on his strengths. Try out this activity to show children the feeling you get when others are positive about you. Tape a blank piece of paper to each child’s back. Now, ask everyone to walk around the room with a pencil. It’s important that everyone has the same colour to write with. Things written down should be anonymous. Each child should write one strength on the back of every other person in the room. You may wish to discuss before hand what a strength is and remind children that they should be kind and take this seriously.

Part 3: At the end, children can take the paper off their backs and read all the strengths others see in them. Ask them to describe how this makes them feel.

There may be some surprises in what others see in them. Hopefully children will be smiling and feeling confident.

Part 4: End with a reflection about how we can make people feel braver and more courageous and how we can help others be the best version of themselves.

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Patient Perdita

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)*.

Extract – begin reading at Chapter 9 on page 151 ‘That marked the ...’ up to ‘... crowds of friends.’ on page 156.

Part 1: Xar wasn't the biggest fan of school and we know he was very disobedient. Perdita seems to treat him differently from his previous teachers. Discuss the differences and the impact of Perdita's choices. How did it change Xar? Why do children think this was the case?



Part 2: Contrast this with Madam Clairvoy.

Extract - read page 159 from ‘Madam Clairvoy taught starcraft ...’ up to ‘... in other lessons as well.’ on page 160.

Why do children think the way Madam Clairvoy behaves towards Xar brings out the worst in him? Can he behave differently? What is Perdita trying to teach him?

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In Each Other's Shoes

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)*.

At the end of chapter 10 in *Knock Three Times*, Bodkin and Xar end up in each other's bodies for a day after taking an Interesting Transformation Potion. In chapter 11 and 12, they both discover things about each other.

Part 1: Read these chapters together or in pairs and find each occasion the characters have a moment of understanding about how the other must feel. Ask children to write these examples down on sticky notes and collect them and feel free to use the activity sheet as a starting point on the next page. Children may also note how a character changes as a result of that understanding.

Part 2: Develop this into a prediction about how this may change the character's behaviour and actions in the rest of the story.

BODKIN IN XAR'S SHOES:	XAR IN BODKIN'S SHOES:
<i>Understanding Xar's feelings:</i>	<i>Understanding Bodkin's feelings:</i>
<i>Changes in Bodkin:</i>	<i>Changes in Xar:</i>

In Each Other's Shoes

Activity Sheet

BODKIN IN XAR'S SHOES:	XAR IN BODKIN'S SHOES:
<i>Understanding Xar's feelings:</i>	<i>Understanding Bodkin's feelings:</i>
<i>Changes in Bodkin:</i>	<i>Changes in Xar:</i>