

Running out of a job

As well as encouraging critical thinking, this enquiry serves the basic function of reminding pupils that people have jobs to earn money. However, it also reminds them that the earth's resources are limited, and thought has to be given to current and future needs.



If you have a young class, begin with questions about jobs – what do their parents do/what would they like to do when they are older. Ask why do people have jobs? Clarify that most adults have jobs to earn money. As soon as you're ready, read out the attached scenario, and encourage as much acting as you can.



What should the fisher-people do? 5 likely ideas and how you/other pupils can respond

We should stop fishing entirely. *But how will you provide for your families?*

We should all get different jobs. *That's fine for some of you younger, apprentice fisher-people. But what about the older members of the group?*

We should move to a different ocean. *Wouldn't this take you away from your families? And what if those have been fished in the same way?*

We should just carry on fishing. *But this will mean your children and their children will have no fish. Is that fair?*

We should only fish a little bit. *How will you make up for the drop in money earned?*



Take clear ideas from the group and 'anchor' them around the boat (no pun intended) by writing on pieces of paper. Ask pupils to stand by the idea they think is best. From here, ask pupils to justify why they have chosen a certain idea, and invite questions/comments from others.

Hopefully, they will pick holes in each other's ideas, like the italic text does above. This will stretch their thinking, and cause them to give further explanation, or abandon the idea. Either way, it is a very useful exercise in assessing viability.

Remove the lesser popular ideas until you're left with 2. Have the fisher-people debate what should be done.

NEXT STEPS

Round off with a blind vote and/or some last thoughts on what they would tell future fisher-people to avoid a visit from the marine scientist.

Setting up your boat

Set out the edges of a boat in any way you wish. I've used hall benches to represent the sides, and one for the plank. Invite pupils to enter your boat, and tell them they are fisher-people. Instruct them to act in role on a daily fish. Acting as an overly-enthusiastic fisher-person yourself will help.

*Watch out for oncoming ships! Throw some nets over that side! Pull in the nets on that side!
Gut those fish! Try not to throw up overboard, we're eating fish out of that water!*

To add depth, tell them they are a range of ages, so they can either act as a young, spritely fisherperson, or a sea-wise old hand. Ask them to imagine years passing by, and that they slowly notice there are less and less fish caught. Introduce an officious-looking marine scientist (either you, or pre-arranged with a TA), ideally with a clipboard in hand.

"Well," says the marine scientist. "We've been monitoring the fish stocks over the past few years, and I'm sorry to say they are indeed going down. If you carry on fishing the way you are, the fish will one day run out."

Be careful not to be too officious, for the pupils may want to spite the scientist for being a jobsworth, and this could bias their views!