



Philosophy  
Circles

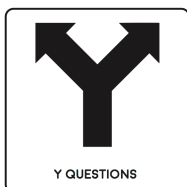
# Fairies at the bottom of the garden

*The first is a dialogue between children about whether there are fairies at the bottom of one of their gardens. It might lead to some awkward questions about Father Christmas for younger children; don't say I didn't warn you.*



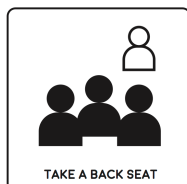
This enquiry will get pupils talking about what's real, what's imaginary, and the relationship between the two. So begin with a game to get them thinking abstractly – '**What is the opposite of...**' (p. 19) and '**What would it be?**' (p. 20) are good examples.

- If fairies were a colour, what would it be?
- If imagination was a sound, what would it be?
- What is the opposite of real?
- What is the opposite of a story?



Read through the dialogue. They could carry on the dialogue, perhaps in role in small groups.

Alternatively, go straight to 'Who do they believe/agree with?' Use '**Vote with your feet**' (p. 16) with characters' names (and perhaps their ideas) placed around the room on paper. Invite pupils to give reasons for their opinions.



Their reasons will open up many avenues of interesting enquiry, and it is best to let the discussion develop organically. If ideas do not seem to be connecting, you could overlay some questions on what is being said to help provide a focus. You might find them talking about questions like:

- Can you create your own reality? (Amy)
- Do you need to see something to believe it? (Lucy)
- For something to be real, does it need to be proven or not disproven (Nina)

## NEXT STEPS



Where you go next will depend on your class' age. You could ask them to find other examples of things people believe without necessarily seeing them (God, superstition, good/bad luck, dreams, life after death). Why do people believe things that they can't always see?

For younger children, you could ask them for things they believe in and why.

LUCY I've got a rabbit.

AMY Well, I've got a dog. Dogs are much more exciting than rabbits. All a rabbit does is sit in a hutch.

NINA I haven't got any pets, but I do have fairies living at the bottom of my garden.

LUCY No you don't. Fairies aren't real. They're just in stories.

NINA These ones are real. When I leave milk out for them they drink it.

LUCY That could be a hedgehog.

NINA No it couldn't. I put it on the bird table and birds don't drink milk. And a hedgehog couldn't climb up.

LUCY It must be a squirrel then.

AMY It can't be a squirrel. There aren't any squirrels in Nina's garden. There aren't any trees for them to climb.

LUCY But it's silly. Why should it be a fairy drinking the milk just because it isn't a squirrel or a bird or a hedgehog?

NINA Well, what else could it be?

LUCY I don't know. Just not fairies. I mean, have you ever seen them?

NINA Of course not. They only come out when you can't see them. That's how I know it's fairies and not a squirrel.

AMY If Nina thinks there are fairies at the bottom of her garden, why can't there be? It's her garden.