

Being Sympathetic and Unsympathetic

Being sympathetic discussion questions

How often do people turn to you when they need some sympathy (tells you their bad news, etc)?

How good are you at being sympathetic?/ How sympathetic are you?/ Are you (very) sympathetic?

What do you do to show (real) sympathy? What else could you do?

How often are you unsympathetic (when people complain about their lives, etc)?

What do you do that makes you appear unsympathetic? What other signs of being unsympathetic are there?

How are these things below different when people are being sympathetic and not?

	Sympathetic	Unsympathetic
Body language		
Voice		
Language		

Listen to and/ or watch your teacher and hold up a "Sympathetic" and "Unsympathetic" card depending on what you think about the meaning. If both are possible, hold up both.

Cards to hold up

sympathetic	unsympathetic

Sympathetic language brainstorming

Brainstorm as many suitable phrases as you can into each column below.

Sympathetic	Unsympathetic	Not clearly sympathetic or unsympathetic/ It depends (on pronunciation etc)

Mixed answers

Put the phrases below into the table above.

- And?
- Are you okay?/ Are you alright?
- Are you?/ Did you?/ Do you?/ Were you?
- Frankly, you brought it on yourself.
- (Just) get over it.
- Good riddance (to bad rubbish) (I say).
- Honestly?/ Seriously?
- I can imagine how you must feel.
- I see.
- I understand exactly how you feel.
- I wouldn't worry about it.
- I'm shocked!
- I'm sure it'll be fine.
- Mmm hmm.
- No kidding.
- (There's) no point crying about it.
- (There's) no point crying over spilt milk.
- No way!
- Oh my goodness!
- Oh no, really?
- Oh well (I'm sure you'll...)
- Oh well, it's not like you...
- Oh, stop complaining!/ Oh, stop whingeing about it!
- Rather you than me.
- Really?
- Serves you right!
- So what?
- That must have been awful.
- That sounds awful./ That sounds terrible.
- That stinks.
- That's a pity./ That's a shame.
- That's such a pity./ That's such a shame.
- That's too bad.
- The same thing happened to me.
- To be honest, I think you had it coming.
- Well, boo hoo for you!
- Well, don't expect any sympathy from me!
- Well, I told you so.
- Well, that's no surprise, is it?
- Well, what did I tell you?
- What a bummer.

- What's the matter?/ What's wrong?/ What's up?
- You didn't!
- You don't surprise me.
- You have my sympathy.

Suggested answers

Some of these are debateable (depending on voice etc) and many other answers are possible, so if you have different answers please check with your teacher.

Sympathetic	Unsympathetic	Not clearly sympathetic or unsympathetic/ It depends (on pronunciation etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are you okay?/ Are you alright? ➤ I can imagine how you must feel. ➤ I understand exactly how you feel. ➤ I'm shocked! ➤ No way! ➤ Oh my goodness! ➤ Oh no, really? ➤ That must have been awful. ➤ That sounds awful./ That sounds terrible. ➤ That stinks. ➤ That's a pity./ That's a shame. ➤ That's such a pity./ That's such a shame. ➤ That's too bad. ➤ What a bummer. ➤ What's the matter?/ What's wrong?/ What's up? ➤ You have my sympathy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frankly, you brought it on yourself. ➤ (Just) get over it. ➤ I see. ➤ Oh well, it's not like you... ➤ Oh, stop complaining!/ Oh, stop whingeing about it! ➤ Serves you right! ➤ (There's) no point crying about it. ➤ (There's) no point crying over spilt milk. ➤ So what? ➤ To be honest, I think you had it coming. ➤ Well, boo hoo for you! ➤ Well, don't expect any sympathy from me! ➤ Well, I told you so. ➤ Well, that's no surprise, is it? ➤ Well, what did I tell you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ And? ➤ Are you?/ Did you?/ Do you?/ Were you? ➤ Good riddance (to bad rubbish) (I say). ➤ Honestly?/ Seriously? ➤ I wouldn't worry about it. ➤ I'm sure it'll be fine. ➤ Mmm hmm. ➤ No kidding. ➤ Oh well (I'm sure you'll...) ➤ Rather you than me. ➤ Really? ➤ The same thing happened to me. ➤ You didn't! ➤ You don't surprise me.

Being sympathetic and unsympathetic speaking coin game

Game 1

Secretly flip a coin and say something sympathetic and unsympathetic depending on which side of the coin comes up, and see if your partner can identify if you are being sympathetic or not:

Heads = Say something sympathetic, Tails = Say something unsympathetic

Do the same, but this time pronouncing the not clear phrases in sympathetic and unsympathetic ways.

Do the same, but this time just humming in sympathetic and unsympathetic ways.

Game 2

Do the same, but this time responding to something that your partner says:

Heads = Respond sympathetically, Tails = Respond unsympathetically

Game 3

Secretly flip the coin and say something to try to get the reaction below from your partner:

Heads = Try to get a sympathetic reaction, Tails = Try to get an unsympathetic reaction

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