

2 The criticism balloon

Pupils imagine a criticism floating in a balloon that they accept and let go of.

Intention: Pupils explore how criticism can help us and then we can let it go.



SEL competency: **Relationship skills** Accept and learn from criticism

Duration: 10 minutes

Materials: Use **Posters 1 and 2** for visual support and emotions vocabulary

Key words: *accept, criticism, resist*

Instructions:

Prepare

- 1 You may want to pre-teach the key words for this activity.
- 2 Introduce the activity: *We're going to explore how criticism affects us, how we can learn from it and let it go.*
- 3 In pairs, invite pupils to think about criticisms they have received: *What types of criticism have you been given about yourself? Why do you think someone gave you this criticism? Did the criticism help you at all?* You may like to write pupils' suggestions up on the board.
- 4 Ask: *How did it feel to talk about criticisms? It's quite normal to find it difficult. What did you notice?* Allow pupils time to reflect on this. Refer to **Poster 2** to help them acknowledge the physical effects of being criticised.
- 5 Say: *Sometimes we resist criticism. We don't want to think about it. But sometimes there is something in the criticism that can teach us something.*
- 6 Continue: *To help us, we're going to imagine a balloon with a criticism in it coming towards us. If it feels OK for you, you can imagine holding the balloon for a moment. Thank it for what it has taught you, and then you can let it go.*

Practise

- 7 Now invite pupils to begin the opening routine: *Please sit up, with your back straight. Put your feet flat on the floor. Hands on your lap.*

- 8 Continue: *Close your eyes or look down. Remember you're in your own bubble.*
- 9 Slowly guide pupils through the practice: *Imagine a balloon with a criticism is coming towards you. Perhaps it's something someone said recently, or something you are imagining.* Allow pupils ten seconds to imagine this.
- 10 Continue: *Often we don't like criticism. But maybe there is some truth in it. Imagine you accept the balloon, hold it for a moment. Perhaps you can thank it for what it has taught you or for the help it has given you.* Pause for 10–15 seconds.
- 11 Say: *Now let the balloon go. As it floats away, imagine waving goodbye to the criticism and the balloon.* Pause for 10–15 seconds.
- 12 Continue: *Notice how you feel as you let it go. Does it feel good?* Pause for 10–15 seconds.
- 13 If their eyes are closed, ask pupils to open them: *When I count to three, open your eyes. One, two, three.*

Reflect

- 14 Invite pupils to give feedback to the group: *How did that feel? What did you notice?* Remember there are no right answers; just accept pupils' experience and thank them for sharing. Use **Poster 1** for emotions vocabulary.
- 15 Bring the activity to a close: *Maybe the next time someone criticises you, you can notice if you resist the criticism. Can the criticism help you? Then let it go.*

Learning to accept criticism and let it go can help us grow.