



How are you feeling today?

Warm-up

- What emotion words do you know?
- Do you think you are good at talking about how you feel?
- Is there always a word to describe how you are feeling?

Tricky Vocabulary and Concepts

feeling	worry	tell them apart
pinpoint	excitement	notice
under pressure	exhilaration	nostalgia
suspicious	terror	fear
jealousy	chaos	unstable emotions
manipulated	Emotional intelligence	impoverished
homesick	nostalgia	smug
heaviness	collectivist culture	self-sufficiency
wellbeing	inner life	Inherit values
The dynamic relationship between emotions and language	Emotions are a cognitive phenomena	The connection between what we think and what we are feeling



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Can you describe what emotions you are experiencing right now? This is the question Tiffany Watt Smith asks her TED audience to sensitize them on how easy or how hard it is to put words on our emotions. This is a fantastic presentation to conjure the vocabulary of emotions.

Do you think words can really describe how we feel? In a lot of the literature on emotions, it has broken down all emotions to 6 basic emotions: anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness and surprise. The first time I read this, I found it hugely difficult to accept this. I found this an oversimplification and it made it so much more difficult for me to boil all my feelings down to these emotions. Yet, these basic emotions seem to be the baseline for emotional researchers--they even made an animated movie about them (see *Inside Out*).

Smith challenges this simple view of emotional language. She looks across different languages and cultures to show the complexity and diversity of the words used to describe how we are feeling. She even suggests that the very existence of these words may allow us to feel things that people in other cultures don't. She exposes a compelling and thought-provoking idea that words can shape how we feel.



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The Video: TED The History of Human Emotion Discussion by Tiffany Watt Smith

I would break this presentation down into a series of snippets and begin by doing [Tell Backs](#) of each segment. In fact, if you have more basic students, I would stop at the 6 min mark and center a discussion on the vocabulary of emotions. However, for more advanced learners, I would go through the presentation as it digs much deeper into the topic of the history of emotions and may be very engaging for higher-level discussions.

https://www.ted.com/talks/tiffany_watt_smith_the_history_of_human_emotions#t-846811

Questions

- What emotions does Smith talk about?
- Can you give some examples of the emotional language of other cultures?
- What stuck with you in Smith's presentation?
- Do you have words in your native language that describe feelings that don't exist in English?
- How are emotions viewed in your culture? Do you talk about them, or not?
- What, according to you, is emotional intelligence?
- Use the [emotional definer wheel](#) and say which are positive and which are negative

