



Philosophy
Circles

Last Command of the King

A highly collaborative enquiry that requires pupils to elect a new King, based on the monarchy of Bhutan. How will your class react?



GET MOVING

To create a greater sense of community, play the 'Walk Together' game: on a given signal, invite all pupils to begin walking around the room in silence, being careful not to bump into anyone. With a second signal, everyone stops.

After a couple of rounds, inform the group that you will play no further part - they need to start and stop as a group, but without talking. Thank you to <http://dramaresource.com/walk-together/> for this

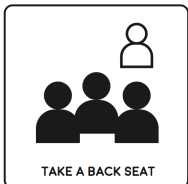
game.



Y QUESTIONS

You could read the stimulus in its pure form, or become acquainted with it in advance so you can ad-lib it so the pupils are the citizens. Play the role of King or Queen, and put the pupils into the roles of citizens of the country. Pull the rug of a wise monarchy from beneath their feet. They now have to decide how they proceed.

Should the citizens should obey the King? Would their opinions change if he was a different kind of king?



TAKE A BACK SEAT

Let the pupils facilitate a discussion themselves. You could pretend to retire to your palace to start packing up moving boxes so that the pupils do not feel orchestrated.

If they agree to obey the King, you might find questions like these arising:

What are the most important qualities for a leader of a country?

Does a leader need different qualities from a judge?

Let them give their opinions, and choose the next speaker.

You could encourage pupils to nominate themselves as potential leaders. Let the class interview them for the job. Encourage a few more to stand, before asking the class whose leadership they approve of.

If the class vote overwhelmingly to convince the King to stay put, you could re-enter and let the dramatic narrative develop. What are their reasons?

NEXT STEPS



How did their reactions differ from the people of Bhutan when the real King announced he was giving up absolute power? This could form an interesting research task.

Once upon a time (perhaps twice, but probably not), a wise and kind king did something very surprising.

It was surprising because his people loved him and were very happy.

When he had to decide what his country should do, he thought long and hard and always seemed to make the right choice.

When something bad happened (which was not very often, because most people were happy most of the time) he was the judge. He listened very carefully to everybody, and decided who was to blame and how they should be punished. He always seemed to be very fair.

Everybody trusted him, and they felt they were very lucky to have such a wise and kind king. So what he did was very surprising indeed.

One day, he called all his people together and told them that it would be better for him not to be king any more. Instead, they should choose leaders and judges from among themselves.

The people were very upset. They were quite happy with how things were, and were worried about what the change would bring.

They marched and protested, and sang songs outside the king's palace begging him to carry on ruling the country.

"You say we should choose our leaders," they said. "And we choose you."

"You say you want to do as I tell you," said the king. "And I am telling you to choose other leaders."

And so it went on, into the night.