



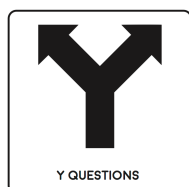
Define it, or lose it!

P4C naturally encourages pupils to question the world. This often involves deconstructing familiar concepts and trying to re-establish meaning. This encourages them to think critically and pose counter-examples. Naturally, pupils also respond incredibly well to issues that affect them directly – such as homework, rules and siblings. This enquiry plan combines concept deconstruction with a highly popular issue. It best explored just before break-up!



Central to the enquiry is the concept of 'holidays.' Begin by posing a light, easy to answer question that they can discuss standing up in pairs, such as 'what is your dream holiday?' or 'what's the best thing about school holidays?' To make it more creative, you could ask one to argue that sunny, hot holidays are best, and the other to argue that cold, wintry holidays are best. If you want to get them really active, they could also freeze-frame a pose from a holiday, or scatter assorted postcards (available on Ebay) on the floor and ask them to pick one up that appeals to them and explain why.

Announce all schools have received a letter from the government and you need to read it to all pupils. Feel free to reprint to ham-up the officiality!



This question is asking pupils to deconstruct a concept rather immediately choose between two or three possible answers.

Start by doing some facilitation in-role, by becoming an official from the Department of Dictionary Definitions, pushing back against their definitions with counterexamples.

Example 1: If a pupil says: 'A holiday is when you don't go to school for a while', see if anyone disagrees, perhaps by asking 'Does a holiday always involve staying away from school?' A possible counter-example is 'What if you're an adult!'

Example 2: A pupil says: 'A holiday is where you rest.' A counter-example could be adventure or working holidays.

It is likely that their posing of counter-examples will lead to contestable questions. For example, 'a holiday is when you go away' may elicit the counter-example 'but what if you stay at home and do gardening?', and may lead to the question 'do holidays require travel?'



The structure of this enquiry lends itself to getting them to self-facilitate, with some children stepping into your role and becoming officials themselves, providing counterexamples and pushing for clearer definitions. If you have started the enquiry sitting in the circle, get them to take your place which allows you to retreat from being a focus of attention.

Will their progress towards a definition keep 'holidays' the dictionary, and keep the thing itself? At some point, you can reach a decision with your other officials!

NEXT STEPS

Can they think of another word that takes central importance in their lives, but the meaning of which can also be contested?

Define it, or lose it!

P4C naturally encourages pupils to question the world. This often involves deconstructing familiar concepts and trying to re-establish meaning. This encourages them to think critically and pose counter-examples. Naturally, pupils also respond incredibly well to issues that affect them directly – such as homework, rules and siblings. This enquiry plan combines concept deconstruction with a highly popular issue. It best explored just before break-up!

Dear pupils,

As you may know, new words are added to the dictionary each year. In government, we are worried that too many new words are being added to the English language. This is not only creating too much work for pupils and teachers, but making dictionaries far too heavy. But we have a plan!

We have decided that if we cannot agree upon the meaning of the word, then we do not need it. This will make sure that we are all clear on the words we use, and that no meaningless extra words can confuse people.

Furthermore, if we cannot produce a meaning for the word, then we do not need the thing. For example, if we can't agree what a cat is, then we will no longer have cats in this country. Luckily, we can probably agree upon the definition of a cat.

The word I would like your class to find the meaning of is 'holiday'. Remember, if we can't find the meaning, then we don't need the word, and if we don't need the word, we definitely don't need the thing.

If you can't give a clear definition of holiday by the end of the lesson, or at least make progress towards one, the word will be removed, and the thing will not exist. You'll be staying in school for the next **x number** of weeks. Good luck!

Department of Dictionary Definitions
HM Government