

Feeling Left Out: Discussion Guide & Activities

PSHE / anti-bullying pack for ages 8–12 (upper KS2 and early KS3) based on the story *Who Erased My Name?*

A name crossed off a list. Practice times changed without telling her. Two girls whispering and glancing over. This pack turns the story of Lena — who decides to withdraw before anyone can reject her — into a ready-to-teach session on feeling left out: separating what happened from what the mind added, checking before believing, climbing hard situations one rung at a time, and knowing when harm is real and an adult must be told. Ideal for Anti-Bullying Week and friendship weeks.

BASED ON

Who Erased My Name? — Book 9 of the Lena series (Kidsbooks.io)

THEME

Feeling left out, jumping to conclusions, and knowing when to tell an adult

AGE RANGE

8–12 (upper KS2 and early KS3; also read comfortably in Years 7–8)

FORMAT

7 printable A4 pages: teacher notes, 8 discussion questions, 30-minute lesson, 4 practical tools, 3 activities, 2 pupil worksheets



What's inside

- Teacher notes: story summary, learning objectives, curriculum links and the psychology of the 'film in my head'
- 8 discussion questions for circle time, guided reading or an anti-bullying lesson
- A 30-minute lesson plan
- 4 practical tools with 'try saying' scripts for teachers, TAs and parents
- 3 activities: the Misunderstanding List (with cut-out cards), an eight-step drama activity and a retelling task
- 2 pupil worksheets: 'The Three-Line Card' and 'The Five-Rung Ladder'

How to use this pack

You do not need the book to run this session: page 2 summarises the story and the questions stand on their own. Use it in Anti-Bullying Week, in a friendship unit, or after a playground fall-out — the story separates misunderstandings (most cases) from deliberate, repeated harm (tell an adult). Print pages 6 and 7 for pupils; everything else is for the adult. The tools on page 4 are written so they can be sent home to parents as well.

Who Erased My Name? is Book 9 of the Lena series by Kidsbooks.io — ten short, illustrated chapter books for ages 8–12, each about one feeling, each ending with a Parent & Educator Guide, discussion questions, puzzles, activities and an original song.

Teacher notes

The story in brief

On Tuesday evening Lena finds only eight names on the list — and hers is not one of them. Practice times change without anyone telling her, her phone becomes a black hole of unanswered messages, and a classmate called Madison has a sweet smile that hides sharp scissors. Inside Lena's head a film starts playing — 'they're mocking me, I'm unwanted' — so she does what she has always done: withdraw before they can reject her. Her mum gives her a three-line card (See – Think – Check), a five-rung ladder of tiny brave steps, and a rehearsal in which Mum plays Madison. Lena stays in the room, asks instead of guessing, and discovers that most of what she was sure of was a misunderstanding; and where the harm was real and deliberate, she learns the safety line: tell a grown-up you trust. She ends the week with a letter to herself and a fourth line on the card in her own writing.

Why this matters at ages 8–12

Between 8 and 12 friendships shift weekly, group chats appear, and a child's mind becomes able to imagine what others think of them — usually the worst. Most 'they hate me' stories are misunderstandings, and withdrawing prevents ever finding that out; but some are real bullying, and children need to know the difference and what to do in each case. This lesson gives a class a card to carry (See – Think – Check), a ladder for brave-while-afraid, and a clear safety line for when to involve an adult.

Learning objectives

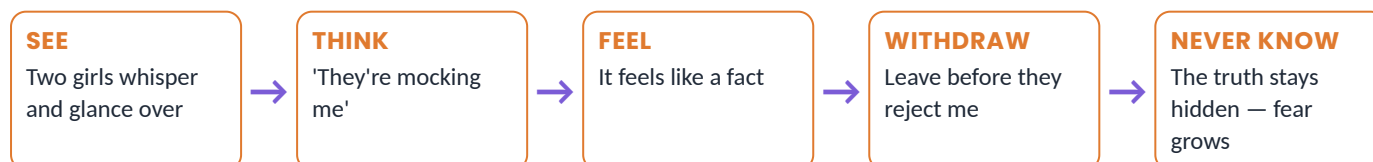
- Separate what actually happened from what the mind added
- Check interpretations by waiting or asking — before believing them
- Stay in hard situations one rung at a time, and involve a trusted adult when harm is real
- Tell the difference between a misunderstanding and deliberate, repeated hurtful behaviour

Curriculum links

PSHE Association Programme of Study, KS2 — Relationships (R14: healthy friendships make people feel included; R17: friendships have ups and downs — resolving disputes; R18: recognising a friendship that feels unsafe and asking for support; R19: the impact of bullying, including online; R20: responding to hurtful behaviour, reporting concerns and getting support); Health and Wellbeing (H17–H20, H24: recognising and managing feelings; problem-solving). DfE statutory RSE: Caring friendships; Respectful relationships (bullying). Also supports English reading comprehension (evidence versus interpretation).

What's really happening

A situation appears (two girls whisper and glance over); the mind adds an interpretation ('they're mocking me'); the interpretation feels like fact; and the child withdraws — which prevents ever finding out the truth, so the fear grows. Lena isn't oversensitive — her mind is simply quick to fill gaps with the worst story. The way out is a small checking routine: separate the story from the interpretation, then find the truth by waiting or asking.



Use the loop with the class: draw it on the board and show where the third line of the card — Check — breaks it. Then add the safety line beside the loop: if harm is deliberate, repeated or threatening, the step is not 'check' but 'tell an adult'.

Discussion questions

The first four questions come from the book's own activity pages; the rest extend the discussion for a class. Keep the talk about Lena; a child who recognises their own situation can talk to you afterwards.

- 1 Lena decided to withdraw before anyone had actually removed her. Why do you think she did that?
- 2 What is the difference between 'I am leaving' and 'I need to check first'?
- 3 Lena's mum asked her to write three lines on a card. What would your three lines say?
- 4 The ladder had five small steps. Why is a small first step easier than a big brave one?
- 5 The whisper turned out to be about a potato-nose drawing. What other 'films' does a mind write from a whisper?
- 6 When is something a misunderstanding — and when is it bullying? What is the safety line in the story?
- 7 Mum played Madison so Lena could rehearse. Why does practising a hard conversation make it easier?
- 8 Lena adds a fourth line to the card in her own writing. What do you think it says?

A 30-minute circle-time lesson

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| 0–5 min | Hook — Describe one scene: two classmates whisper and look at you. Ask the class to write, silently, what the whisper was about. Read out the range — from 'nothing' to 'they hate me'. |
| 5–12 min | Story — Read or summarise the story (page 2). Stop when Lena's name is not on the list: what does she see? What does her mind add? |
| 12–20 min | The card — Teach See – Think – Check on the board using Lena's list. Then the safety line: deliberate, repeated or threatening = tell an adult, and proving it is not your job. |
| 20–27 min | Talk — Discussion questions in pairs, then whole class. Focus on questions 1, 2, 5 and 6. |
| 27–30 min | Commit — Each pupil makes their own three-line card (page 6) to keep in their bag. |

Practical tools that work

These four tools come from the Parent & Educator Guide in the book. They are written as scripts so that teachers, teaching assistants and parents can use the same language.

1. The three-line card

Make Lena's card together and keep it in the schoolbag.

TRY SAYING *"Line one — See: what did you actually see? Line two — Think: what did your head add? Line three — Check: shall we wait, or ask?"*

2. Catch the film

Help the child notice when their mind starts directing.

TRY SAYING *"Is this a fact, or a film your mind wrote, directed and starred in? Your feeling is real — the thought still needs checking."*

3. The five-rung ladder

Break scary situations into tiny steps, and make the first step almost effortless.

TRY SAYING *"You don't have to fix everything today. Rung one is only: stay in the room. That's the whole mission."*

4. Rehearse the hard talk

Before a difficult conversation, play the other person — with a little humour, like Lena's mum playing Madison.

TRY SAYING *"I'm Madison now. Talk to me. Say what happened and what you want, and keep your voice steady — screaming makes people see you as the problem."*

Mistakes to avoid

- Don't say 'just ignore them' — it teaches silence, not checking. Offer the card instead
- Don't rush to fix everything for them — climb the ladder beside them, one rung at a time
- Don't dismiss the feeling ('you're imagining it') — the feeling is real; only the interpretation needs testing
- Don't treat asking for help as weakness — some doors need more than one hand

Encouraging tips

- Praise brave-while-afraid: 'You stayed even though you were scared — that is courage'
- Share your own misunderstandings out loud: 'I thought my friend was ignoring me — her phone was broken'
- Keep the deeper question alive: not 'how do I make them like me?' but 'what kind of person do I want to be, even while feeling rejected?'

Classroom & home activities

The Misunderstanding List

Start a class list like the one Lena writes at the end: times each of you was sure someone was against you — and it turned out to be a misunderstanding. The whisper that was about a potato-nose drawing. The friend on the bus who was holding a sick classmate's bag. Read the list whenever a new 'they're against me' film starts playing. Then add the safety line: 'If the harm is deliberate, repeated or threatening — I tell a grown-up I trust. Proving it and gathering evidence is not my job.' Cut out the cards below.

SEE — what did I actually see?	THINK — what did my head add?	CHECK — wait, or ask?
Rung 1: stay in the room	Rung 2: say hello	Rung 3: ask one question
Is it a fact — or a film?	Deliberate + repeated + threatening = TELL an adult	Proving it is not my job

Act it out — drama in eight steps

From the book's activity pages. The rehearsal scene — Mum playing Madison — is made for drama: one pupil plays the difficult person, one practises a steady voice, the class coaches.

1. **Choose a scene:** select a key scene that conveys the message you want to explore.
2. **Assign roles:** distribute roles and encourage free expression.
3. **Set up the space:** designate a simple area as a stage — no complex decorations.
4. **Use simple props:** classroom or household items are enough.
5. **Practise in advance:** allow children to rehearse without pressure for perfection.
6. **Encourage improvisation:** let children add their own creative touches.
7. **Discuss the performance:** talk about what they learned from the activity.
8. **Positive reinforcement:** praise and encourage each child for their effort.

Retell the story

Retell the story using your own creative words and ideas. Younger pupils can retell it in six pictures; older pupils can write the whisper scene from the other girls' point of view — what were they really talking about?

The Three-Line Card

Name: _____

Date: _____

Think of a moment when you felt left out — real or imagined. Fill in Lena's three lines, then add your own fourth line.

1. SEE — what actually happened (only what a camera would record):

2. THINK — what my head added (the film it wrote):

3. CHECK — how I could find out the truth: wait, or ask whom, and what?

4. The safety line — is any of it deliberate, repeated or threatening? If yes, which adult do I tell?

5. My fourth line, in my own words:

The Five-Rung Ladder

Name: _____

Week beginning: _____

Lena didn't have to fix everything on day one. Rung one was only: stay in the room. Build your own ladder for one hard situation — make the first rung almost effortless.

Rung	My tiny brave step	Scared out of 10 (before)	Done? What happened
Rung 1 (almost effortless)			
Rung 2			
Rung 3			
Rung 4			
Rung 5 (the whole mission)			

My misunderstanding list

Write one time you were sure someone was against you — and it turned out to be a misunderstanding.
Keep adding to this list all year.