



Philosophy
Circles

Animal Rights

A simple to follow, to easy to deliver enquiry which puts the pupils in control of which issue they discuss.



Pair pupils up to play 'Word Tennis' – on the theme of 'How do we use animals'? In their pairs, they take it in turns to give an example of how we use them. It's a good idea to provide some examples – e.g. Guide Dogs, Horse Racing, etc., otherwise I've found younger pupils come up with answers like 'feeding / stroking'!



After a couple of minutes, ask pairs to join to create fours and provide each with a pack of 5-8 sheets of the same coloured card / paper. Ideally, have a range of coloured sets so groups can easily tell which is theirs.

Ask the groups of four to write one way we use animals, in big letters, on each of the cards. After a couple of minutes, they will have all the cards ready to form a 'Conceptometer'. Ask groups to rank their cards from 'Always OK' to 'Never OK' with a space for 'Sometimes OK' in the middle.

Once this is done, ask all groups which of the 'uses' is most juicy and interesting to discuss. Emphasise that the juiciest ones will be those with lots of arguments of either side, and so probably made the group disagree about where it should go on the scale. Ask pupils to decide upon the juiciest, and then bring it to the middle of the room.

Whilst impossible to predict, you may find uses like these:

- Eating meat
- Animals in the circus
- Zoos / captivity
- Experiments
- Horse-racing

Ensure that all in the group know what each mean, and perhaps loosen loyalties by asking for links between two or more, or asking for an odd-one-out. Vote on one to talk about, and then begin with a simple question of 'Is it OK to...'



Almost inevitably, questions about the moral acceptability of something become a question of 'When?' (unless it's something completely horrendous, which probably wouldn't have been chosen because of its one-sidedness). So don't feel concerned if a few answers begin with 'it depends' – push them for examples of when and when not to allow it!

If the class do end up voting for a use that creates a consensus, you can still ask when / not to allow it to see if there are any specific circumstances where an exception can be made. You can also broaden the scope of the question to involve other, similar areas: for example, if a class universally disagree with training animals to perform in the circus, ask how far this principle should extend. Should it also apply to training dogs for agility contests?

NEXT STEPS
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Ask pupils if it's possible to create a rule(s) to govern how we decide which uses of animals are acceptable and which are not. In Philosophy this is called a 'Maxim' and challenges them them to synthesise range of stand-alone ideas to form a governing principle.