



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

ISABELLE FARRINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Philosophy For Children: A Curriculum Guide
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Abstract

This is a curriculum guide for implementing philosophy for children (P4C) in the K-6 classroom. In this guide you will find a plethora of resources ranging from lesson materials, to instructional strategies to video links on philosophy for children. There are also recommendations and other writings from the researcher. This comprehensive guide is intended to provide materials for P4C lessons once a week, for one hour each session, in place of a reading lesson. There is more than enough material for an entire school year. When implemented correctly, P4C improves students' standardized test scores; benchmark scores; reading, writing, and math progress; critical thinking and reasoning abilities; confidence; respect towards peers; and pro-social behaviors.

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Jason, thank you for mentoring me through this process and presenting me with an opportunity to help teachers and make an impact on the Philosophy for Children field.

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Without the contributions, advice, and support from all of the aforementioned professionals, this work would not be able to have the positive impact on the P4C field and teachers that I know it will. Thank you again.

Disclaimer

In this curriculum guide, most of the summaries, discussion questions, lessons, activities, and more are not by the author of the curriculum guide. Authors are cited both in text and in the reference section. Permission to include each lesson in this guide has been granted by author or publisher. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. For the children's literature section, if an author is not sited, the source reference is on the header of the page. If there is no name on a document, then the researcher, Rebecca-Jo Schwetz wrote it.

Table Of Contents

Contents	Page number
Section I	1
Section II	3
Introduction and Overview	3
Why P4C?	4
Literature Search: Research Indicates	5
Section III	11
Common Core State Standards addressed in P4C	11
How to use Appendix B (CCSS) in P4C	13
Professional Development Opportunities	14
P4C Instructional Strategies	15
No Right or Wrong Answer	21
The First Philosophy Circle	23
The Second Philosophy Circle	26
Eliciting Responses	27
Section IV: Philosophy for Children Book Modules and Lesson Materials	29
Aesthetics	30
Children's Literature on Aesthetics	31
Lessons and Activities for Aesthetics	60
Ethics	99
Children's Literature on Ethics	100

Lessons and Activities for Ethics	135
Epistemology	180
Children's Literature on Epistemology	181
Lessons and Activities for Epistemology	220
Metaphysics	252
Children's Literature on Metaphysics	253
Lessons and Activities for Metaphysics	315
Additional Resources	360
Techniques from Ancient Philosophers for Every Day Lessons	362
References	366
Section V	385
Recommendations	385
Reflection	386
Action Plan	387

Section I

Statement

I created this reference guide for elementary school teachers which lays out how to teach philosophy for children in the classroom. The reference guide is designed to allow implementation of lessons once a week for one hour in the place of a reading lesson. Topics include: aesthetics, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Different instructional strategies, tips on how to start, professional development opportunities, and lessons are also described. This reference guide is a well organized handbook that any elementary teacher can easily use to teach philosophy to children.

Rationale

Based on my educational background in philosophy, experience in education, and empirical findings, I know that implementing philosophy for children has a positive impact on education. In the education system, teachers battle the pressure to cover all of the standards, prepare students for standardized testing, and teach students to respect and be kind to one another. Philosophy for children (P4C) has statistically been supported to increase a number of academic scores and grow community with very little instructional time and at no cost.

Impact on Education

By implementing P4C sessions once a week for an hour students will show gains in verbal, non verbal, and quantitative tasks as well as pro-social behavior. Your students' abilities to reason, to support their ideas with evidence, challenge their own thinking, and think critically will improve. These are the foundation of persuasive writing skills. The students will question everything, be imaginative, and perhaps think the impossible. These skills are what makes

fantastic story writers. The students' aptitude to engage in meta-cognition, evaluate and analyze a text, and question characters will increase. These skills make better readers. The students will show improvement in their ability to detect patterns, to understand problems and stubbornly not give up on solving them, and reason abstractly and quantitatively. These skill make excellent mathematicians. The students will improve their communication skills, confidence, be more respectful, be more honest, and not only accept, but appreciate that others have different opinions. These are skills that make good people.

Section II

Introduction and Overview

In 1970, Matthew Lipman embarked on a mission. A Mission to help children learn to reason better through stories (Lipman, 1982). In 1974, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) was formed as a part of Montclair State University in New Jersey. (An Institution that is still actively involved in conferences, professional development, workshops and the like for Philosophy for Children.) In 1991, The United Kingdom got wind of P4C and developed the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERRE). It was a rough start in the UK, but through the efforts of many dedicated teachers who continued to experiment, train, and network, P4C has become extremely widespread (Williams, n.d.). Unfortunately, even though P4C was born in the United States and there are institutions that employ P4C all around the country, P4C is not as pervasive in the U.S. as it is in the UK and other countries. Today, P4C has been adopted by about 60 countries, who all take different approaches (Gorard & Siddiqui, 2017) that fit their society, education system, and personal teaching style the best.

There are many different strategies for teaching philosophy for children, most of which involve children's literature (*see instructional strategies*). Even though there are many different approaches, the main structure of the P4C session is essentially the same.

- 1) A teacher presents a stimulus that has been chosen to elicit deep thoughts. This stimulus may be a book, a scenario, a picture, a musical piece —the sky is really the limit here.
- 2) The students share ideas, questions, and opinions.
- 3) A question or idea is chosen as a starting point (most of the time through voting).

- 4) The students have a discussion. They share their thoughts, comment on others' thoughts, make connections, etc. and the conversation flows naturally. It is important that the respecting others' opinions is maintained as a rule and explicitly taught if necessary for philosophy circles to work properly and build community. The teacher may prompt with a question if needed.

Why P4C?

Philosophy for children has three main goals: critical thinking, creative thinking, and caring thinking (Topping & Trickey, 2007a). *Critical thinking* involves: asking “big questions,” analyzing, using reason and logic, backing up ideas with evidence, testing ideas, and suggesting conclusions. *Creative thinking* involves: using ones' imagination, taking a holistic approach, creating new ideas, making connections, and proposing alternatives. *Caring thinking* involves: building community, respecting others, listening to others' ideas with an open mind, maturely disagreeing, the willingness to change one's thinking after considering others' ideas, and having students appreciate peers when they help them work through their thinking.

In an interview with Matthew Lipman (1998) an editor asked Lipman if he thought that philosophy for children was one answer to address critical thinking in education. Lipman replied:

I think it is *the* answer, because it provides all that critical thinking approaches can provide, and a great deal more...it concentrates on systematically connecting skills to one another so that when one thinks about the subject matter of a discipline, one does so in an organized and thorough way... It is through such thinking together that children become reasonable and independent. (Brandt, 1998, p.4)

Literature Search: Research Indicates

There is no standardized test that specifically measures critical thinking, creative thinking, and caring thinking. However, P4C researchers measure cognitive abilities that require both creative and critical thinking through verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative tests or other appropriate measures. Observations, as well as self reflection scales are used to measure P4C's effectiveness on caring thinking.

Critical and Creative Thinking Results

Colom et al. (2014) executed a longitudinal study for P4C starting in 2002. They examined students who participated in P4C session for one hour a week from 6 years-old to 18 years-old. They compared these results to students in a near-by similar region with the same socio-economic background. Colom et al. (2014) collected data for cognitive abilities and personality for both the control and experimental groups when they were in 2nd grade, 6th grade, and 10th grade. Based on the average, the experimental group's general cognitive ability score was 7 IQ points higher. Their non-verbal score (reasoning & spatial) was 4 IQ points higher. Finally the experimental group's average was 7 IQ points higher for language and math (Colom et al., 2014).

Colom et al. (2014) clearly found positive academic results when P4C was implemented for student's throughout their entire primary and secondary education. But what if intervention only took place for a couple years? Would there be any effect? If so, would it last?

In a study by Topping and Trickey (2007a), students in the experimental group were exposed to one, one hour philosophy lesson per week for 16 months (two school years). The intervention consisted of collaborative enquiry and followed Cleghorn's (2002) "Thinking

through philosophy” strategy (*see Instructional Strategies*). Compared to the control group, the students who were exposed to the intervention saw a significant increase in verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative ability scores.

Two years later Topping and Trickey (2007b) did a follow-up study to see if the students had maintained gains into high school and if their peers in the control group “caught up” to the academic gains of the experimental group. Topping and Trickey (2007b) found that students in the experimental group had maintained their high cognitive ability scores on verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative subtests. Actually, they slightly improved by an average of .2%. The control group did not “catch up” to their peers who received intervention. The control group’s cognitive ability score decreased an average of .9%. This study supports that philosophy sessions are not only beneficial for students while in elementary education, but for prolonged learning. Also, some have argued that students that do not receive philosophy instruction will catch up to P4C students implicitly. This study suggests that that is not the case. Topping and Trickey (2007b) made this statement about their findings, “There are practical implications here for curricular reform.” (p. 794)

Topping & Trickey (2007b) found that students who received P4C instruction maintained cognitive gains over a prolonged period of time. Yet, some skeptics might make the argument that their study had a small sample size, there were only four classes in the experimental group and three in the control group. Gorard and Siddiqui (2017) looked at the results from 48 different schools that either did or did not implement philosophy for children. They evaluated reading, math, and writing progress over the course of one school year. The participants were from grades K-5. Students in the experimental group showed higher progress (equal to two months worth of

education) than the students in the control group for math and reading. There was no difference in the groups in writing, yet the researchers admitted that the instructional strategies that the teachers chose did not contain a writing element. The participants also took a pre and post CAT (cognitive ability test) and the experimental group had a significantly higher gains in all areas which were equivalent to one months' worth of progress.

Most of the aforementioned studies showed gains using standardized testing. Does P4C have any effect on benchmark gains? In 1993, Steve Williams experimented at the Village Community School in the UK. He looked at the effects of holding 27 one hour philosophy circles for one year with 11 and 12 year-olds. Once a week the class would engage in a philosophy lesson instead of a reading lesson. Williams measured reading improvement through benchmark testing. The London Reading Test measured reading comprehension and accuracy. In the experimental group, 12/15 students had an increased reading score. As a class their average improved by 3 points compared to the benchmark prior to implementing philosophy sessions. This is extremely impressive because the average score before this intervention was a 91.5! Educational professionals know that it is difficult to achieve growth when students already have high scores. The control group's average score only increased .1% and their average benchmark score at the beginning of the year was lower; therefore there was more room for growth.

Jane, a Headteacher stated this about P4C, "[Over] the last three years [we] have seen us double our number of Year 6 pupils [level of achievement] in all three areas of reading, writing and maths, and, in all year groups, our reading progress is now outstanding" (House, 2016).

The Achievement Gap

Colom et al. (2014) also looked at the “at risk” students in both groups to determine if P4C had any effect on narrowing the achievement gap throughout the years.

Colom et al. (2014) claimed this about the benefits of P4C for at risk youth:

The percent of students within the risk area is increased across the school years, as expected. Students with lower cognitive ability scores in first grade face greater challenges in successive years... These are really interesting results, because they imply that P4C is especially positive for the more disadvantaged students. (p. 54-55)

In a recent study the Education Endowment Fund found that after two years of P4C, students who received free lunches made *an additional* four months more worth of gains in reading, three months’ in math, and two months’ in writing (House, 2016). This was compared to other students who made progress as well. P4C also had outstanding affects on students with special needs and emotionally disturbed students (House, 2016).

Caring Thinking

Williams (1993) claimed that when they first implemented P4C sessions, there were arguments, insults, and tantrums, when a student voiced their opinion and others disagreed with them. Over time, these behaviors went away as students learned how to phrase their ideas that countered others’ opinions in a respectful way. Positive behaviors that increased include: self-esteem, peer support, patience, open mindedness, and reasonableness. Negative behaviors that decreased included: peers belittling one another, and frustration. William (1993) stated that success in this program is reliant on the teacher’s pedagogy. A teacher must have firm rules and expectations

during philosophy sessions, implement teacher and peer modeling, and provide positive feedback.

Williams (1993) also had students in both the control and experimental groups take an intellectual confidence scale before and after intervention. The students answered ten questions and rated them using a 7-point likert scale ranging from *not at all* to *all of the time*. Some questions were “If someone disagrees with me I am able to defend my point of view,” “I am happy to question other people's ideas,” and “when I get stuck I can think my way through a problem.” The students in the experimental group had a mean increase of 5.3 points compared to the control group whose mean increase was only .6.

In a study by Trickey (2007), students had a weekly philosophy lesson for six months. One variable that they measured was students supportiveness of their peers opinions. After the six months, the rate of supportiveness doubled. There were also significant improvements in student's communication skills, confidence, and concentration.

Colom et al. (2014) examined personality traits and social behavior in the P4C group and the control group. The students in the treatment group had higher levels of honesty, were more extraverted, more emotionally oriented, and also showed more pro-social behavior.

Mercer, Wegerif, & Dawes (1999) observed exploratory talk and reasoning with 60 students aged 9-10. Exploratory talk is one P4C strategy that may be implemented after a stimulus has been presented. In exploratory talk, students converse with partners critically and creatively by bouncing ideas off of each other, challenging each others' thinking, offer counter hypotheses, and coming to a consensus. They found that exploratory talk was an effective strategy for reasoning. It helped students reach the correct answer when given problem solving

tasks. This study supported the hypothesis that P4C helps students with reasoning abilities. It also shows the caring thinking aspect because students have to respect their peer's opinions and come to a conclusion together.

This literature review shows that P4C has both academic and social benefits. Through only one P4C session, one hour a week students start to show gains in critical, creative, and caring thinking. Even if these sessions are not continued into secondary education, or even the next school year, they still have long lasting effects. By teaching children to think philosophically, the teacher has made an impact on their students' education, social maturity, and mind.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Anchor Standards Addressed in P4C

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Mathematics

CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP1

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP2

Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP3

Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS Anchor Standards Addressed in P4C Cont.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

How to Use CCSS Appendix B for P4C

Common Core State Standards Appendix B describes cross curricular tests that align with CCSS. It lists performance tasks and text exemplars which can be adapted into P4C lessons.

Simply look through Appendix B, find a book/exemplar that matches the philosophy unit that you are on and use it as the stimulus in a P4C session. Since Appendix B contains not only English Language Arts materials, but social studies, science, and technical subjects, this may be used as a tool to create a cross curricular lesson. Just find a text that aligns with the current topic being taught in a core subject and relate it to a branch of philosophy.

Example: A fourth grade class is learning about Egypt in social studies. On page 93 of Appendix B, the exemplar: “A Short Walk through the Pyramids and through the World of Art” by Philip Isaacson, is presented. This story applies both to social studies *and* aesthetics. Focus question: What do we learn about art when we look at the pyramids?

Many of the books listed in Appendix B have established book modules in this guide. Exemplars are important to use because they come up frequently in standardized testing. Students should have the skill of being able to analyze a text when only a short passage is given. Why not make it fun and turn it into a philosophy session?

Professional Development Opportunities For P4C

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

IAPC (The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children)

This Institute holds its annual Summer Seminar during the first week of August (Saturday through Saturday) at St. Marguerite's Retreat House in Mendham, New Jersey.

For more information visit

<https://www.montclair.edu/iapc/iapc-summer-seminar/>

PLATO (Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization)

This organization holds a conference every other year. Mostly they have been in Late June, but one year it was in February. The locations of these conferences change each time and have presented in Washington state, New York, Florida, Louisiana, and more. For more information visit

<https://www.plato-philosophy.org/plato-conferences/>

Center for Philosophy for Children

This center has a three day professional development training at the University of Washington each June.

For More information visit

<https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/what-we-do/workshops-for-teachers-and-parents/>

The University of Hawaii Uehiro Academy for Philosophy and Ethics in Education

This university holds professional development, workshops, and symposiums on P4C.

For more information visit

<http://p4chawaii.org/study-opportunities-programs/>

P4C Texas at Texas A&M

This university holds several one day P4C professional development workshops throughout the year. They even have a P4C summer camp for students and other resources available.

For more information visit

<http://p4ctexas.sites.tamu.edu>

P4C Instructional Strategies

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

This section highlights several different approaches for carrying out philosophy inquiry circles. Specifically, when children’s literature or other stimuli is presented and students critically, creatively, and collaboratively converse about the topics it addressed. When engaging in P4C activities, the structure of the lesson will most likely vary. Inquiry circles are very important in P4C, and should be well established before engaging in activities. Do what works best for you and your students. See *Recommendations* at the end of this guide for more information.

Hayes (2001) came up with a nine step approach for teaching a philosophy lesson with children. This is a whole group lesson.

1. Get started — agree upon rules for interacting and then do a relaxation exercise.
2. Share a stimulus to prompt questioning. The stimulus can be a book, a poem, or a picture.
3. Pause for individual thought.
4. Questions — the students think of perplexing questions.
5. Connections — the group makes connections between all of the questions.
6. Choose one of the questions to start evaluating.
7. Build on each other’s thoughts. The teacher facilitates between motivating students to respond to each other’s thoughts and when to move on to related questions that arise.
8. Record the discussion using graphic mapping.
9. Closure and review — summarize, go over the process of the discussion, and evaluate if the student’s minds were changed or not (Topping & Trickey, 2007a).

Cleghorn (2002) has a different strategy that incorporates whole group, pairs, and small groups. This strategy seems like it is best used on slightly older children (nine and older) and when there is one philosophy lesson per week.

1. Focusing exercise —establish a sense of mindfulness.
2. Linking with the previous week — remind them of what they discussed in the prior meeting and allow new thoughts pertaining to the subject to arise and be discussed.

Instructional Strategies

3. Stimulus - Usually a story or poem is read aloud by the teacher, it may be supplemented with a visual.
4. Pair work - put two students in each group to discuss. The teacher goes around and checks for understanding.
5. Dialogue in groups — place the students in small groups (about six per group). The teacher inspires the students to: (a) communicate their opinions in response to an agreed subject of questioning; (b) give examples and evidence to enhance their opinions; (c) listen to other's views with respect; (d) communicate whether they agree or disagree with those opinions; (e) Give different perspectives; (f) Go through the process of discourse to develop a more thorough understanding (or better conclusion) than would be possible if they thought about the enquiry by themselves.
6. Closure (whole group)— motivate the students to go over their discussions and how their thinking evolved.
7. Thought for the week — focus on an empirical thought drawn from the stimulus and assign the students to think about how it applies to the real world for homework that week (Topping & Trickey, 2007a).

Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan (1980) have a very simple method.

1. Read the children a story.
2. Ask them what they found interesting and write those opinions on the board. The teacher may add to it if the students overlooked something, but it should be mostly children's ideas.
3. Use the list as an agenda. Start with the first opinion and ask students how they feel about that.
4. Let the conversation flow naturally, if the students are not putting in much input the teacher can prompt with questions or move on to the next interesting thing.

Gareth Matthews Dialogues (Matthews, 1984)

Gareth Matthews offers another style for introducing philosophy for children. Matthews uses dialogues or story beginnings that can either come from a prior discussion with a group of students, or from a philosophical topic that children would find thought-provoking.

In this method, the teacher reads a story beginning and then asks the students to finish the story. One example he gave was a short conversation between two siblings.

A brother and sister watered their Aunt's flowers and the younger sibling said, "Aunt Gertie's flowers are happy again." The older sibling replied, "Flowers cannot be happy, because they cannot feel."

Matthew's then prompts the students to finish the story by asking questions to get them thinking. "How might the conversation between the characters carry on?" "How could the characters best support their positions?" "What could the characters say to clarify their points and learn more about the issue?" There also might be some questions that are specific to the philosophical topic like "How do we know that plants can't feel?" "What is the nature of happiness?" After the discussion, the teacher comes up with a story ending based on the student's responses. This method allows children to be involved in the storyline by using their philosophical problem solving (Goering, 2008).

Matthews' Philosophical Problems (Matthews, 1984)

Another one of Matthew's techniques is presenting a famous philosophical problem. For example, the Ship of Theseus, which asks: If over time a ship has every board replaced, is it the same boat? Is it the same ship or a new ship? The teacher can then ask, "What if someone uses all of the old boards and puts them back together in its original shape?" See if the student's opinions about the identity of the boat change. The conversation then can move to "What defines identity?" ... (Goering, 2008).

A Norwegian Approach "Philosophical Café" (Olsholt, 2001)

1. Ask students to come up with themes or questions for discussion
2. Once you have 6 or 7 topics the students vote
3. The students discuss the theme or question that had the most votes

Instructional Strategies

With this approach there are three rules

1. The topic must be universal

Choose themes that apply to everyone; the topics must be impersonal and relatable to all.

2. Equality of Contributions

We must respect everyone's opinion. The teacher should not let their own beliefs get in the way of children's thoughts or revelations. The facilitator must act as if they know nothing.

3. Voluntary participation

Do not call on a student if they are not raising their hand. It is perfectly fine for them to observe and think things over in their own mind.

“Plain Vanilla” by Tom Jackson (Goering, Shudak, & Wartenberg, 2013)

1. Stimulus: Most of the time the stimulus will be text, between a paragraph to an entire story. A stimulus may also be a: painting, musical piece, video, or poem. Further, Goering, Shudak, & Wartenberg suggest that the classroom has a “Wonder box.” Whenever a student has a philosophical question pop into their heads during the week, they may write it on a slip of paper and put it into the “Wonder box.” The teacher can pull out a question at the beginning of a dialogue and let it serve as the stimulus.
2. Question: Each student is asked to pose a comment or question about the stimulus. The students or teacher writes them for everyone to see.
3. Vote: The students vote which question or comment they would like to address first
4. Inquire: The students evaluate the selected question or comment using “The Good Thinker’s Tool kit (WRAITEC) to inquire as a group.
 1. W = *What* do you/ we mean by?
 2. R = Are *Reasons* being offered to support claims?
 3. A = Are we aware of and determining the key *Assumptions* claimed?
 4. I = Are we aware of *Inferences* and possible *Implications* of what is being discussed?
 5. T = Is what we are saying *True*? How can we find out?
 6. E = Are *Examples* being given, or is *Evidence* being cited to support what is being said?
 7. C = Are there *Counterexamples* to the claims we have made?
5. Group Reflection: The teacher asks the following questions about how the group did as a community and about their inquiry. The students respond with thumbs up, middle thumb, or thumbs down.
 1. How did our group work as a Community?
 1. Listening: Did I listen to other people’s opinions? Did others listen to what you had to say?
 2. Participation: Did most people participate?
 3. Safety: Was the environment safe?
 2. How was our inquiry?
 1. Focus: Did we stay focused?
 2. Depth: did our discourse open the topic up?
 3. Understanding: Do I understand this topic more than before?

Instructional Strategies

4. Thinking: Did I question my thinking or work hard to try to challenge my own thoughts?
5. Interest: was it interesting?
6. Self Reflection: The students write a reflection about the progress in thinking they experienced during the discussion.
 1. Complexity/confusion: Are you or were you confused about what to believe during or after the discussion?
 2. Connection of ideas: Did you hear an idea or opinion that you had not thought of before? Did you find a new connection or think of something new in response to the new thought?
 3. Emergence of an answer: Do you have a new conclusion on the topic based on the discussion?

“P4C with an Eastern Touch” By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. Yoga
 - a. You are kidding yourself if you expect students to sit nicely for an hour and focus without doing some sort of movement break before hand. Yoga is for the body and the mind, so in my opinion it is the best match as a P4C warm up. If the kiddos get antsy during the P4C session add some yoga movement breaks as necessary. You can find free yoga videos for kids online. There is also this great program called Yoga 4 Classrooms® (Y4C®) check it out. It’s inexpensive and also has breathing and mindfulness activities as well.
2. Meditation
 - a. Do what works for your students and you, some teachers may find that guided mediation videos or audio recordings are the way to go. Others may just want to use the breathing exercises and/or mindfulness activities in Y4C®. I prefer mindfulness meditation OR a combination of Anapanasati and Vipassana meditation.
3. Prompt thinking (optional) - The teacher tells the students which branch of philosophy the stimulus deals with today and asks a student what they know about that branch of philosophy.
4. Stimulus is presented (usually a picture book that conjure deep thoughts and discussion).
5. The students each have their own journals and an index card. As the teacher is reading students are encouraged to write down thoughts in their journals.
6. After the stimulus is presented the teacher allows time for the students to finish recording their final thoughts and ideas in their journals. They may record as many as they like! Each student then chooses their favorite question or comment and writes it on their index card. (If they really can’t choose one it is OK if they write two. Tell them to pick the one they think people will be able to talk about the most).
7. Index cards are collected by the teacher (these may also be used as a formal/informal assessment).
8. As the teacher sorts the cards, the students turn to a partner and discuss from their journals.

Instructional Strategies

9. The teacher uses the index cards to make a list on the board as topics of discussion. The teacher has their own criteria for how they would like order the discourse. They might rank them in frequency (the comments that most students made go first), in order of thought provoking-ness (start with the deepest questions or ones that have a foreseeable path to a dense conversation), or my personal favorite, put them in an order that flows together so that the conversation is seamless.
10. Remind students of the rules and the philosophical virtues
11. Let the conversation flow naturally. The teacher will facilitate and change topics as necessary.
12. Wrap it up- review key points from the discussion

“Philosophy Chalk Talk” strategy by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. Yoga
2. Meditation
3. Prompt thinking (optional) - The teacher tells the students which branch of philosophy the stimulus deals with today and asks a student what they know about that branch of philosophy.
4. Stimulus - picture book
5. Review rules for “chalk talks” set a timer for 15 minutes
6. There is a large piece of paper taped to the wall. Students all have a marker. They SILENTLY take turns writing their comments or questions about the stimulus on the paper. They all start standing a few feet back, then take turns writing one comment at a time, and then stand back again.
7. The teacher draws lines connecting ideas, makes comments, and even poses questions.
8. Students respond to other students’ ideas or questions. (Each student is encouraged to post at least one question/comment/connection of their own and to respond to at least one other person’s thought.)
9. Once the timer goes off, this poster is now a map for the discussion. Start at a point that seems to have the most lines connected to it.
10. Let the conversation flow naturally. Change topic when necessary.
11. (Optional) on a separate piece of chart paper bullet important points that were discussed.
12. Wrap it up- review key points from the discussion

“The best thing about philosophy is that there’s no right or wrong answer.”

You hear this slogan in praise of P4C from both adults and children. It’s a very liberating idea that provides a bold contrast to traditional schooling. But I’d like to suggest that it should be marked “handle with care”, and that it is worth doing some philosophy on this claim about philosophy. The questions in italics are ones that can shape thinking during many enquiries.

Does it make sense? If there are no right or wrong answers in philosophy (NROWA for short), mustn’t there be at least *one* right answer – that there are no right or wrong answers? In which case there *aren’t* no right or wrong answers!

Does it go too far? Universal statements about the whole of philosophy or “all x’s”, “no y’s” require stronger proof than more modest claims such as “most...” or “some...” That there are no right or wrong answers about *any* philosophical question at all is a very strong claim. If you include within an answer the reasons that support it, at least some answers will be wrong because they are based on false factual premises. The presence of a vegetarian in the room is sufficient evidence to disprove “it’s OK to eat animals because you cannot survive otherwise.”

Does it say what we mean? Just as an enquiry question can sometimes be a colourful code for a broader problem, NROWA can be a shorthand way of saying something else: all opinions will be listened to with respect, or that participants are not playing “snap” with the teacher’s authoritative answer. Or more philosophically, it can signify that answers are provisional and that openness to changing one’s mind is something to be valued.

Is it a useful idea even if it isn’t true? In chemistry, for example, teachers use the simplified model of electrons orbiting the nucleus of an atom in a series of “shells”. They know this isn’t true, but they teach it as a helpful approximation so that they can get on with other bits of chemistry without having to explore quantum mechanics.

NROWA is undoubtedly helpful in motivating both pupils and teachers, in particular in encouraging participants to shed their inhibitions and stop looking to an authority figure for an answer. But there are outcome-focused teachers and pupils for whom it is a

turn-off as well: if I know there’s no right or wrong answer before we start, what’s the point of the discussion? Should we at least let pupils know we’re using an approximation?

Which questions have answers, but ones which we can’t know? Reflecting on the limits of our knowledge, present and potential, is a paradigmatic philosophical activity. Though it may be out of reach, there is a right answer to the question “Does God exist?”

If it’s true, what then? I struggle to see how NROWA can be separated from NROW – that there’s no right or wrong. That a belief has unpalatable consequences doesn’t mean it’s not true, but it demands scrutiny.

A facebook group was set up by supporters of Raoul Moat, who shot three people, one fatally, evaded capture for a week and finally turned his gun on himself. Its forum became an expletive-laden confrontation over the question of whether he was a hero or a villain. The majority of contributors to the forum were there to protest the very existence of the group, but perhaps 5%- 10% saw Moat as a hero for his “resistance” to the police. Then there were subscribers to a third point of view, of which this was the most succinct expression:

i aint sticking up for any one but all im gunna say is no one can judge anyone and every one is intitled to there opinion

This is a runaway “lethal mutation” of liberal and democratic values. It’s wrong to judge people on their gender, race or sexuality, so it’s wrong to judge people on anything at all (except if they judge people, in which case be as judgemental as you like); everyone is entitled to an opinion and everyone is equal, so all opinions are equal (except the opinion that your opinion is more reasonable than someone else’s – who do you think you are?).

The facebook contributor may have thought that she was being eminently reasonable precisely because she was holding the middle ground and suspending judgement – being a peacemaker, respecting the views of all the others in the forum. This is what NROWA looks like when applied to an extreme case. What’s missing from her thinking, and from NROWA

taken in isolation, is any notion that opinions can be held accountable to reason.

Not that NROWA is intended to be taken in isolation, but that's what happens to the most easily remembered aspects of ideas in education. The phrase "lethal mutation" is from research into how innovations are distorted as they spread.

Without adherence to first principles of learning, surface procedures tend to be adopted, adapted and ritualized in such a way that they cease to serve the "thinking" function they were designed to foster... Some modifications so far depart from the original philosophy that they can be termed "lethal mutations."¹

I take a core part of P4Cs original philosophy to be "to bring about the transformation of persons into more reasonable individuals committed to the creation of a reasonable world."² NROWA does not seem to take enquiry that seriously, but instead contributes to the spread of our own lethal mutation, as voiced by a deputy head: "Ah yes, we do P4C. It's basically a way to get them talking, isn't it?"

Given that P4C is bound to be known to many by a small number soundbites, it is easy to see why NROWA is one of them. It contrasts boldly with typical classroom practice; it plays to the creative, caring and collaborative sides of P4C which are the "easier sell"; and it's memorable and inviting.

I'd like to put in a plea for a change in the language we use. "In philosophy, there's no right or wrong answer" for me says kick back, relax, it doesn't matter what you say. It puts participants on an equal footing through a "beggar my neighbour" policy: your thoughts are just as important as the teacher's thoughts because he doesn't have a clue either.

By contrast, "In philosophy, anyone might have the answer" says get involved, we're on a quest for something here. You are worth listening to because you might have the thought all of us need to hear, and it's worth listening to others because you never know who else might have it. It promotes openness to new ideas but intimates that some answers are more reasonable than others and that progress is possible.

Above all, it implies that P4C is not just a way to get them talking. If that's what you're after, release a snake in assembly. They'll be talking about it for months.

A 2009 survey of Canadian teens, reported in the August 14, 2009 edition of The Vancouver Sun., xix disclosed that 64% of Canadian teens agreed with the statement that "what's right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion." To those who do not cringe at this monstrous misguided pseudo-democratic relativist assumption, I challenge you to de-horrrify for the rest of us such decisions as the one made in 1997 by David Cash, a Berkeley University engineering student, who chose to turn the other way as his friend raped and then drowned a 7 year old girl, and who then proudly proclaimed that what his friend did had nothing to do with him and that it was not his place to judge.

from Susan Gardner, "Putting Kids in Charge", presented at the 2010 NAACI conference and available at www.naaci.org.uk

1 "Lethal mutation" is a phrase coined in this context by E.H Haertel. Quotation from Brown AL and Campione JC (1996) "Psychological theory and the design of innovative learning environments: on procedures, principles and systems".

2 Ann Sharp, The Ethics of Translation (1993), quoted in the SAPERE Level 1 Handbook pg 16

The First Philosophy Circle

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. Sit in a circle
2. Ask students if they know what philosophy is. If no responses ask students to guess.
(Remember not to tell children they are wrong, rephrase or pull out part of their guesses and relate it to philosophy. For example, Student: “Is philosophy a story about a guy named Phil?” Teacher: “I’m sure there was a philosopher named Phil at some point in history.”)
3. Explain what philosophy is
4. Describe the difference between factual questions and philosophical questions
5. Ask students to write down philosophical questions that they have had
6. Explain rules and expectations (Modify the wording of the intellectual virtues as you see fitting for the age group that you have).
7. Ask students to share the philosophical questions they wrote down. Chart and draw lines to connect ideas
8. Pick a question and ask students to reflect silently. You could either have a vote or choose the idea that has the most connections.
9. Students share their thoughts. Remind them about the rules and virtues.
10. Review discussion and what you hope that the students got out of it.

The First Philosophy Circle Script

Teacher: *Alright everyone, please find a pencil and your new journals I gave you yesterday.*

Once you have found those please bring them with you to the carpet and sit in a circle.

Students bring their materials and the teacher has chart paper and markers set up.

Teacher: *Today we are going to start something new and I know you are all going to love it, so I am very excited! First I'm going to ask you a question and I want you to think about it for a moment. What is philosophy?*

Students: *various responses or silence.*

Teacher: If silence, ask them to try to guess (Goring, Shudak, & Wartenberg, 2013). If students give a response that does not match what philosophy is, do not tell them they are wrong. Instead, pull out something that matches or rephrase in a way that brings you closer to the definition.

Teacher: *Those were some great guesses! Philosophy comes from the root words "Philos" which means love, and "sophia" which means wisdom, so philosophy means "love of wisdom."*

Philosophers love to learn and their goal is to seek knowledge and understand the world. They do this by asking big questions about the world. Not every question is a philosophical question, some questions are factual questions. For example, "What is for dinner tonight?" is a factual question, "How did the plants that grow food get on earth?" is a philosophical question. Give more examples ("What time is it?" versus "What is time?" "Did I get this question right?" versus "How do we determine what is right from what is wrong?")

Teacher: *I would please like you to write philosophical questions you have thought about.*

Students: Write questions in their journals.

Teacher: Give students some time to write responses. *Before we share ideas I think it is important to go over the rules for sharing and the expectations. If you want to share, you must raise your hand and wait your turn. It is extremely important that we respect our peers during philosophy because here we learn from each other. Philosophers share their ideas and build off of each other's thoughts and opinions. By listening to what others think we get closer to knowledge. It is important to follow the seven intellectual virtues or habits of reasonable people.* The teacher displays a poster that shows the seven intellectual virtues (Silliman et al., 2011).

1. Passion for Truth – Whether in epistemology, ontology, moral philosophy, or life generally, we have a persistent desire to get things right.
2. Critical Thinking – An attitude of curiosity and respect toward all potential sources of knowledge, and an unwillingness to accept important claims uncritically or on mere authority.
3. Judgment – A refined capacity for making judicious and useful distinctions, avoiding gratuitous ones, and framing issues in their appropriate context.
4. Intellectual Honesty – An openness to re-examining one's views and frankly and openly assessing their merits, contrary to one's prior assumptions or personal and material interests.
5. Intellectual Humility – A preparedness to acknowledge one's ignorance or error while proceeding with inquiry (not to be confused with a deflective skepticism or dismissive claim of ignorance. See Fallibilism).
6. Intellectual Courage – A willingness to consider with an open mind ideas or lines of reasoning that are unpopular or potentially dangerous, to follow reasoning and evidence where they lead undeterred by any potential risk their conclusions may pose.
7. Interpretive Charity – A preparedness to give others the benefit of the doubt, interpreting their statements in the best possible light and on the working assumption that their thoughts are valuable. To interpret charitably is not to read or listen uncritically, but to be disinclined to condemn others' views except as a last resort. It is the practical basis for civility in discourse, as well as prerequisite for grasping unfamiliar texts and approaches.

After discussing the rules, expectations, and mindset for philosophy circles, the teacher asks the students to share their thoughts.

Students: *Various responses*

Teacher: Writes ideas on a chart paper, and links ideas. The teacher then casts a vote for the question the students will discuss or chooses the question that had the most connections to it. The teacher poses the question and asks students to reflect silently about it for a moment. Before asking students their opinions briefly remind them of the rules and virtues.

Students: After taking a moment to reflect students are asked what they think. They raise their hands and share their opinions.

Teacher: Reviews what they discussed. Optional: the teacher can think of a question for students to think about and have that be the topic of discussion for the next meeting.

The Second Philosophy Circle

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. Use the first list of philosophical questions (# 5 from first day) or another question that came up during discourse as the topic for this session.
2. Find material that addresses the topic and question. [Say for example the question, “How do we know if we know something?” came up. That is a metaphysical question. Go to the Metaphysical section in this guide and look at the listed materials. Choose one that addresses the question. (The book, Boodil My Dog, would be a nice fit for the aforementioned question). If none of the materials are a match, go to the additional resources page and search through the sites listed.]
3. Choose a type of instructional strategy that you will use for the course of the year. Choose the one that you feel the most comfortable with and the one you think your students will be most successful using.
4. Ask students to the carpet with their pencils and journals
5. Review what the rules, expectations, and virtues are
6. Outline how philosophy circles will be structured based on the instructional strategy that you chose (optional: make chart)
7. Review what they discussed last time.
8. Follow the instructional strategy accordingly

For the rest of the sessions, structure them following instructional strategy you chose. Use questions that come up during the discussions, the materials in this book, additional resources, your personal research, and your best judgement to choose topics.

Eliciting Responses

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Of course, ideally in P4C circles the conversation flows naturally. Children bounce ideas off of each other, counter claims, and come to realizations with little to no help from the teacher. However, there may be times where there is silence or no one has anything to say. What do you do? Here are strategies for different stages during the P4C session that may help.

After the stimulus has been presented

Situation: You have presented the stimulus (book, poem, picture, etc.) and there are no responses.

Picture Book

1. Review the story or call on students to retell. Then ask for comments or questions again.
2. Ask if any parts stuck out to them and why
3. If the book you read is highlighted in this guide, start with a question provided.
4. Come up with a question that will lead students in the right direction. (Remember, your role is to facilitate, you want the students to discover as much as they can on their own. For example instead of asking “What is truth?” Ask, “What was an inner conflict that Libby was battling during the story?”)
5. Think-Pair-Share (turning and talking to a partner)
6. Reread important sections
7. Ask students to describe a character in the text
8. Ask students what they thought a certain character was thinking or feeling

Picture/Painting

1. What is happening in this picture?
2. Is this present day or something from the past?
3. What is in the background? Does it give you any clues about the setting or plot?
4. Who are these characters? What’s their story?
5. What emotions are being conveyed? How can you tell?

In the middle of a P4C Session

Situation: The conversation has died down and you have gone through all of the topics/questions.

Picture Book

1. Go back to a point where it seemed like students had comments to say, but the conversation changed before they had the chance.
2. Build off of a comment a student made. ex. “Tommy had said... that really got me thinking. Did anyone else want to add to that?”
3. Ask a leading or prompting question that may evoke responses
4. Ask students to think of another text or movie that the presented stimulus reminded them of. How are they the same? How are they different?
5. Ask students to connect to the text
6. Encourage students to think of a counter example to an agreed upon claim.

Picture/Painting

7. What assumptions can we make? Why can we make those assumptions?
8. What role does culture or society play in this painting? What role does it play in art in general?
9. What message do you think the artist wanted to convey?
10. What style of painting is this? Why do you think the artist chose this style? What does an artist’s style say about them or what they are painting?
11. Is this beautiful?
12. Is this art? Why or why not?
13. What makes something art?
14. Plato claimed that, “Art is an imitation of an imitation” What do you think that means? Does it relate to this piece

Section IV:

Philosophy for Children Book Modules and Lesson Materials

Aesthetics

What is it: Aesthetics is a philosophy topic that is under the ethics/moral philosophy/axiology branch of philosophy. Aesthetics deals with beauty and artistic taste.

Big questions:

What is beauty? Is beauty subjective or objective? What makes something beautiful? What is art? What makes something art? What does art and beauty have to do with emotions? How are the different types of arts (performing, painting, engineering/architecture) related? How are art and beauty related? Can natural objects be art? Does art have to be constructed by man? How does aesthetics shape admiration? How does the way we interpret someone's appearance effect the way we treat them?

Types of stimuli:

Children's Literature (some include extension activities)

Discussion questions

Warm up questions

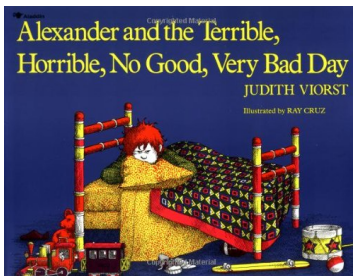
Activities

A Recipe card

lesson plans

Original lessons by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Children's Literature on for Aesthetics



Author: Judith Viorst

Plot Summary: Alexander is having an awful day. His day begins when he wakes up with gum in his hair, trips on a skateboard, and drops his sweater in the sink, and everything seems to go wrong all day long.

Questions (University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children, 2019):

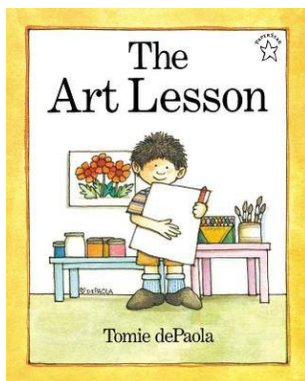
- Alexander says that Mrs. Dickens liked Paul's picture of the sailboat better than Alexander's picture of the invisible castle.
- What makes one drawing better than another?
- Does a drawing have to be something we can see?
- What makes someone qualified to be a judge of art?
- If Alexander thinks it's art, is it?

The nature of art Questions: (Lawson, 2016)

Alexander draws a picture of an invisible castle and is disappointed when his teacher doesn't like it.

1. Do you think he deserves praise for his picture?
2. Do you think his picture is artistic?
3. Do you think that Alexander may have actually seen a picture when his teacher did not?
4. How could the picture be real to Alexander but not his teacher?
5. Does art always have to be something that we can see?
6. What are the different kinds of art?
7. Using the discussion from the previous questions, can we come up with a definition of art?

Summary, activity, and questions for The Art Lesson are Contributed by Gobe Hirata



Author: Tomie de Paola

Plot Summary: Tommy, an aspiring artist, is about to have his first art lesson in kindergarten. Tommy practices art all the time, but has learned from his sister that true artists never copy, and so he refuses to copy. Finally, the day he has been waiting for arrives, his first day of art class. Excited, Tommy brings his impressively large set of crayons to class, but is devastated when his teacher not only prevents Tommy from using his beloved supplies, but also refuses to give him more than one piece of paper. What's more, she expects the students to copy

her in creating their art! Tommy finds himself in a frustrating situation, but he finds a way to make due and compromise with his teacher without sacrificing his creativity.

Questions:

- Is copying art?
- Why was the teacher mean?
- Why did the teacher make everyone copy her?
- Why couldn't all the students just bring in their own crayons?
- Does uniformity stifle creativity?
- Is art a skill to be learned or something else?
- Are there certain qualifications to make one thing art and not another?
- If someone creates a perfect duplicate of say, a Rembrandt, does this count as art?
- Would it be acceptable to allow more "creative" students more access to art supplies than other students?
- What are the pros and cons of uniformity? Of individuality?

Activity

A nice follow-up activity to this lesson is "What is art?"

You might adapt this activity more specifically to the book by asking students to **split one paper in half by drawing a line across the page and creating some sort of art in the top space. Then collect the papers and redistribute them. This time, ask each student to try to replicate the original artwork in the lower frame.** From here, some questions that may arise might be:

Are both of these images art?

If not, which one is?

How do we define what art is?

Does the person who put the material to paper have a say in the matter?

Who decides what is art and what is not?

Is replication an art or something else? What would that something else be?

Make sure you allow enough time for students to see pictures!

Consider the implications of giving a student one piece of paper to create with.



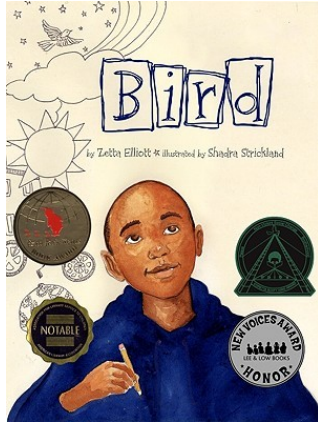
Author: Daniel Manus Pinkwater

Plot Summary: Mr. Plumbean, who lives on a street where the houses are all the same, painted red with olive-colored roofs and windows with green trim. He and his neighbors all like this, characterizing their street as a "neat street." One day, a seagull drops a can of bright orange paint on Mr. Plumbean's

house, leaving a big orange splot on the house. Everyone on the street sympathizes with Mr. Plumbean, who will have to paint his house again, and that's what Mr. Plumbean plans to do. But, instead, he looks at the house for a long time. Finally, in response to his neighbors' urging, Mr. Plumbean takes out some paint and paints his house. But instead of using the house's original colors, he paints it a rainbow of colors. Over the next couple of days, he adds to his house a clock tower, palm trees, a hammock and an alligator. Horrified, one by one the neighbors stop in to see Mr. Plumbean to talk with him about their dissatisfaction with what he's done to his home and remind him that all the houses have to be the same for their street to continue to be a "neat street." And, one by one, after each neighbor visits with Mr. Plumbean, sitting under the palm trees, drinking lemonade and talking, each neighbor repaints his or her own house to "fit his dreams."

Questions:

- Why do you think Mr. Plumbean painted his house the way he did?
- Was he right to paint his house in a way different from his neighbors, when part of the community agreement was that they would keep their houses looking the same?
- Did Mr. Plumbean have the right to paint his house however he liked?
- What if he painted words expressing his hate for an ethnic group? Would that be okay? At what point does his right to make an independent choice give way to his obligations to his neighbors?
- Do you think Mr. Plumbean dreamed of a house that looked like the way he painted it or do you think he just dreamt of an extremely colorful house?
- Do you think that Mr. Plumbean house truly looks like his dreams? Or did he just interpret his dreams and painted his house the way he thought it would have looked like in his dreams? Is there a difference? If so, what is it?
- Do you remember your dreams? Why or why not?
- If you dream about something is it real?
- -What is the difference between the dream world and what we call the "real" world?
- Is there something that you identify with as strongly as Mr. Plumbean identifies with his house?
- Why do you think Mr. Plumbean felt so strongly about his house (after he had painted)?
- What made Mr. Plumbean's decision to paint his house to "fit his dreams" so compelling to his neighbors, so that after spending time with him they all changed their minds about how their street should appear?



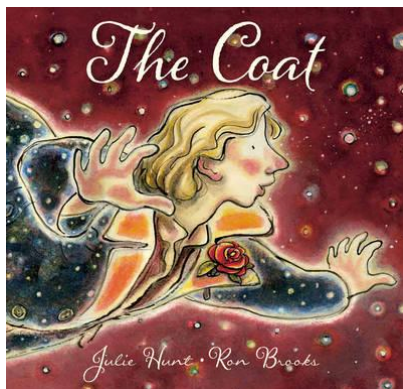
Author: Zetta Elliott

Plot Summary: Young Mekhai, better known as Bird, loves to draw. With drawings, he can erase the things that don't turn out right. In real life, problems aren't so easily fixed. As Bird struggles to understand the death of his beloved grandfather and his older brother's drug addiction, he escapes into his art. Drawing is an outlet for Bird's emotions and imagination, and provides a path to making sense of his world. In time, with the help of his grandfather's friend, Bird finds his own special somethin' and wings to fly. Told with spare grace, Bird is a touching look at a young boy coping with real-life troubles. Readers will be heartened by Bird's quiet resilience, and moved by the healing power of putting pencil to paper.

Questions

- Is Bird's grandfather correct when he says that his brother's graffiti is not art? Is art only found museums?
- Does the emotions Bird feels when he looks at his brother's art play a role in the decision about whether Bird's brother's graffiti is art?
- If we define art as determined by its function, is Bird's work art? His brother's? What is the function of Bird's art vs. his brother's?
- How does Bird's art reflect the reality of his situation?
- How do you think Bird's art makes him feel about his family situation?
- Can art change reality?
- Who decides what is art?

Summary, questions, and activity for The Coat are contributed by Gobe Hirata



Author: Julie Hunt and Ron Brooks

Plot Summary: This is a whimsical story about an animate coat that sits atop a paddock buttoned up tight stuffed with straw lamenting, "What a waste of me!" Soon enough a man comes along and, realizing some value in the coat that is going to waste, concludes, "I could do with a coat like that!" As the man puts on the coat, or rather, the coat puts on the man, the two fly over the city to a Café Delitzia where they put on a lively performance for a wonderfully receptive audience.

Questions:

- Can what we wear affect us? How does that happen?
- How do we respond to certain clothing, certain textures, lengths of fabrics, colors?

- Are certain thoughts possible in some attire that are more difficult to conceive of in other attire?
- Do we wear clothing to reflect our current mood or perhaps to give us some sort of magical ability to take on new tasks, personas, and postures?
- Do we play a role when we wear certain clothing?
- Does a new set of clothes give us a new perspective on the world? A new perspective of ourselves?
- Do we wear our clothes or do, to some extent, our clothes wear us?

Activity: “What We Wear and What Wears Us”

Bring into the class to an assortment of six pieces of unique clothing.

For example:

A funky coat of swirling fabric with a faux fur trim

A small, but wearable children’s sweatshirt resembling the character of Woody from Toy Story

A hospital gown

An alpaca poncho

A sparkly hooded plastic sweatshirt

A large, striped, collared button down shirt

Try to pick garments that all students can fit in some way comfortably and can attract both genders equally.

Draw a name from the class list and ask the first person if they want to try on one of the garments; if they do, allow them to pick which one. It’s helpful to have a random way of choosing students such as names in a hat or on popsicle sticks. Continue drawing names until each garment has a wearer.

Students enjoy feeling the different materials, posing for their friends, and reflecting on how the clothing makes them feel. **Encourage students to take in information from all senses, reflecting on how garments look, feel, smell, sound, etc.** Ask the participants to stand in a line in front of the class and display their garments. **Allow each student spotlight time to share their individual experiences with the class.**

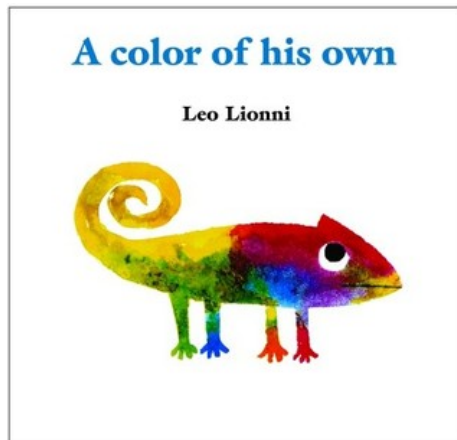
Ask different questions of each participant such as:

- Why did you choose this garment over the others?
- How does it make you feel?
- Can you tell us about the texture?
- Do you have new thoughts of feelings in this garment that you did not previously have?

Note: Make sure to plan time to allow every student who desires to try on clothing to do so.

I think you could definitely split this activity into two parts to allow for longer discussions of the book and of the clothing as both were fantastic discussion generators.

It’s a fun activity and a great introduction to aesthetics.

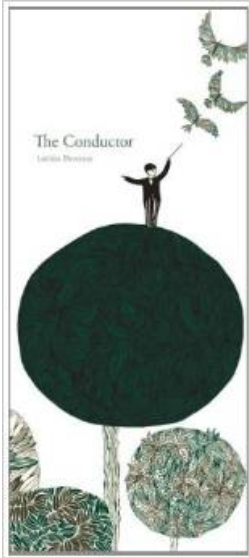


Author: Leo Lionni

Plot Summary: All animals have colors of their own except for the chameleon, which changes colors based on its environment. The chameleon sees a green leaf and says, “If I remain on a leaf I shall be green forever, and so I too will have a color of my own.” However, when the leaf turns orange, the chameleon turns orange, and when the leaf turns red so does the chameleon. When spring comes, the chameleon meets another chameleon and asks if he will ever have a color of his own. The other chameleon says no, but says that the two should stay together so they can be alike.

Questions:

- What would it be like to change colors? Would you feel different each time you turned a new color?
- What things come in different colors?
- Say if the following things come in different colors and then, if they do, say what colors they come in.
- Dogs, Ice cream, The sky, Flowers, Grass, Water, Fire, People, Footballs, Winter, Sadness, Roller blades, Laughter, Fall.
- What things in the classroom are:
 - blue
 - green
 - red
 - purple
 - yellow
- Do colors change?
- Are there things that have no color? Example? (Light)
- Are there things that have many colors? Example?
- If something is red, can it also be blue? Can it be pink? Maroon?
- Is the color green made up of blue and yellow? If so, is all green is blue and yellow? Or is it something in itself?
- Do all green things look alike?
- Do all things that are blue feel the same way (Ex: the sky and a blue blanket)
- Is color real?
- How do we know if what I call and perceive as blue, is blue to you too? How do we know if what you perceive as blue isn't red to someone else?



Author: Laetitia Devernay

Plot Summary: This is a beautiful book of illustrations. There are no words as you watch a conductor approach a set of big bulbous trees. He climbs atop one tree and prepares his musicians-the leaves. Slowly, his orchestra begins as he directs a fluttering of leaves to leap from the tree. Momentum builds as the pages turn and you see and hear with your eyes a beautiful symphony of movement as the leaves engage in new patterns, new arrangements, and new relationships. At one point, all of the trees are almost completely naked, the leaves dancing everywhere. The conductor summons the leaves back to their places as the song nears the end. He takes a bow, descends his tree, and plants a new tree upon leaving his natural stage.

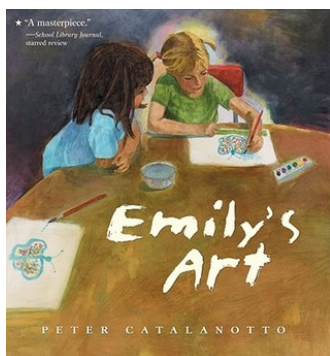
Questions:

- Can we listen with our eyes?
- Is it possible to listen without using our ears?
- What does it mean to listen?
- Does silence enhance our ability to listen?

Activity: by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Have students listen to John Cage's 4'33"

- What does silence sound like?
- Can music be silent?
- What does music need to be considered music?
- What makes something music and not just sound?



Author: Peter Catalanotto

Plot Summary: A class of first grade students is involved in an art contest. The judge is the principal's mother, who notes that her cousin is married to an artist. Looking at the paintings, the judge points out a painting she admires because of its "detail and amazing colors," and observes that it is a beautiful rabbit. When she is informed that the painting is actually of a dog, the judge decides she does not like the painting after all because she hates dogs, and she chooses another painting as the contest winner.

Discussion Questions:

Is this judge qualified to judge an art contest?

What makes someone qualified to evaluate works of art?

Is the opinion of someone who knows very little about art as valuable as the opinion of someone who has pursued an art education?

If the judge in Emily's Art says paintings of dogs are not art because she hates dogs, does that mean paintings of dogs are not art?

Is there some art that is art no matter what anyone says? If no one liked the Mona Lisa, would it still be art?

Does someone have to appreciate a work for it to be considered art? More than one person?

Does a work have to have beauty to count as art?

Questions below for Emily's Art are on behalf of Kate Vigour, revised by Lindsay Kurahara (2016) from teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

The nature of contests

In this story, Emily's school has an art contest and the students discuss different kinds of races.

1. Who has been in an art contest?
2. What other types of contests have you been in?
3. Does a contest always have to be a race?
4. Have any of you ever seen a science fair?
5. How is a winner decided in a running race? Science fair? Art contest?
6. Are there differences between a science fair or running a race - even though both have a winner? If so, what are they?
7. Does the judging/winning differ between the two? If so, how?
8. Is one contest easier to judge than the other? If so, how?

What is art?

In this story, Emily's artwork is not chosen as the winner of the art contest.

1. What are some things that you consider to be art?
2. What makes something a piece of artwork?
3. What is art?
4. Does art have to be man-made?
5. Who decides whether or not something is good artwork?
6. What makes someone an artist?
7. What does one have to do in order to be considered an artist?
8. Can anyone be an artist?

Non-realistic vs. realistic painting

In one of Emily's paintings she has four mothers. She said it was because her mother is so busy in the morning.

1. What does Emily mean when she says this?

2. What is special about her paintings?
3. Because Emily's paintings are not the way things are in real life, are her paintings not as good as other paintings? Why or why not?
4. Who should be able to determine whether a painting is good or not?
5. Could anyone be a judge of "good artwork"?
6. What happens if two people disagree on whether or not a piece of artwork is good?
7. Whose opinion wins?

Who gets to judge?

In order for a winner to be chosen in the art contest, there has to be a judge. The judge in Emily's Art is the principal's mother. The judge says, "My cousin is married to an artist." That's why she's the judge.

1. Does this make the principal's mother a good judge? Why or why not?
2. Should there be a special person to be the judge of an art contest?
3. How should the judge be chosen?
4. How should the judge choose which painting is the best?
5. Does the painting that wins the contest have to be realistic or pretty?

The nature of feelings

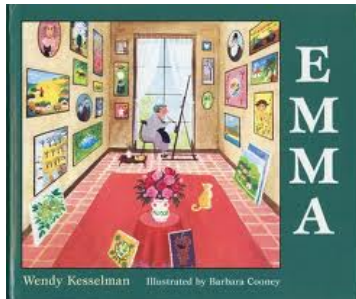
Emily goes to the nurse when she's not feeling well. The nurse asks her what's wrong.

1. Who remembers what Emily says?
2. Does her heart literally hurt?
3. What does Emily mean when she says that she had 'hurt her heart'?
4. Has anyone here ever had their heart hurt?
5. Why does Emily's heart hurt?
6. How is hurting your heart different from hurting another body part, like your leg?
7. Is the healing process different for each type of hurt/pain?

The nature interpretation of art

The judge loved Emily's picture when she thought it was a rabbit but when Emily's teacher told the judge it was a dog, she changed her mind and chose another picture.

1. Why does the judge change her mind and choose another picture?
2. Is this how a picture should be judged?
3. Should it matter that the judge viewed Emily's painting as one thing, and Emily had something else in mind?
4. Is it possible to know what an artist was thinking when he/she painted their picture?
5. How would you ever know if what you think a painting means is really what it is supposed to mean?
6. Is it okay for people to have different opinions about what art is?



Author: Wendy Kesselman

Plot Summary: Emma, who is seventy-two years old, lives alone with her cat and is sometimes is “very lonely.” For her birthday, Emma’s family gives her a painting of her childhood village, and Emma thinks to herself that the painting really doesn’t resemble her memories of her village. She begins painting her village as she remembers it, and goes on to paint many other paintings, which surround Emma with the “friends and places she loved.”

Questions:

Does Emma’s artistic inspiration come from inside her?

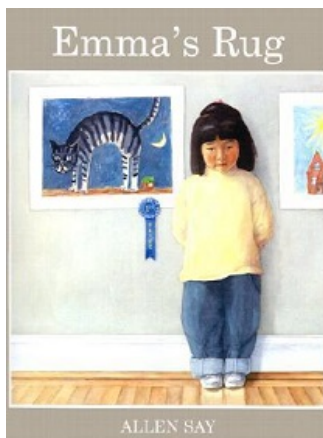
What role does memory play in art?

Is the way each of us sees the world unique?

Are we then all artists, or does being an artist require some expression of our perspective?

Can expressing ourselves through art change the way we feel about ourselves?

What is the relationship between our feelings and our aesthetic experiences?



Author: Allen Say

Plot Summary: Emma has a white rug that she takes with her everywhere she goes. Never stepping on it, she spends hours just sitting and staring at it. Taking up painting and drawing, Emma is seen as an artist by teachers and peers and begins collecting awards in art competitions. When asked where she gets her ideas, Emma responds, “I just copy.” One day, Emma’s mother washes the rug. It becomes shriveled, with all the fluff gone. Emma stops drawing and painting, and eventually throws away her awards, pencils, paints, brushes, and the rug. Eventually, sitting in her now empty room,

Emma begins to see things in the wall, and then in the trees outside, that she “knew from before.” “I can see you!” she cries out. And the last scene, without words, shows us Emma drawing again.

Questions:

What did the rug mean to Emma? What did she see in it?

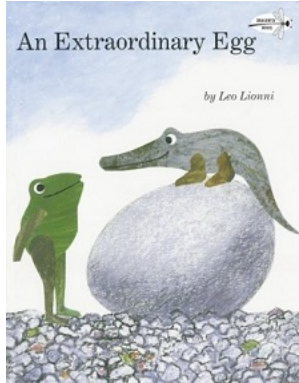
How did throwing away everything in her room help Emma to see these things again?

Does what Emma sees come from inside her, from the outside world, or both?

Why did Emma losing the rug cause her to stop seeing these things?

Is Emma an artist? If so, what makes her one?

When Emma stops painting and drawing, is she still an artist?



Author: Leo Lionni

Plot Summary: Jessica, a frog, lives with two other frogs. Jessica is "full of wonder," and frequently ventures out on long walks and returns shouting with excitement about what she's found, even if it's "nothing but an ordinary little pebble." One day, she finds what she thinks is a perfect white stone, almost as big as she is. She brings it home, and the other frogs point out that it is not a pebble, but a chicken egg. "How do you know that?" Jessica asks. "There are some things you just know," one of the frogs replies. Pretty soon, the egg cracks open and a "long, scaly creature that walked on four legs" emerges. The three frogs all shout, "A chicken!" They spend days playing with the "chicken," and the chicken and Jessica become great friends. One day a bird tells the chicken that her mother has been searching for her, and Jessica and the chicken follow the bird to find the enormous alligator that is the chicken's mother. When Jessica returns home, she tells the other frogs that the mother chicken called her baby, "My sweet little alligator." "What a silly thing to say," one of the frogs comments, and they all can't stop laughing.

Questions:

- How do the words and drawings together tell the story?
- What feelings do the drawings create? How do drawings create feelings?
- Would the story be the same without the drawings? The words?



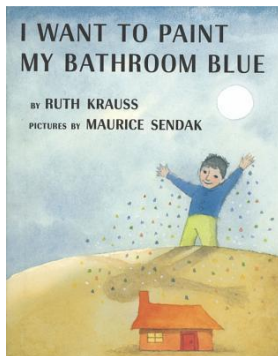
Author: Eric Carle

Plot Summary: A little frog is having a birthday party and he wants to invite his friends, Red Fox, Purple Butterfly, Orange Cat, Green Snake, Yellow Bird, Blue Fish, and White Dog with Black Spots. However, when the guests arrive, for Mama Frog, Red Fox looks green, Purple Butterfly looks yellow, and so on. What is going on? Little Frog helps Mama Frog to see the guests differently.

Questions:

- Why do we perceive colors the way we do?
- Why is red red? Green? Yellow? Black? White?
- Who do you think is seeing the party guests correctly, Mama Frog or Little Frog? Why?
- How can we be sure that the colors that we are seeing are the correct ones?

- How can we be sure that anything we perceive is the way the world actually looks without us looking at it?
- If something is red, can it also be blue? Can it be pink? Maroon?
- What would it be like to change colors? Would you feel different each time you turned a new color?
- Is color real?
- Are there things that have no color? If yes, give an example.
- Are there things that have many colors? If yes, give an example.



Author: Ruth Krauss

Plot Summary: A young boy dreams of painting his bathroom blue, kitchen yellow, ceilings green, etc. He imagines what his ideal home would look like, all in the context of being informed by his father that he can't paint his bathroom blue.

Questions:

- How do certain colors allow us to imagine that we couldn't imagine otherwise?
- Why are colors so important to us?
- We often identify things by their colors, but are the colors really in the objects, or just part of our perceptions?
- Do different colors have different emotional effects on us?
- How does color elicit emotional responses?
- How do the experiences of the boy in nature in the story change what he thinks? Do our experiences transform the way we see the world?



Author: Jon Agee

Plot Summary: Felix Clousseau enters his painting of a duck in an art contest held by the Royal Palace in Paris. The judges think his painting is ridiculous, compared to the other art masterpieces entered in the contest, until they hear a loud “quack” from the duck in the painting. The judges award Clousseau the grand prize because there isn't another artist who can bring his subjects to life in the same way, and Clousseau becomes famous. Eventually even the king commissions a painting from Clousseau, called, "The Sleeping Boa Constrictor." But when the sleeping boa awakes from its slumber, problems ensue.

Questions:

- What makes something beautiful?
A painting, a smile, a sunset, a story, a lamp, a spider, a flower, a horse, a potato, a baby, a cloud, Music, a tree, or a person.
- Can we have different ideas about what beauty is?
- What does something have to have to be beautiful? Anything?
- What does it feel like when something is beautiful to us? Is this always true?
- For something to be beautiful, does someone have to think it's beautiful? Can something be beautiful if no one thinks it is?
- If something is beautiful, is it always beautiful?

Questions below for The Incredible Painting of Felix Clousseau are contributed on behalf of teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

Judging art

When Clousseau entered his painting, the judges called it "outrageous"

1. Look at the painting. Do you agree with the judges that the painting was outrageous?
Why?
2. Was it fair for the judge to assume his painting was bad because he wasn't famous yet?
Were the judges being fair to Clousseau?
3. Do all famous artists paint 'good' pictures? Are all of their pictures good?
4. Can an artist who is not famous paint better pictures than an artist who is famous?

The goal of art

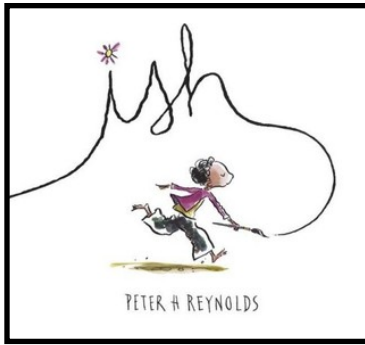
All over the city, Clousseau's paintings come alive and he is celebrated for it.

1. Do you think his painting should have won when it came alive? Why or why not?
2. Did you like the painting before the painting came alive? After? Would you have liked all his paintings after they came alive?
3. Should every artist try to make their paintings look as 'real' as possible?
4. Are there some paintings that depict things that are not 'real' that you like?

The nature of Art

The judge liked Clousseau's paintings when it came alive but the French aristocrat didn't.

1. Is it okay for two different people to like different paintings?
2. Is it okay for different people to judge art differently?
3. If so, who is a good judge of art? (who could really say if Clousseau's paintings were good or not)



Author: Peter Reynolds

Plot Summary: Ramon loves to draw and draws all the time. Then one day his older brother laughs at one of his drawings, and Ramon becomes preoccupied with making his drawings "look right." He draws and then crumples up what he's created, and tries again. Finally Ramon decides to stop drawing. His younger sister picks up one of his crumpled drawings and Ramon follows her into her room to retrieve it, where he sees many of his abandoned

drawings hanging on her walls. She points out a drawing of a vase of flowers, which she declares is one of her favorites. Ramon tells her that the drawing was supposed to be a vase of flowers, but he doesn't think it looks like one. "It looks vase-ISH!" she replies. A light goes on in Ramon's head. Maybe his drawings don't have to resemble the world exactly to be any good. Maybe what matters is that they express the way he sees the world. At the end of the book, one spring morning, Ramon has a "wonderful feeling." He decides not to try to capture it in pictures or words. "Instead," the book tells us, "he simply savored it. . . . And Ramon lived ishfully ever after."

Questions:

- Does art have to look like whatever it is expressing to be good?
- What makes something art?
- Are all our expressions of ourselves "art?" Can you think of any that aren't art?
- Why does Ramon decide not to capture his "wonderful feeling" in pictures or words?
- Can some experiences be better if we appreciate the way the moment feels to us without trying to express it?
- Is living "ishfully" something we should strive to do?
- What would it mean to live life "ishfully?"

The questions below for Ish are contributed on behalf of Karen Grossi (2016) from Teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

Realism in art

"Ramon kept trying to make his drawings look right."

1. What was Ramon trying to do? What do you think "look right" means?
2. Are there some drawings or art that you like that don't "look right"?
3. Does art have to "look right" (look exactly like the object the person is trying to draw, paint, sculpt) for it to be considered "good"?

Perfection and improvement

1. Do you ever feel like you have to make or do things that are perfect?
2. Are you ever done improving something that you want to be better? Why or why not?
3. Can something that is considered perfect be improved? Why or why not? Give examples.

Enjoyment as motivation

1. What impact did Ramon's brother and sister have on his enjoyment of making his drawings?
2. Do you ever do things you do not enjoy? Give examples.
3. Is something worth doing if you don't enjoy yourself? Why or why not? What are some other reasons you might do something, aside from the enjoyment it gives you?

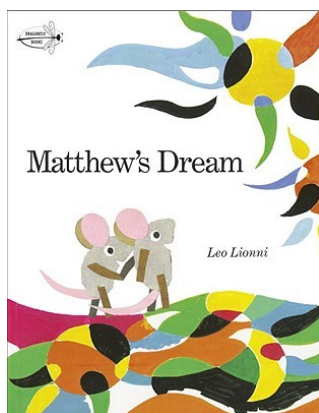
Emotion and creativity

1. What feelings do you think Ramon had while he was trying to make his drawings "look right" after his brother laughed at him?
2. How would you feel and if someone made a negative comment about your art? A positive comment? How would this affect how you make your art?
3. Is making art when you are feeling angry or sad the same as making art when you are feeling silly or happy? Why or why not?

Goals of doing

"Leon burst out laughing. 'What is that?' he asked"

1. Is there anything you enjoy doing that either you or other people don't think you are very good at?
2. Is something worth doing if you cannot be perfect at it?
3. Is it a good goal for someone who loves to draw to try and make their drawings "look right" or perfect? Why or why not?



Author: Leo Lionni

Plot Summary: Matthew is the only child of two mice, and the family is very poor. One day, Matthew's class visits an art museum, and Matthew is overwhelmed by the variety of paintings. "The world is all here," he thinks. Back at home, he becomes more aware of "the gray dreariness of his attic corner." Then he looks at it in a new way, seeing the shapes and colors and images that resided there, and he decides to become a painter.

Questions:

- Are having experiences like visiting museums and looking at art necessary to becoming an artist?
- Do you have to have knowledge about art to be an artist?
- How does one develop the ability to express artistically one's way of seeing the world?
- What is inspiration?
- How does artistic inspiration happen?
- What makes someone an artist?

The questions below for Matthew's Dream are on contributed behalf of Kate Vigour and Nancy Soudant (2016) from Teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

Matthew is very impressed when he goes to the art museum for the first time.

1. If you draw, color, or paint, does that make you an artist?
2. If someone is passionate about their artwork, does that make them an artist?
3. Do you consider yourself an artist?
4. Does your work need to be in a museum for you to be considered an artist?
5. Could a child's artwork be in a museum?

When Matthew goes to the museum, he says, "The world is all here."

1. What did he mean by that?
2. Could the whole world actually be in one building?
3. Is it possible for a museum to have a representation of the whole world in it?

Matthew goes to the museum and is inspired to become an artist after looking at all of the art work there.

1. What does it mean to be inspired?
2. Have you ever done or saw something that inspired you?
3. Do you have to have inspiration to make good art?
4. Can art be made without inspiration?
5. Does something have to be good to inspire you? Why or why not?
6. Is it good if it doesn't look like anything recognizable?

The book shows several different pieces of art from the museum.

1. Does something have to be man-made to be considered art, or can it come from nature?
2. Does something have to evoke a feeling in order for it to be considered art?
3. What if you see something different than what the artist meant for you to see? Is that OK?
4. If someone really likes a piece of art, and another person really dislikes it, can it still be considered a piece of art?

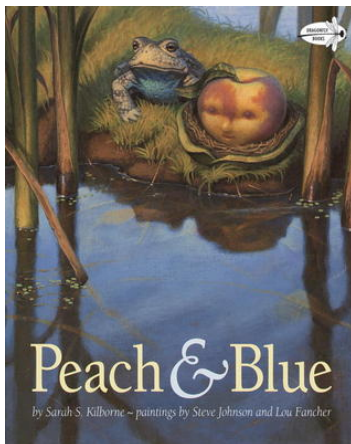
5. Can two people interpret the same thing differently and both be right?

Not all art is realistic.

1. What is abstract art?
2. What makes it abstract?
3. When you look at a piece of art, especially an abstract piece, do you all have to see the same thing in it?
4. Can you think of any other types of art other than paintings?

After visiting the museum Matthew is able to see his dark, dreary corner in the attic in a new way.

1. If it was still the same old newspapers, magazines, broken lamp, and doll parts, how was he able to view it differently?
2. What made it possible for him to see things differently?
3. Can something messy, broken, or junky also be beautiful, and if so how?



Author: Sarah S. Kilborne

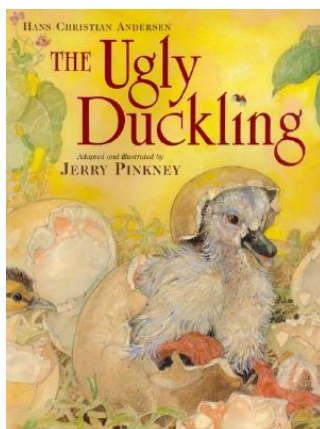
Plot Summary: A friendship develops between a blue toad and a peach who wants to see the world before she is eaten. They open each other's eyes to seeing the world in new ways.

Questions:

Are things more beautiful when you see them for the first time?

Does what we think is beautiful depend on the way we perceive the world?

Can new experiences change the way we perceive the world?



Author: Hans Christian Andersen

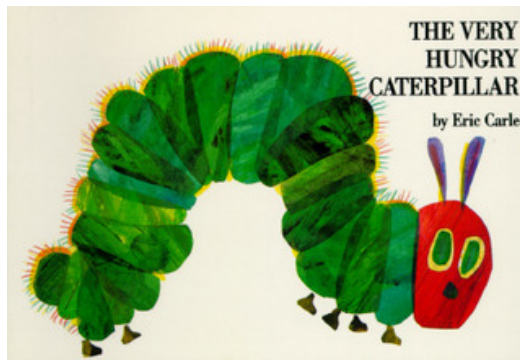
Plot Summary: The classic nineteenth century fairy tale tells the story of a duckling who, when hatched along with his brothers and sisters, is ridiculed and ostracized because they perceive him as ugly. He wanders alone through the fall and winter, and suffers from fear, loneliness, and sadness. In the spring he flies away from the marsh and meets up with a group of swans, and realizes that he too has become a beautiful swan.

Questions:

- Was the “ugly duckling” really ugly? If so, what made him ugly? Did he stop being ugly at the end of the story?
- What does ugly mean?
- Would the “ugly duckling” still be ugly if someone thought he was beautiful?
- What is beauty?
- How do we decide what is beautiful and what is not?
- If you’re ugly, are you always ugly, and if you’re beautiful, are you always beautiful?
- Are the following things beautiful:

A sunrise, the Mona Lisa, a smile, a song, a feeling, a thought, a painting

- If the ugly duckling believed he was beautiful, would that make him more likely to be seen as beautiful?
- What does it mean to have “inner beauty?”
- Can someone be a terrible person and still be beautiful? An extraordinarily wonderful person and be ugly?
- Is there some objective standard of beauty—so that everyone in any time and place would agree that this particular person or object is beautiful—or does it depend on where and when you live, and on what you think? If it depends on individual perspectives and circumstances, is beauty real or is it just something people make up?
- Why does beauty matter to us?
- What does it feel like when something is beautiful to us? Is this always true?



Author: Eric Carle

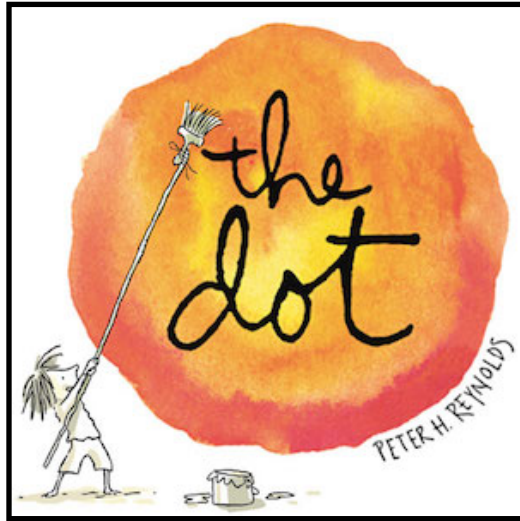
Plot Summary: A big green caterpillar is born, eats too much, and learns to eat less. Finally, very full, crawls into a cocoon and emerges as a beautiful butterfly.

Questions:

- Are butterflies beautiful?
- Are caterpillars beautiful?
- If the caterpillar transformed into a butterfly, is it still the same thing? Why or why not?
- Can we have different ideas about what beauty is?
- What does something have to have to be beautiful? Anything?
- What does it feel like when something is beautiful to us? Is this always true?

- For something to be beautiful, does someone have to think it's beautiful? Can something be beautiful if no one thinks it is?
- If something is beautiful, is it always beautiful?
- Do you think that the butterfly in the story was beautiful?
- Was the caterpillar more beautiful before or after is transformed?

Summary and questions for, The Dot are contributed by Sarah Magid and Daniel Gorter



Author: Peter H. Reynolds

Summary: In art class, Vashti convinces herself that she can't draw. Her teacher, unconvinced, encourages her to "make a mark and see where it takes you."

Vashti makes a frustrated mark on the page, and her teacher asks her to sign it. The next week, Vashti is surprised to find her dot displayed for everyone to see. Realizing she can draw a better dot than that, Vashti begins creating many more dots, in all different colors, sizes and styles. At an art show where Vashti displays her dots, Vashti meets a little boy in awe of her work. The boy is also convinced that he can't draw. Vashti, unconvinced, encourages the boy to

"make a mark and see where it takes you," which sets in motion a whole new story.

Questions:

What is Art

1. Is Vashti's first picture art? Why / why not? What makes it art?
2. Did signing it make it art? If so, what if she never signed it?
3. Does hanging it up make it art? What about in a museum? If so, what if she never hung up the dot; would it no longer be art?
4. Would it have been art if she signed the blank paper (without a dot)?
5. Does someone have to decide that something is art for it to be art? If so, who decides whether something is or is not art?
6. Does all art have something in common? If so, what might this be?
7. Does art have to represent something?
8. Does art have to express something?
9. Does art have to be human-made?
10. If I think something is art and you think it isn't art, is one of us right and one of us wrong?

Evaluating Art

1. What makes something good art?
2. Does art need to be hard to draw or make?
3. Does art need to be creative or unique?
4. Does art need to be beautiful? What makes art beautiful?
5. Does art need to make you feel a certain way when you look at it?
6. Can art be wrong or immoral? What if someone draws a picture of a cat that's on fire - is there something bad about that?

7. If I think a piece of art is good art, and you think the same piece of art is bad art, how do we know if it is good art or not? Is one of us right and the other wrong?

Summary and questions for, Lily Brown's Paintings are contributed by Maya Dean



Author: Angela Johnson

Summary: When Lily Brown paints, her world starts to change... trees wear hats and drink tea, people walk upside down, and apples sing all the way home from the store. It's Lily Brown's world, and it's wondrous. A little paint and a lot of love bring imagination to life in this captivating picture book

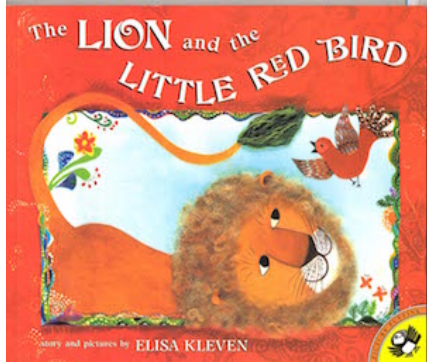
Questions:

Lily paints all that she sees and feels her own way. She puts her world of color and light on anything she can find. It's magical.

1. The things Lily puts in her paintings, no one else has ever seen happen. Why do you think Lily paints such things?
2. What other kinds of things can you do when you paint or draw pictures?
3. Can creating art be a way to use your imagination?

In Lily Brown's paintings, the colors of people, places and things change with her heart.

1. Why do you think that the colors of everyone and everything in Lily's paintings change when her heart changes?
2. Can painting or creating art be used as a way to express your feelings?
3. If you were angry, and you drew a painting, how would it look? What colors might you decide to use? What types of things would be in your paintings?
4. If you were very happy, and you drew a painting, how would the painting look? What colors might you decide to use? What types of things would be in your paintings?



Author: Elisa Kleven

Summary: One afternoon a little red bird saw a lion with a colorful tail, which began an unlikely friendship filled with art, music, and respect.

Questions:

Communicating Without Words

"The lion didn't understand the bird's language. He thought she was simply chirping."

1. How else can you communicate your thoughts besides through language?
2. Are there other ways of communicating your thought and feelings beside words?
3. How are the lion and the bird able to understand kindness and pleasure, which they felt in the story?
4. Do art and music count as universal languages?

Unlikely Friendship

"The bird had never seen anything so unusual or so pretty. Just looking at it [the lion's colorful tale] made her happy."

1. Why does the bird like the lion?
2. Why does the lion like the bird?
3. What are some reasons that a person likes another person?
4. Do we have to speak the same language in order to be friends?
5. What are some other ways that we can communicate our feelings?
6. The lion takes the little red bird inside to the cave to save him from the storm. How might we think of this as true friendship?

Art and Nature

"The cave was warm and colorful. The walls were filled with pictures of green forests, orange flowers, butterflies, sunsets, a bright blue sky, a deep blue lake."

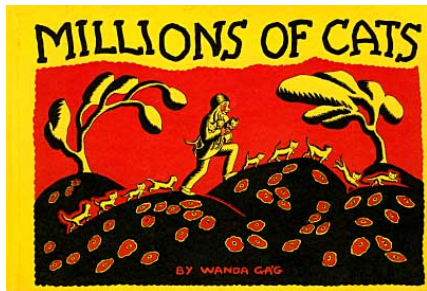
1. The beauty of nature is an important part of this story. Are there things in nature that you think are beautiful? What makes them beautiful to you?
2. Do you think all colors come from nature? Why or why not?
3. Can art be more beautiful than nature? What about the reverse?

Music and Beauty

"The bird sang while the lion painted. She sang a song without any questions, full of color and joy. The lion had never heard anything so unusual and so pretty. Just listening made him happy."

1. Does listening to music make you happy? Are there other emotions it can convey?
2. What makes a song sad? happy?
3. Do you use music to express your emotions? How?

Summary and questions for Millions of Cats are contributed by Danielle F. dela Gorgendiere



Author: Wanda Gag

Summary: *Millions of Cats*, a fantastical tale by Wanda Gag, is a story about an old couple that is faced with the very difficult problem of finding the world's prettiest cat. The old man and woman in the story decide they need a cat to make them happy and only the prettiest cat will do. But when the old man looks out across the land filled with millions of cats, he decides he simply must take them all home because he

cannot decide which one is prettiest—they all seem equally pretty in their own way. The old woman, however, realizing the impracticality of picking so many cats, decides that the cats might be better judges of their own prettiness than either she or her husband and insists that they pick amongst themselves the prettiest one. When the cats prove incapable of picking one cat, they eat each other up, until only the homeliest kitten is left. Interestingly, it is this scraggly, ugly kitten that turns out to be the prettiest cat in the whole world in the eyes of the old couple, but only after it has been nursed back to health.

The Subjectivity of Beauty

When the old man and woman ask the cats to decide for themselves which one was the prettiest, the cats disagree and eat each other up.

1. Why did the cats disagree about which one of them was the prettiest?
2. How would you decide which cat was the prettiest?
3. Is the way that you would decide which cat was prettiest different from the way your classmates would decide which cat was prettiest?
4. If two people disagree about what is pretty, is one of them wrong?
5. Who gets to decide whether or not something is pretty?

Beauty as Culturally Constructed

In the story, the very old man sees how different all of the cats are from one another and cannot decide which of the millions of cats is the prettiest, so he decides to take them all home to the very old woman.

1. Why did the old man think that each cat was too pretty to leave behind?
2. If you were in a land filled with millions of cats, like the place in the book, do you think that you would be able to pick out which cat was the prettiest?
3. How would you pick out which cat was the prettiest?
4. How can you tell when something is pretty?
5. Is it possible that there could be two prettiest things in the world? What about a million?
6. Is it possible that everything in the world could be pretty?

7. Could everything in the world be the prettiest?

Beauty and Happiness

The old man and woman decide that they need to find the prettiest cat so that they can be happy.

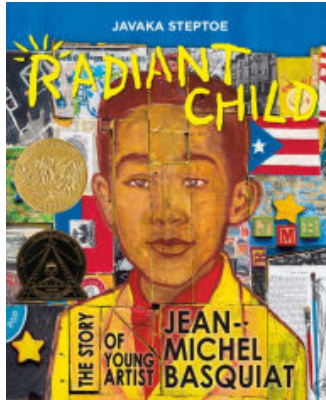
1. Why do you think the old man and woman think that the prettiest cat in the world will make them happy?
2. Should they have been looking for a pretty cat if they wanted a cat to make them happy?
3. Do you think that the kitten the old man and woman decided to keep at the end of the story made them happy?
4. Do you think that a pretty cat could make someone happier than an ugly cat?
5. Could something ugly ever make somebody happier than something pretty?
6. Do you think that old man and woman were happy with the kitten before they realized that it was the prettiest cat in the world?
7. Do you think that it was the kitten's prettiness that made the old man and woman happy?
8. Do you think the old man and old woman would have been happy if the kitten wasn't pretty?
9. Do things that make us happy look prettier than things that make us unhappy?
10. Do we love something because it is pretty or is something pretty because we love it?
11. Do pretty things always make us happy?
12. Is everything that makes us happy pretty?

Who Gets to Judge What's Pretty?

The old man and old woman decide to let the millions of cats decide amongst themselves which one of them was the prettiest.

1. How do you think the cats judged who was prettiest?
2. Do you think that the cats were better judges of their prettiness than the old man and woman?
3. Are there other ways that the cats or the old couple could have decided which cat was prettiest?
4. How do you think the couple should have decided which cat was prettiest?
5. Are some people better judges of prettiness than others?

Summary and questions for **Radiant Child** are contributed by Daniel Quintero and Emma Goidel



Author: Javaka Steptoe

Summary: Jean-Michel lives in Brooklyn and dreams of being a famous artist. He draws day in and day out, and even though his lines are sloppy and he does not color within the lines, his drawings are still somehow beautiful. Matilde, his mother, inspires him. One day he gets into an accident, and his mother brings him a book on anatomy to help him get better, but after he recovers, his mother's mind is not well and she has to be taken from home. Jean-Michel tries to draw the sadness out. He visits his mother in the hospital and promises her that he'll be a famous artist one day. As he grows older,

he leaves Brooklyn for New York City, where he draws on street corners and on anything he can find. Soon, his art becomes recognized by many, and it moves from street corners onto gallery halls. He is now famous, yet he still visits his mother regularly and draws for her. Jean-Michel's art is still sloppy, and not within the lines, but it is still beautiful.

Questions:

What is art

Jean-Michel draws and learns from his mother that art is everywhere. He learns that beyond museums and poetry books that they read together, art can be found in the style of the way we speak; in the games that children play on the street; and in the jumble of pieces that make up city life.

Show the children three different slides of pictures and repeat the question for each picture. Do you think this is art?

1. What do you think the author means when he says, "art creates new meaning for ordinary things"? Do you agree?
2. What is art?
3. What makes some pictures art and others not?
4. Are some works of art better than others? Why?

The nature of beauty

Jean-Michel's drawings are described as not being neat or clean. He does not color inside the lines and sometimes his drawings can be sloppy, ugly, and weird but they are still described as beautiful.

1. Do you think the drawings in this book are beautiful?
2. If yes, why so? If no, why so? Describe elements that make it one versus the other.
3. Is it possible for something to be both beautiful and ugly? Can you think of a time that something was both beautiful and ugly?

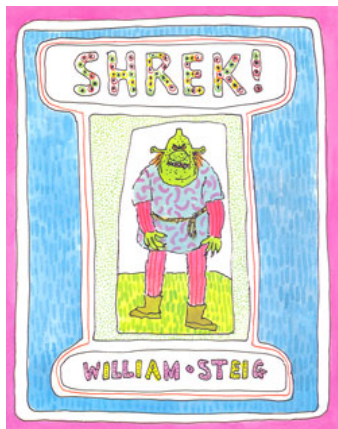
4. Does art have to be beautiful? To be good art, does it have to be beautiful?

The nature of fame

Jean-Michel continually emphasizes that he wants to be a famous artist one day. He in fact does become famous.

1. Why does Jean-Michel want to be famous?
2. What are the benefits of being famous?
3. Are there any downfalls that come with fame?
4. What does it mean to be famous?
5. What is fame?
6. Do famous people do bad things?
7. Do you know someone who has done something that is worth being famous for but they are not famous?
8. What is better: 1) to not be recognized for doing great things that you love or 2) to be famous for doing something you don't love or something bad?

Summary and questions for, Shrek are contributed by Hilary Pollan



Author: William Steig

Summary: Shrek is an ogre who lives in a swampy home. One day Shrek's parents tell him to leave the swamp to go see the world and do some damage. Soon after Shrek leaves he meets a Witch who gives him a fortune to go wed a princess. After receiving his fortune, Shrek sets off on a journey to find the princess. Along the way he meets a pheasant carrying peasants, fights a whopper of a dragon, has bad dreams about happy little children, meets a jabbering donkey, fights a fearless knight, and gets lost in a hall of mirrors filled with ugly Shreks. Shrek is not phased by the fact that his ugliness overwhelms everyone he meets. In fact, he loves being

so repulsive! When Shrek finally meets his stunningly ugly princess they instantly fall in love, get married, and live horribly ever after.

Questions:

Defining Ugliness

Shrek's mother was ugly and his father was ugly, but Shrek was uglier than the two of them put together.

1. (look at a picture of Shrek) What makes Shrek ugly?
2. How does Shrek feel about his ugliness? Does he like or dislike it?
3. How do other characters in the book feel about Shrek?

4. How can people think different things are ugly?
5. What about a beauty contest? How does the judges choose the most beautiful?

Looking Ugly and Being Ugly

Some things that Shrek does, like taking down the dragon and the knight, might be considered mean.

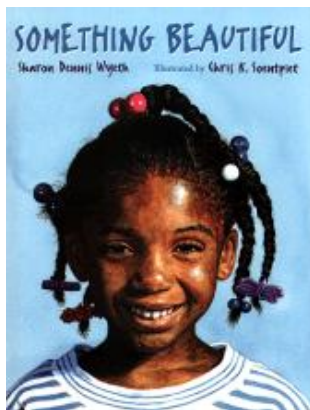
1. What does Shrek do that is mean?
2. What does Shrek do that is nice?
3. Would you call Shrek more or less ugly based on his actions?
4. Why do we call things ugly? Do we only call things ugly if we don't like them?
5. What is it that we don't like about someone that makes us think they are ugly? Is it just looks/appearance, or do other things play a role?
6. Can you think things/people are beautiful even if they do mean things?
7. Are people more beautiful when they only do nice things?

Love and Ugliness

Shrek falls in love with the princess because she is stunningly ugly.

1. Can you like things that are ugly?
2. Can you love someone who has warts or is hairy like the princess?
3. Do people love other people/things only because of the way they look?
4. Do we only love people who are like us?

Summary and questions for Something Beautiful are contributed by Isabella Barden



Author: Sharon Dennis Wyeth

Summary: This is a story about a young African American girl who initially sees only the ugliness in her neighborhood. After pointing out the various “ugly” aspects of her neighborhood, she seeks to find “something beautiful”. She runs into various people along the way, including Miss Delphine who says, “There is nothing more beautiful tasting than my fried fish sandwiches”. The young girl wants to find her own “something beautiful”. You’ll be surprised at how the girl creates her own piece of beauty.

Questions:

Sadness and Beauty

The girl saw the trash outside her window, the word “Die” written on her door, and the homeless lady on the sidewalk.

1. Do beautiful things always make you happy?
2. Who decides whether or not something is beautiful?
3. What does beautiful look like? Sound like? Feel like?
4. Do sad things and beautiful things ever look/sound/feel the same?
5. Is beauty only a feminine quality? Can boys be beautiful? Why or why not?
6. When is it helpful to be beautiful, and when is it detrimental?
7. Do you think that it upset the girl to see the homeless lady, the word die, and the trash, or do you think it was inspiring?
8. Can something sad be inspiring?
9. Is it difficult to find something beautiful? Why or why not?
10. Did she decide to find something beautiful once she saw these things, or do you think she always wanted to find something beautiful?

Knowledge and Error

The girl asked her neighbors what they thought was beautiful.

1. Have you ever been wrong about something?”, “Before you knew you were wrong, do you remember “knowing” you were right?
2. Have you ever been wrong about something?
3. Before you knew you were wrong, do you remember “knowing” you were right?
4. What does it feel like to know something, and have someone tell you you’re wrong?
5. Talk about a time when you have been wrong about whether or not something was beautiful. A time where you have disagreed with someone about whether or not something is beautiful.
6. How did you resolve the disagreement, did you both realize that you have a right to your own opinion, did you agree to disagree, or did you settle on a final agreement?
7. Can something be beautiful to more than one person? To only one person?
8. If you disagree with someone about whether something is beautiful, does that mean that it’s not beautiful? Why or why not?
9. Can you believe something is beautiful, but not know it is? Or do you always know when something is beautiful?
10. How do you know something is beautiful, do you agree with what the girl said, that it’s “something that when you have it, your heart is happy”?

Types of Beauty

At the end of the story, the mother tells her daughter that her “something beautiful”, is the girl.

1. Is beautiful just a physical thing?
2. Have you ever told somebody they were beautiful, or has anyone ever called you beautiful, how did that feel?
3. Can you be beautiful on the inside?
4. Do you think that the mother was referring to her daughter’s physical beauty or to her inner beauty? Or both?

5. Do you think that this girl is beautiful on the inside?
6. What does it mean to be beautiful on the inside?
7. Have you ever met somebody that was beautiful? What were they like?
8. What makes something beautiful?
9. If I say that I am beautiful, does that mean that I am?
10. What ended up being the young girl's "something beautiful"?

Aesthetics warm up activities

Contributed by: University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children

Warm-up #1:

Write down something that you think is beautiful and two reasons why you think it's beautiful, and write down something that you think is ugly and two reasons why you think it's ugly.

Warm-up #2:

What is your favorite art form (music, literature, visual arts, dance, poetry, film, theater, etc.)?
What about it do you like most?

Warm-up #3:

Think of something (and write down if appropriate):

Visually beautiful

Visually ugly

Tastes delicious

Tastes disgusting

Smells fragrant

Smells stinky

Feels really good

Feels really awful

Sounds great

Sounds terrible

Warm-up #4:

Think a red thought

Think a blue thought

Think a green thought

Think a yellow thought

Think a purple thought

Think an orange thought

Think a clear transparent thought

Two Painters

By: Peter Worley

Stimulus

Many years ago in Greece they held a competition to find the best painter. The people of Greece loved beauty in all its forms and tried to find the best in all things. Everyone agreed that there were 2 wonderful painters in the city of Athens, but nobody could decide which of the 2 painters was the better artist. Some people preferred one artist, some preferred the other. So they decided to have a painting competition in order to decide who the best painter was.

They asked an old man who was an esteemed painter in his youth to be the judge, and he set the two painters the task of painting something that was real to life - the one that painted the most realistic painting would be the winner and crowned the best artist in Athens.

Both painters went away and were not seen by anyone for 3 months, then on the day of the competition both of them brought their paintings to the stage in front of everyone, with a curtain covering their paintings. The judge asked the first painter to reveal his work, and when he pulled back the curtain there was a cheer from the audience - the artist had painted a bowl of grapes, glistening in sun: ripe and juicy and ready to eat. They looked delicious, and life-like. Some birds that had been flying nearby suddenly swooped down and tried to peck at the grapes - the artist had fooled the birds into thinking they were real. The crowd cheered once more - if it was good enough to fool birds this painting must be the winner. The judge turned to the second artist and asked him to reveal his painting. The artist stood smiling at the judge but did not move. "Let us see your painting" the judge demanded, and still the artist did not move. The judge angrily walked over to the painting to reveal it himself, but when he reached out his hand only touched thin air. He gasped and tried again, and to his amazement he suddenly realised that the painting itself was of the curtains - the painting had fooled him. He now had to decide who was the best artist - the one who fooled the birds, or the one who had fooled him?

Task Question:

- Who do you think should be crowned the best artist?

Nested Questions

- Do you think the winner has painted the most beautiful painting?
- Do you think the competition proved which was the better painter?
- What's the difference between an ordinary painting and a beautiful one?
- What is beauty?
- Does good art have to be beautiful?
- Is it possible to judge art?



**Philosophy
Circles**

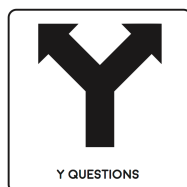
Once there was an artist

There's a wonderful anecdote in John Berger's book, "The Success and Failure of Picasso", where Picasso looks at some grand house on a hill, and he draws it, and the drawing buys the house! It isn't as "narrow" as my usual stories in putting a single concept forward and drawing attention to obvious questions. I used this for a World Philosophy Day, so may require more time than 30 minutes if pupils are choosing questions.



Ask pupils to imagine they could draw one picture, and whatever was in the picture, you could have it. What would it be? Just picture it in your mind's eye.

Then invite anyone to share what they pictured. It's best not to put them on the spot as they may have private images they don't want to share, such as lost loved ones.



This is a particularly good stimulus to provoke pupils' questions. A number of bulletin readers wrote back with how their class had responded. For a class experienced in P4C, you could ask them to create their own questions from the stimulus. Alternatively, you could present with a selection to vote on:

What makes a painting valuable?

Can you capture someone's "true heart" in a painting?

Can love at first sight really be love?

How much control should parents have over our lives?

Is life like a painted picture?

Do we need to impress to prove love?

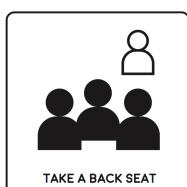
Can paintings capture reality?

Is what you really want what you really need?

Can a painting be as valuable as a house?

It is unfair to use your talent to get things?

Why would you risk your life for something there is more than one of?



Once the pupils have voted for a question, step back and be at the service of the enquiry. Scribe their ideas, rather than script the direction of the enquiry. Use your notes to recap on what has been said and help pupils decide where to go next. Encourage them to talk to each other, rather than look at you.

NEXT STEPS

Take another look at the story. What ingredients made it a good stimulus for questions? Based on this, can they make their own Philosophy Fairytale?

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Once there was an artist. So great an artist was she, that when she wanted something, she had only to paint it and give the picture in exchange, and the thing was hers.

When she wanted a meal, she would draw it on an innkeeper's table and he would make it. When she wanted a dress, she would paint a pattern for the weaver, who would gladly weave the cloth from the finest thread. When she wanted a house, she would make a painting of it. The owner would sell his house for the painting, and sell the painting for a bigger house.

Before she ran out of paints, she would use the last of each colour to paint itself, and when she was down to her last brush, she would paint another with its final stroke, so that she never wanted for anything.

Until one day, when she was painting a little cottage, sure that the owner would be happy to exchange it for the beautiful picture it would make. A young man came out of the cottage to see what she was doing. He was so handsome that straightaway she fell in love. In no time at all, she had made up her mind to marry him.

"I shall paint my greatest picture ever, of one of the grand houses in the city, with footmen and maids and all, and we shall live there together and be happy," she said.

"That's all well and good," said the youth. "But I shall only marry when my mother says. For she's the one that brought me into the world and has kept me in it."

"Let me paint her a picture of you," said the artist. And she did. When it was finished, it was the most beautiful picture she had ever painted.

But when she showed it to the youth's mother, the old woman said, "Not a bad likeness. But there is something missing. You have not captured his true heart. When your painting shows me that, then you shall have my blessing to marry. Come again tomorrow."

So the next morning, the artist began again, working with her finest brushes and her most beautiful paints, until you would think that even his mother could see no difference between the youth and the painting. But again, his mother said, "No, you have not captured his true heart. Come again tomorrow."

And so it went on. Every day the artist would paint the painting anew, trying to capture the youth's true heart. She tried different lights, different poses, different brushes, different paints. But the old woman was never satisfied. The artist grew thinner, because she would sometimes forget to paint some bread for the baker before she came to see the youth; and her clothes began to fade, because she had no time to visit the weaver and the seamstress and paint a new dress.

One day, she had very few paints left, for she had forgotten to use the last of them to paint them again, and her brush would hardly last to paint another. The new painting for the day was almost finished. It looked to him perfect in every way, as if it were a mirror. Yet he knew that it would still not please his mother, and the artist would be sent away again to come back tomorrow.

At that moment, three tears dropped from his eyes onto his cheek. With the last of her paints, the artist caught the tears on the canvas, and the painting was finished.

The old woman looked at the painting and at the tears. "Now," she said, "you have caught my son's true heart, and you shall be wed!"

And so they married. And what a splendid wedding she painted!

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/blind-painter



Blind Painter

Time: about 25 minutes

Materials: A blackboard or whiteboard to draw on, blank pieces of paper for students to draw on, crayons or colored pencils if possible.

Description: Frame this exercise by making the point that there are two key skills we want to develop when we do philosophy. These are, first, the ability to communicate clearly and second, the ability to listen actively. When we do philosophy, it's very important that we learn to express ourselves with clarity, to say what we mean in a way that others can understand us. It's also vital that we listen actively: we need to ask questions when we don't understand, to rephrase and restate what others say, and to engage in dialogue with our fellow philosophers in order to advance mutual understanding.

This activity offers an opportunity for students to practice those two skills — communicating clearly and listening actively — in a way that's fun, but which also gives them an authentic taste of what it's like to communicate effectively — and ineffectively, too, for that matter.

To start this exercise, pair students up, and then have them arrange their chairs back-to-back so that one of the members of the pair faces the board and the other faces away. The student who faces away from the board needs to have a surface to draw on (usually a notebook), a blank piece of paper, and something to draw with. A crayon or marker is ideal since students will eventually display what they draw to their classmates, so something bright and easy to see from across a classroom works best.

The explanation of the exercise goes something like this: “This exercise is called ‘Blind Painter.’ The way it works is that the one of you facing away from the board is a painter, but you are blind to everything except what you are painting. The good news is you have a set of eyes to help you. So, I am going to draw a picture on the board and you, the painter, are to try to recreate it. However, you can’t look at what I’m drawing; only your “eyes” can do that. Your “eyes” will have to describe to you what I’m drawing. You need to keep in mind two rules: first, the “eyes” cannot look at your paper and second, the painter cannot look at what I am drawing. Consequently, you will have to use those two skills I mentioned — communicating clearly and listening actively — in order to successfully complete your drawing.”

Note that students should feel comfortable engaging in a discussion with each other, but that they should do so in a kind of “stage whisper” since, with some many students talking simultaneously, the room can get pretty loud.

Commence drawing a picture on the board. Do so slowly, one or two lines at a time, so that the pairs of students can keep up. Facilitators should monitor the process to make sure they don’t too far ahead. Any picture is fine, but something simple works best, for example, a simple little scene with a house and a mountain and a tree — the sort of drawing a small child would make.

When the drawing is completed, make a box around the whole picture to indicate that it’s finished. Invite the painters to take a look at what been drawn and to see how close their drawing is to the original. Ask all the painters to come to the front of the room and proudly display their drawings. Then facilitate a question-and-answer session about what worked and what didn’t and how, perhaps, painters and “eyes” could do a better job of communicating and listening.

Typically, painters commend their “eyes” for giving precise instructions, especially for describing what to draw in terms of recognizable shapes, like triangles, squares, and easily identifiable objects like clouds and letters. The most common complaint is that their “eyes” gave confusing information in regards to the placement — right, left, up, or down — of items in the drawing. Brainstorm together about how to build upon what worked and improve upon what didn’t for the next go-round.

At the conclusion of this discussion, students get back into their pairs, with the former “eyes” now playing the role of painter and vice-versa. This time around, it’s interesting to draw a much less easy-to-follow drawing. (Usually, we draw a cartoon head, something like Fred Flintstone or Homer Simpson. Unlike the first drawing, this one doesn’t have easily identifiable objects like trees and houses. Typically, therefore, students have a far more difficult time of recreating the drawing.)

At the conclusion of this drawing, again invite the painters to compare their works to the one on the board. Ask them to come to the front of the room and again proudly display what they’ve done. (Without fail, the drawings are more interesting this time around,

even though they tend not to look very much like what was drawn on the board.)

At this point, lead a discussion about why this time around was so much trickier and what could have been done to make it easier for the painters to match my drawing.

(Sometimes, a discussion about the nature of art emerges here. Students often want to talk about whether the pieces in the second round — which admittedly look little like what was drawn on the board — aren't, in fact, more interesting works of art than those in the first round.) Often students want to talk about whether or not a painter has “failed” if his or her artwork doesn't match what the original picture. Occasionally, some students get very exercised about their drawing (or their partner's) not looking like what the teacher has drawn. From time to time, this can lead to a rich discussion of whether or not it was fair that the second time was so much harder. A teacher might put this up for grabs as a topic to inquire about: is it fair that some people face harder challenges than others? If so, why? If not, why not? What if facing those challenges leads to superior outcomes (like more artistic drawings?) Would you rather be an expert at something simple or a novice at something complex?

The main thing that comes out of the discussion, though, is the value of communicating effectively. Students really do come to see how what they say can be interpreted and/or misinterpreted by someone else. And the connection to philosophical discussion can therefore be made pretty easily.

The other point that is worth mentioning is that sometimes our best efforts to communicate effectively fail because we don't really have the complete picture of what we're trying to share with each other. This is illustrated pretty well by the second round of the exercise. Because what is being illustrated doesn't really become obvious until the artist is finished — that is, it doesn't really look like the head of Fred Flintstone until the last few marks are made — it's hard for us to communicate what we're seeing. Had a set of “eyes,” though, for instance, waited until the drawing was done and then told his or her painter to draw a cartoon head of Fred Flintstone, the drawing might have come out much closer to what was put on the board. Students tend to understand appreciate this point and are able to see the connection to the study of philosophy quite easily. But just in case, it's worthwhile making that point explicitly: philosophy is like this; sometimes it doesn't make sense until we get to the very end. We have to be willing to ‘live in the question’ and allow the whole picture to emerge. Then, when we're all finished, we can look back at what we've done and understand what it all meant.

Again, having done philosophy even just a couple of times, students will recognize this dynamic and appreciate how familiar it is to the practice of philosophical inquiry.



What is Art?

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Ages: 7-13

Subject: Visual literacy & Aesthetics

CCSS Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Background Knowledge: This is intended to be taught near the beginning of an aesthetics unit. No prior knowledge of aesthetics is necessary. However, this lesson is written for students who are familiar with the structure and expectations of P4C sessions.

Objectives: At the end of this lesson 100% of students will be able to:

1. Respectfully listen to their peers' opinions, build off of each other's ideas, and express their own opinions clearly.
2. Collaboratively create a philosophical working definition for "Art"

Materials:

Easel/whiteboard/Interactive white board

Printed out pictures of paintings **or** slides of paintings to project

Focus Question: What is art?

Supporting Questions: What makes something art? Does art occur in nature? Does something have to be beautiful to be art?

Initiation:

(Optional read a book from the Aesthetics section or from your own choosing about art)

Ask students, "What is art?" Discuss and come up with a working definition.

Development:

Find paintings from different cultures, eras, and styles. It might be a famous "beautiful" painting, a controversial painting, a cubist painting, an Andy Warhol painting, etc.

Each time you present each painting or image ask the students, "Is this art?"

You might want to make it a movement activity by asking students to go to one side of the room if they think it is art and the other if they do not. You may also just make a “art” pile and a “not art” pile with the pictures.

Now show: a child’s drawing, pictures of things that might not be seen as art (these should be ordinary objects in the form of clip art or just pictures you took from your phone or camera -- tree, chair, car, etc)

Find drawings/paintings/ professional photos of these objects. “Are *these* art?”

Now find an “ugly” painting “Is this art?”

(Optional) Ideas for Visual Stimuli



"Sunset Over An American Southwest Landscape, Organ Pipe National Monument, Pima County, Arizona, USA."
By Christopher Talbot Frank



"Composition VIII" By Wassily Kandinsky



"The Starry Night" By Vincent Van Gogh



"Foxes" by Franz Marc

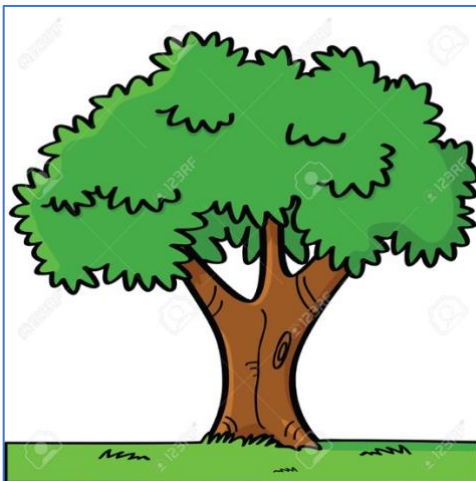


“St. Catherine of Alexandria”

By Raphael



“Campbell's Soup I” by Andy Warhol





“Furniture – Chair – Rocking Chair”
By Mike Savad

“Oak Alley, Louisiana” By Yan Lee



Unknown artist retrieved from
<https://www.artranked.com/topic/Famous+Ugly>

“The Ugly Duchess”
By Quentin Matsys

Closure:

Review what students thoughts were. Discuss supporting questions: What makes something art? Does art occur in nature? Does something have to be beautiful to be art?

Ask the students to create their own definition for what art is based on the discussion. They can either do this in pairs or individually. Then come back as a whole group and discuss. Create a working definition for what art is that you may change through out the unit.

Plato and Aesthetics

By: Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Initiation:

Have students stand up and say, “I’m going to show you some pictures. If you think it is art go to the left side of the room (point) if you DO NOT think it is art go to the right side of the room.” You might want to tape an ‘Art’ and ‘not art’ sign on each side so that the students remember. Show pictures real objects and then drawings of them. ex: a chair, a tree, a person, an animal, etc.

Development:

Facilitator: Most of you said that this picture (show picture of real object) was not art and that this picture (show picture of drawing) was art. Turn to your partner and discuss why. (After giving students a few minutes to discuss) Why did most of you say this was art and this was not art?

Students: Various answers

Facilitator: So you thought this one was art because someone made it. Hmmm, and this one isn’t art because why?

Student: Because no one made that, they just took a picture of it.

Facilitator: So which one is more real? (holds up photo of a chair and drawing of a chair)

Students: (point to photo of chair).

Facilitator: So believe it or not friends, the fact that you said that this photo was more real and this picture was art, means that you were thinking philosophically! And not just any philosophical thinking, you were thinking like Plato, one of the most famous ancient philosophers!

Facilitator: In his theory Plato states that there are two realms: The realm of Forms and the Physical Realm. The Realm of Forms is perfect and unchanging. It consists God, the perfect circle, true beauty, and other ideals in their most perfect state. Let’s say that this chair (points to a chair in the room) is the most perfect chair, and no other chair will ever be as perfect as this one! It is the chair in the Realm of Forms. The only problem is that we cannot see this perfect chair. (Lift up the chair and put it in the hall).

The Physical realm is the physical world around of and it consists of every person and object we encounter every day. In Plato's view, the people and objects in our world are just an **imitation** of objects in the Realm of Forms. We are not perfect, we are copy of the idea of the perfect person. This chair, that chair, the chair in this photo, in the physical world are not perfect, they are an imitation of or an attempt at the perfect chair.

Anyways, since in Plato's eyes everything here is an imitation, What do you think Plato's view of art is? (Allow students a moment to think to themselves and then turn and talk to a partner).

What do you think Plato's view of art is and why?

Students: various responses

Facilitator: In Plato's theory, he states that "Art is an Imitation of an Imitation." What do you think he means by that? (Allow students a moment to think to themselves and then turn and talk to a partner).

Students: Various responses. So, if we are an imitation of the idea of a perfect person and then we create something it is an imitation too?...

Facilitator: Yes. And I am not saying I agree with Plato, this is just what he believed. So the chair in "The Realm of Forms" (the hallway) is the perfect chair, and these chairs are an imitation of those chairs. Then, this drawing is an imitation of the chairs in the room. So this drawing, or art in general, is an imitation of an imitation!

Students: Ohhhh

(If more explaining is needed)

Student: I still don't get it.

Facilitator: Imitation is another word for copy. So if I made a chair and then someone copied how I did it, their chair would be an imitation of mine right?

Student: Yes, because yours was the original.

Facilitator: Correct. But now, you draw that chair that someone copied from me. They copied me, and then you copied them. Therefore your drawing would be a copy of a copy, or an imitation of an imitation.

Student: Okay I get it now.

Facilitator: Remember how you guys mentioned that this picture was more real and this one was a drawing so it was less real? Well, Plato thought that by creating art (and by art I don't just mean paintings. Poetry, and music fall into the category too) we are pushing

ourselves further from truth. Why do you think Plato said that by making art we are pulling ourselves further from truth?

Student: (various answers.) Because art isn't real. The chair in that drawing isn't real.

Student: Sometimes with cartoons and stuff little kids might think it is real and it isn't.

Facilitator: Great answers! On that point, Plato also said that art can be potentially dangerous. How could art be dangerous? And remember we are talking about all kinds of art like music, poetry, movies. (Give students a moment to think to themselves and then share with a partner).

Student: Because people might start to think that the art is real. And if they play a lot of video games they might think that they can act that way in real life too.

Facilitator: Phenomenal thinking friends! Remember that In Plato's day they did not have TV or video games. Plays, music, and art were their form of entertainment. I have one last question. When you look at this drawing of a chair do you learn anything.

Students: No

Facilitator: That's the other reason why Plato thought art was dangerous. Because he believed that you don't obtain any new knowledge from it. You may not learn anything by looking at this drawing, but art is much more than that.

Closure:

Facilitator: (Recap what was discussed). I want to know what you all think. Can art (media, plays, music, anything artistic) potentially cause danger? How? Can you learn anything from art? Can you learn anything by creating art?

(*If time have small group discussions and assign each group a focus question and then come back together.)

Alright my philosophy friends, your exit ticket today is to write a philosophical question in your journals that is inspired by today's discussion.

Students: (Get out their journals and create a question independently at their desks.)

*As a follow up to this lesson start with some questions that the students came up with. Then I suggest moving on to the Plato's Allegory of The Cave lesson in the epistemology section while you are on the topic of Plato's *Republic*. *

Can anyone make art?

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/can-anyone-make-art



Learning Objectives

- **Critical viewing** - students will watch the movie and look for the questions and ideas it invites us to ask and think about.
- **Reflective dialogue** - Students will engage in a reflective discussion on the discussion questions provided but even more importantly, the ones they craft themselves.

Tool Text

In 2007 an independent film came out entitled "My Kid could paint that." It followed the art career of a four year old, Marla Olmstead, living in Binghamton, NY who took the art world by storm. Many of her canvases sold for 5 figures and presented beautiful and engaging abstract images. The film began as a story of Marla, the pint-size Picasso, but developed into something quite serious. Who defines what is art? Can a child really be a "genuine" artist? Can anyone paint like Picasso? Is modern art a big hoax foisted on an unsuspecting public?



Or is abstract art a deep and genuine engagement with aesthetic ideas which pushes us to examine what art means?

Have your students watch the movie and encourage them to reflect and discuss their reactions.

Possible Discussion Questions

1. Who defines what is art?
 2. Can a child really be a "genuine" artist?
 3. Can anyone paint like Picasso?
 4. Is modern art a big hoax foisted on an unsuspecting public?
-



Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for Year KS2 - KS4

Accidental Art

*"This painting is an accident; believe it or not, it's true.
So, is it art then? Well that's a question for you!"*

Philosophical Potential	Aesthetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art, Intention, Purpose, Accidents, Contingency, Creativity, Skill, Meaning
Session Objective(s)	Community of Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children should connect contributions to what others have said when prompted • Some children should connect contributions to what others have said spontaneously
Facilitation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is art? • Can you think of a clear example of art? Of not-art? • Who decides what is art? • What is an artist? • If a painting is made by an artist is it art? • Are all artworks made by artists? • If a painting is in a gallery is it art? • If a painting is sold for money is it art? • If someone calls something art, is it art? • If someone likes a painting is it art? • Can an accidental painting be art? • Can an artwork have no artist? • Can people who aren't artists make artworks? • Is there anyone (or anything) incapable of making art? • What (if anything) is wrong with an accidental painting as art? • How is an accidental painting different from an ordinary painting? • Does an artist have to do every brush stroke of a painting on purpose? • What does it mean to do something on purpose? • If an artist makes a mistake, does this mean it isn't art any more? • Who decides what is art? • Is an accidental painting worth more or less money? • Is an accidental painting more or less valuable in other ways? • Should we like, appreciate, or enjoy accidental art?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pom-pom • Circle of chairs • A painting

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Re) introduce facilitator(s) • Briefly establish or reiterate your class rules. 	
Warm up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the session with an anecdote (in-role for younger children, out-of-role for older children e.g. <i>"There was a woman who loved art so much ..."</i>) <i>"My sister loves art so much, she decided she would like some art in her house. So she went to an art shop, a sort of gallery where all the artworks were for sale. What kinds of artworks do we imagine she found in the art shop?"</i> • Allow the class time to speculate, gathering a range of kinds of artwork. E.g. <i>painting, pottery, photography, sculpture, film.</i> • You may want to unpick some of the examples further asking: What kind of painting? <i>Figurative painting? Decorative painting? Abstract painting?</i> <p>Here you are assessing the extent of the children's experience of artworks and gathering examples for the ensuing discussion</p>	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presentation of stimulus part one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the anecdote <i>"So my sister found a painting she liked very much and she bought it. Now she's proud as can be that she has art in her house. But when my brother saw it, he wasn't sure that she <i>had</i> bought an artwork. Well my sister and brother have argued all weekend. So I've brought the painting to you to see if you can help."</i> • Present the artwork. <p>Note: The session will change depending on the artwork you present. I have found that abstract expressionism like the action paintings of Jackson Pollock or the colour field painting of Mark Rothko work well because for many children, they are already 'borderline cases'. However, be aware that the children are rightly sensitive to the fact that you are presenting printed copies of these works and not the originals. Acknowledgement of this will affect their verdict on whether or not the work constitutes art.</p> <p>I have also found that sharing an original painting makes the sessions twist more believable as – among other things - they can see the brush strokes. You could use an original artwork you have in school or one made by a child in another class. Be aware that an artwork made by children will raise its own set of issues.</p> <p>Mimetic paintings of people, animals, landscapes etc. are harder to use with younger children but can be interesting with older children if they can make the leap of imagination.</p> 	

	Whether the painting is framed or signed by the artist, also affects the verdicts of younger children in ways that you may like to play with.	
3. QUESTIONS		3 min
Prepared Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write up the following central question: Is it art? 	
Thinking Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the group one minute, allow children to take a closer look at the painting. 	
4. DIALOGUE		10 min
First Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin the dialogue with a paired discussion. 	
Collecting Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite children with strong intuitions to share their best reasons. 	
Getting Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated discussion, identifying key issues of interest to the children and identifying debate. <p>The following sub questions may be helpful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is art? Can you think of a clear example of art? Can you think of an example that clearly isn't art? Who decides what is art? What is an artist? If a painting is made by an artist is it art? Are all artworks made by artists? If a painting is in a gallery is it art? If a painting is sold for money is it art? If someone calls something art, is it art? If someone likes a painting is it art? 	

TWIST		2 min
Presentation of stimulus part two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After your initial discussion, show the students a note you found taped to the back of the painting. It reads: <p>"Believe it or not, but this painting is <u>an accident</u>! True I am an artist and this painting belongs to me, but I am not the artist of <i>this</i> painting. At least I don't think I am.</p> <p>What exactly do I mean? Well, I was carrying a blank canvas and some cans of paint when I tripped. My fall made a terrible mess and when I was tidying up I noticed the most extraordinary thing. On the floor, on one of the empty canvases was this picture: beautiful, colourful, ordered and perfectly art-like but entirely accidental. I must admit, that I think it is the best painting to have ever come out of my studio. But is it art? Well I'm afraid I just don't know the answer to that question."</p>	

Digging Deeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paired discussion on the twist. Refer to the central question: Is it art? The following sub questions might be helpful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can an accidental painting be art? Can an artwork have no artist? Is there anyone (or anything) incapable of making art? What (if anything) is wrong with an accidental painting as art? How is an accidental painting different from an ordinary painting? Does an artist have to do every brush stroke of a painting on purpose? What does it mean to do something on purpose? If an artist makes a mistake when painting, does this mean it isn't art any more? Is an accidental painting worth more or less money? Is an accidental painting more or less valuable in other ways? Should we like, appreciate, or enjoy accidental art? 	10 min
Final Push	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to the central question pressing for revised answer(s). Is it art? 	5 min
Last thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on time, go round the circle once, hearing from everyone. Encourage the children to respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Yes because..." "No because..." "I don't know because..." 	10 min
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the Community of Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Assessment (based on session objectives) Ask the following questions asking children to indicate yes or no with thumbs up or down: Have I connected by ideas to someone else's ideas today? 	

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/what-is-art



What is Art?

This is an activity to get students thinking about what makes something art.

Have each student draw two pictures. One drawing must be a drawing they would call art, and the other one they would not call art.

Ask the students who want to do so to share their drawings.

What makes one art and the other not?

Does the intention of the artist matter?

Is the effort what matters?

What about what other people think — does that matter?

Pose to the students the “Case of the Purple Picture.”

One day your teacher says that she wants to draw a picture of you. You are excited. She takes a sheet of paper and covers the whole thing in purple and then she tacks it up on the board. Under it she writes, “This is a picture of ____.”

Would you be mad? Why or why not?

Would it be a good picture of you?

What is a picture?

How do we know what a good picture is?

How do we know what the person who drew the picture meant?





COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY

WHAT IS IT?

Many opportunities for learners to be creative involve working independently, but group work is fertile ground for creative activity.

The new ideas, perspectives and values of a group can push individuals to think deeply and communicate more effectively. This tool explores several ways to explore ideas using the creative output of learners working together.

RECIPE

- **No. of participants:** 5 – 30 (maximum 5 per subgroup)
- **Age of participants:** 7+
- **Preparation time:** 5 - 20 minutes
- **Delivery time:** 10 minutes – 1 hour
- **Materials:** Will depend on the activity

HOW DOES IT WORK?

For each activity, the communication within the group is through the media; participants should take part in the activity without speaking. A reflection after the activity provides the opportunity to discuss what they've made.

Collaborative Poetry Writing

Each member of the group takes it in turn to write one line of a poem entitled: 'Imprisonment' (or whatever concept or theme you're exploring.) Once they have written a draft they can take it in turns to edit the poem. When the activity is over, they should share their edited version with the rest of the group.

Collaborative Sculpture

Each member of the group adds to a sculpture. The sculpture could be a response to an issue, emotion or concept you'd like them to explore. All participants can work on the sculpture simultaneously. They might want to use an immediate medium like rubbish, empty boxes, Playdough or Lego. Present the finished sculpture at the end of the activity and invite the wider group to ask the sculptors questions or comment on the group's theme.

HOW DOES IT WORK? (cont.)

Collaborative Drawing

In pairs, students can try drawing using the same pen. Start them off with simple shapes such as 'house' or 'flower'. Later the pairs can move on to more challenging concepts like 'love' or 'family'. Alternatively this activity can involve a long role of wallpaper and a whole class drawing at the same time around the same theme.

Collaborative Tableaux

Build a tableaux around a question or concept. One performer assumes a position at a time while the other performers try to make sense of the scene as it builds, adding themselves to the picture in a pose that makes sense. Perform the finished tableaux to the rest of the group and invite them to comment on what it depicts and what they think it represents. (See 'Dramatic Devices' Tool)

Collaborative Music-Making

Using rhythm to explore an emotion, an event or an issue, begin with one percussionist and invite members of the group to improvise accompaniment, layering the sounds until everyone is making a contribution. Perform the final piece and invite the wider group to identify the central theme.

TIPS

- Try providing each group with the same brief but a different medium, or the same medium but a different brief.
- As the facilitator try and give as little guidance to their activity as possible. After the concept / issue / question has been explored everyone can discuss as a group how well they think it has been represented.

YOUR NOTES...

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FIND OUT MORE

- See 'Concept Building' Tool
- See 'Dramatic Devices' Tool



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What is Music?

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Ages: 9-15

CCSS Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 & CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short research projects based on focus questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Background knowledge: This may be an introduction to aesthetics or an activity that is done after the students have already had some discussions in the area of aesthetics. You choose.

Objective: This lesson aims to help students define what music is by listening to other's opinions and exploring different types of music/sounds. By the end of the lesson 100% of the students will be able to:

1. Respectfully listen to their peers' opinions, build off of each other's ideas, and express their own opinions clearly.
2. Create a philosophical definition for "Music"

Materials:

Tables for each center

Timer

Laptops/Chrome Books (one per student)

Internet access

Headphones (One per student)

Worksheets for each center

Pencils/Pens

Easel/whiteboard/Interactive whiteboard

Learning activities:

I. Initiation:

Gather in a circle and ask the students “What is music?” Create a working definition as a class and write it on an easel or the board.

Review the activity and directions, determine the route (after center 2, you go to center 3, etc.), Split students into groups and assign them a center to start at.

II. Development:

Music centers. There will be laptops/Chrome Books and headphones at each center with the auditory clips ready to play. Directions and worksheets will be at each center as well. All of the suggestions are easily available online for free.

***Tip:** if you paste each youtube url onto <http://viewpure.com>, this will eliminate ads and also block each clip from going onto another clip once it is over. This will make for smoother transitions. *

Focus question: What is music?

1. Center One: Atonal vs. Classical music

Suggestion for Atonal piece: Schoenberg “Drei Klavierstücke, Op. 11”

Suggestion for Classical piece: Vivaldi “Four Seasons – Spring”

Supporting questions for center one: What was the difference between these two pieces? Did you like one more than the other? Why?

2. Center two: (American) Folk vs. Slam Poetry vs. Rap

Suggestion for American Folk piece: Todd Snider "Talking Reality Television Blues"

Suggestions for Slam Poem piece: Marc Smith “Small Boy”

or an appropriate clip from BBC Social Rappers v Poets. Sage Francis is a fine choice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiKYTzkX55c>

Suggestion for Rap Piece: The Fat Boys “Human Beat Box”

or an appropriate clip from BBC Social Rappers v Poets This one by Zesh is a good one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geA4t9fXJQI>

Supporting questions for center two: Which of these clips do you consider to be music? Why or why not? What components did each clip have or not have that helped you classify it? Does it constitute as music if a person is speaking rhythmically?

3. Center three: Random Sounds vs. Sound Art vs. Music

Suggestion for random sounds: I suggest that you make your own recording of random sounds. If you are not able to, this clip may work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCFCbMqeddc>

Suggestion for sound art: Anders Lind “Lines”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP36xoPXDnM>

Supporting questions for center three: Are these clips this music? Why or why not? If not, what are these clips lacking that music has?

4. Center four: Music vs. Organized sound

Suggestions for rhythmic STOMP clips:

The beginning of “Stomp Out Loud “ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US7c9ASVfNc>

Stomp “Basketballs and Kitchen” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik8jICj8juc>

Suggestion for step team clip: Patriot Press “Step Team”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9Ot0jY0PVo>

Suggestion for organized sounds: STOMP “Construction Site”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRPK8NT64VE&list=PLQH5Q8v0FxfS6BU3iN3aMjtKMo2cOmYj7>

Supporting questions for center four: Does music have to be made with musical instruments? Can your body be an instrument? What was the difference between these clips? Which would you consider music and why?

III. Closure:

Reconvene as a whole group and discuss as you see fit. You may want to ask questions that were on the worksheets, simply ask what they learned, or enquire how has their idea of music has changed? Change the working definition of “Music” based on the discussion.

What Do We Find Beautiful?

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/what-do-we-find-beautiful



Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization

info@plato-philosophy.org

Posted by: This lesson plan, created by Terrance McKittrick, is part of a series of lesson plans in Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Designed for: [High School](#), [Lower School](#), [Middle School](#)

Topics Covered: Beauty, as well as subjectivity and objectivity

Estimated Time Necessary: 90 minutes
[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

- **To explore the nature of beauty -**
 - **To examine the significance of beauty in music -**
-

Tool Text

Introduction

Students should be given a week to do the following assignment (though it can be revised as needed to fit your time constraints):

Pick as many “beautiful” songs as you are old. So, for example, if you are 16 you will pick 16 of the songs you feel are the most “beautiful”. Please make a list of them and then write a paragraph for each song detailing why you think they are the most beautiful songs ever created. After you have done this please pick one song that you believe is “the opposite of beautiful,” that you might term “ugly”. Please also write a paragraph for this song detailing why you think it is ugly.

Emphasize that the songs have to be the *most beautiful* songs of all time. Students are asked to bring, on the due date along with their completed assignment, their songs with them via i-pod, phone, cd, or other device and told that they will have a chance to play some of them. Make sure to have the ability to play different mediums on the due date.

Activity

When students come together on the due date, divide them into groups of four or five. Ask students to share, in their small groups, what songs they chose that were beautiful and why. You can walk around and listen to the groups’ conversations.

After about fifteen to twenty minutes (based on how you feel the group discussions are going), ask the students to share with their groups the “ugly” song they chose and explain why. Give this part of the activity somewhere between five to ten minutes, and again listen to each group’s discussions.

Bring the class back together in one large group and ask the students whether, when they shared their beautiful songs, they found they chose some of the same ones. What were they? Why did they think they were beautiful? Did anyone else in the class pick those songs? If it turns out that there are a few songs about which the class shares the belief that they are beautiful, ask if students would like to play those songs. When a song is played, listen to the whole piece, unless it is particularly long (in which case you can ask the student to choose a segment to play). When the song is over, ask the student who played it why he or she thought it was beautiful if they haven’t done so already. Ask the rest of the class if they thought the song was beautiful and why. Generally, a few students will volunteer ideas about the song and address why they think it is beautiful.

Questions Raised

As students address the whole class, listen to find places to ask follow-up questions about beauty. If you keep your ears open the questions will come easily, and the context will call forth particular queries, but here are a few possible questions:

- What exactly is beauty?
- Is there something in music that needs to happen in order for you to find a song “beautiful”? What? Why?
- Is there a quality to this piece of music you find beautiful and which you recognize as happening in other places as well? So, for example, you say that this song makes you cry. Does every time you cry mean that you are experiencing beauty? Why or why not? (There are many different variations to this question.)
- How did you recognize the beauty of this song? Was it a feeling? A sensation? A thought? What was the process you went through to get to the belief that this song is “beautiful”?
- Why do you think other people might not see this song as beautiful?
- Is the song beautiful in itself, or does it depend wholly on the listener? If no one ever heard Beethoven’s 5th symphony, for example, might it still be beautiful?
- What is the difference between subjectivity and objectivity? Can there be an objective beauty or is beauty always in the eye of the beholder?

After the groups have reported to the class, ask the whole class for volunteers to play a song they consider beautiful. Before they play it, ask them why they think it is beautiful. Continue this process and discussion until there is about twenty minutes left of class time. Then turn to the “ugly” songs and again ask the whole class if anyone wants to play their “ugly song.” Repeat the format used for the beautiful songs by asking the students why they think various songs are ugly before they play them, and then open it up for discussion after it is played. Generally the class will explore the relationship between beauty and ugliness, and examine such topics as the connection between sadness and beauty, violence and ugliness, the song’s music and its lyrics, etc.

At the end of the class, thank the students for sharing what they believe is beautiful. This can be a very personal exercise for students. When they describe why they find certain music beautiful and talk about the songs they love, they are sharing parts of themselves. The activity is often very moving and meaningful to the students, and elicits complex discussions about what makes something beautiful, the relationship between beauty and ugliness, and the objective or subjective nature of beauty.

This lesson plan, created by Terrance McKittrick, is part of a series of lesson plans in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools*, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Welcome to PLATO

PLATO promotes philosophy classes for all K-12 students, including those in classrooms least likely to have access to academic enrichment programs. Bringing together the education and philosophy communities, PLATO celebrates diversity within the philosophy classroom and endorses a wide variety of philosophical approaches and methods.

Why PLATO?

The Philosopher's Toolkit

Become a Member

Funding Opportunities

Translate

Site Information

Monster at School

By: Sara Stanley

Skill focus: Sharing ideas. Listening as part of a group. Making a decision. Revisiting a question after dialogue.

Thinking focus: Should we judge from appearance only?

Stimulus: Large drawing of a monster.

Stimulus details: Draw a monster with a closed mouth (no teeth), three arms, four legs and a tail. Ensure that it looks neither friendly nor frightening.

Presentation

Explain to the children that you have a difficult decision to make. You met a monster on the way home last night and he asked if he could come to nursery tomorrow.

Making a decision

Ask the children to vote on their answer to this question using double-sided voting cards or with a 'stand up/sit down' vote.

Conversation and thinking time

Ask those children to form two groups based on how they voted. Allow the children a few minutes to share their reasons within the groups.

First words

Ask the children with the majority vote to share their reasons. Encourage the children from both groups to give their reasons. What would be the good things and the bad things about having a monster at nursery?

Building

Introduce further facts about the monster to see if it changes thinking. For example, what if this monster smelt really bad? What if the monster was so small he could fit into a pocket?

Last words

Review the main ideas put forward and then revisit the original question. Have any children changed their answers? If so, ask them if they can say why.

P4C session on Beauty: Ages 3-7

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Throughout this section we have mainly focused on art and music. In PLATO's "What do we find beautiful?" there was talk of what we find beautiful, yet the conversation lead to focus on music. Beauty in and of itself should be a topic in a P4C circle.

For the Pre-K to second grade students (ages 3-7):

- On chart paper, draw a line down the middle and title one side "beautiful objects" and the other "Features/attributes"
- Ask the students, "What is something that you think is beautiful?" Record responses on the "beautiful objects side."
- After they have given you a list of beautiful things, go through each and ask why that object is beautiful. Some might say, "I don't know." You can tell them that's okay and skip or ask, "Well what's one thing about it that is beautiful?"

Sample list

Beautiful Objects	Attributes
Jewelry	sparkly
My mom	makes me happy
flowers	smell good
The sky	Lots of colors

- Review the chart. "So jewelry is beautiful because it is sparkly. Is everything that is sparkly beautiful?" (Allow children time to think. They probably won't be able to think of anything that is sparkly that isn't beautiful— I know I can't!)

- “We mentioned that Moms are beautiful because they make us happy. Is everything that makes you happy beautiful?” (Allow children time to think).
- Continue to go down the attribute list and asking if every object with that attribute is beautiful.
- Once you have gone through the list make a statement at the bottom that reflects the discussion. Ex. “Everything that is sparkly, makes me happy, and has lots of colors is beautiful.”
- Now go to the “Beautiful Objects” side and ask if each object has each attribute from the statement. “Does jewelry sparkle, have lots of colors, and make you happy?” “Are Moms sparkly? Do they make you happy? Are they lots of colors?” etc.
- The point of this exercise is to find an attribute that all beautiful objects have.
- If you find that one or two attributes match all of the “beautiful objects” then make another statement at the bottom. Ex. “Everything that is beautiful makes me happy.”
- If there is not a single attribute that matches each beautiful object discuss why things are beautiful for different reasons.

I would suggest either starting with or following up with Sara Stanley’s “Monster at School.” The focus of that lesson is, “Should we judge from appearances only?” My lesson and hers flow together quite nicely.

P4C Session on Beauty: Ages 8-11

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Students third grade - eighth grade (ages 8-13)

Whole lesson: 60 minutes

This is an aesthetics/logic lesson. If your students are not familiar with logic/critical reasoning modify as you see fit. The second half of the lesson is different for students 8-10 years old and students 10-13 years old.

Initiation (independent, 5-10 minutes):

A great way to initiate this lesson is using The University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children's aesthetic warm up #1.

Warm-up #1:

Write down something that you think is beautiful and two reasons why you think it's beautiful, and write down something that you think is ugly and two reasons why you think it's ugly.

First Half of Development All Ages (Whole group, 15 minutes):

On chart paper create a T-chart with one side "Beautiful things" and the other "Why it is beautiful."

Ask students to share their ideas and have them give their reasons. Record their responses on the chart paper. Hopefully students will have more complex answers than "flowers" and "jewelry" in the upper grades.

Sample chart

Beautiful Things	Why it is Beautiful
A Ballet	They move so gracefully; It takes a lot of talent
A grand piece of art like The Sistine Chapel	The details; it evokes emotion
Poetry	It is worded in away that sounds pretty and it paints a picture in your mind. (Author's craft)
Nature	The way everything works in a circle (weather, life cycles) and it does so independent of anyone's control.

Development Continued for Younger Groups (8-10 years old) (Whole Group /Pairs/ Small Groups, 25 minutes):

Review the chart. Create discussion questions based on what the students responses were. Give time for students to reflect and share with a partner after each question. Make a list of attributes that students agree are always beautiful. (Ex. all things that move gracefully are beautiful, so “moves gracefully” would be put on the list.

Examples:

“Let’s look at the reasons why we mentioned certain objects were beautiful. Someone said that ballets are beautiful because they move gracefully and they require a lot of talent. What else moves gracefully? Are those beautiful too? What else requires talent that is beautiful?” Is everything that requires talent beautiful?

“It was mentioned that a grand art piece like “The Sistine Chapel” is beautiful because it has a lot of detail and it evokes emotion. Is there anything else you can think of that has a lot of details and is beautiful? Is everything with a lot of detail beautiful? What kind of emotion does art evoke in you? What else causes you to feel that way? Are those stimuli beautiful as well?”

Once you have gone through the “why” side, go over the “beautiful things” side as well. Look at your list and ask if each of the beautiful things have all of those attributes. (Ex. in ballets do they move gracefully? Do ballets ‘move’ people?.)

Based on the class discussion have students work in pairs or small groups to come up with a necessary/ sufficient condition statement about beauty.

Closure for younger students (8-10 years old)(Whole Group, 10 minutes):

Have the students reconvene as a whole group. Have students share their statements. Combine ideas and agree on a final statement as a class.

Development continued for older/ more mature groups (5 minutes):

Assign small groups.

Ask the groups to analyze and discuss the chart. Then as a group create a syllogism about beauty. (Ex. All beautiful things evoke emotion. All ballets evoke emotion. Therefore, all ballets are beautiful.)

Closure for older students (30 minutes, Whole group):

Have students reconvene and share. Discuss if each argument is valid and sound or strong and cogent. Allow students to bounce ideas off of one another. Try to come to a conclusion as a class about beauty.

Extension (All ages):

In the following session, follow the same steps, but focus on ugly objects and why they are ugly, instead.

Ethics

What is ethics: Ethics is a large branch of philosophy that deals with questions and scenarios relating to moral principles. They ask whether something is right or wrong, evil or good, just or unjust, or fair or unfair.

Big questions:

What is morality? How do we decide if something is right or wrong? Is it ever okay to steal? Is it ever okay to cheat? Is it right to sacrifice animals lives for medical testing? Is it right to kill animals for food? Is it right to kill an ant? Are certain lives more valuable than others? Is fair and equal the same thing? How do we determine what is fair? Is it ever okay to lie? If so, when is it okay to lie? Should men and women be treated the same? When should they be treated differently and why? Is war ever justified? If you were defending yourself and murdered someone, was your action justified? Because something is the law, does that mean that it is right? If you do not agree with a law should you still follow it?

Stimuli:

Children's Literature

Discussion questions

Warm up activities

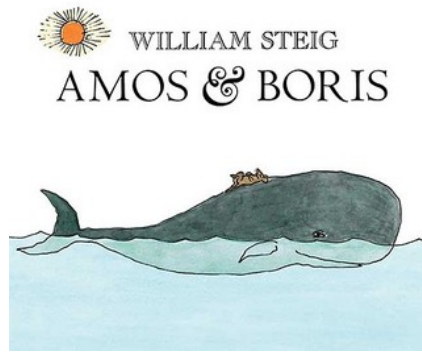
Scenarios

Activities

Lesson plans

Games

Videos



Author: William Steig

Plot Summary: Amos the Mouse loved the ocean. He built a boat, packed it full of all the supplies he would need for his voyage, and set sail. One night Amos came across some whales and, overwhelmed by their beauty, fell out of his boat into the sea. Stranded in the middle of the sea, his strength about give out, Amos is saved by Boris, a whale, who takes him home. Boris and Amos become very close friends. Years later, Amos finds a way to help Boris.

Questions:

What does it mean to be a friend?

What makes someone a friend? Think of someone who is a close friend. Why is he or she your close friend?

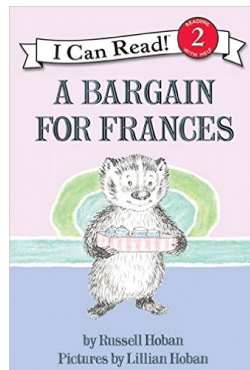
Can we be friends with people entirely different from us? Do we have to have something in common?

Can we be friends with someone we think is strange?

Is there a difference between being nice to someone and being their friend?

What does it mean to be a good friend?

What makes a friendship good or bad?



Author: Russel Hoban

Plot Summary: Frances begins her day by deciding to play with her friend, Thelma. As she leaves her house, Frances's mother admonishes her to be careful when playing with Thelma because Frances always seems to get the short end of the stick. When Thelma tricks Frances, Frances decides to get even. Can the friendship survive? Frances and Thelma figure out how to resolve differences and realize that friendship is more important than a bargain.

Questions:

What is trust?

In the book, Thelma tricks Frances.

Should Frances trust Thelma?

When should people be trusted?

How do you decide who to trust?

Why do you trust certain people and not others?

Do you trust any of the following?

Doctors, teachers, firemen, policemen, Strangers, people at your parent's work, people your own age, dogs or other animals that you are unfamiliar with

What is fairness?

In the book Thelma tricks Frances and then Frances tricks her back. Is this fair?

Who decides what is fair?

Why is fairness important?

Is it ever permissible to get revenge on someone if it is fair?

When would it be wrong to retaliate against someone, even if it was fair

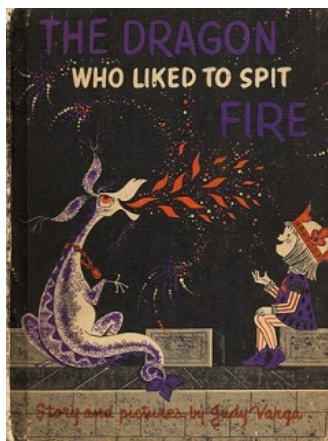
At the end of the book, Frances and Thelma decide friendship is more important than tricks or bargains.

Why is friendship important?

What makes a friend?

What qualities do you look for in a friend?

What qualities do you have that would make you a good friend?



Title: The Dragon Who Liked to Spit Fire

Author: Judy Varga

Plot Summary: Darius, a little dragon who likes nothing more than to spit fire (in many colors), and young prince Frederic become close friends. Eventually Darius decides to move to Frederic's castle with Frederic, because he has been lonely and he wants to be close to Frederic, although he is wary that he will not be able to spit fire at the castle. As Darius tells Frederic, "[L]ife without spitting fire wouldn't be much of a life for a dragon." Frederic tells Darius that he will be able to spit fire when they are alone. Darius is made to feel

very at home in the castle, but he finds that he can't ever spit fire, because he and Frederic are never alone.

Questions:

Does friendship require compromise? If so, are there compromises that demand too much of us?

How would we know?

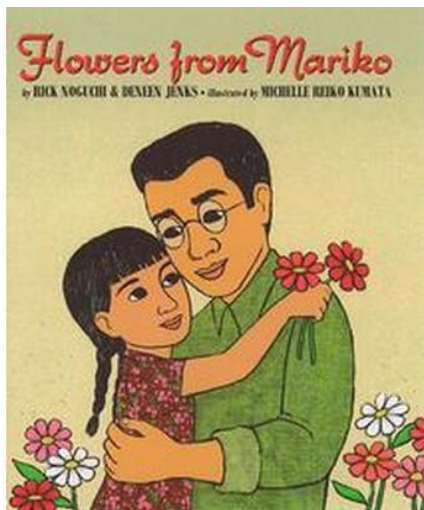
Can Darius be himself and still be friends with Frederic?

Is Darius being asked to give up something that is too important to him for a friendship to require its absence?

Is being a dragon essential to Darius' identity? Is spitting fire?

If something is part of our identity, is it necessary for our well-being?

Questions and summary for Flowers from Mariko are contributed by Gobe Hirata:

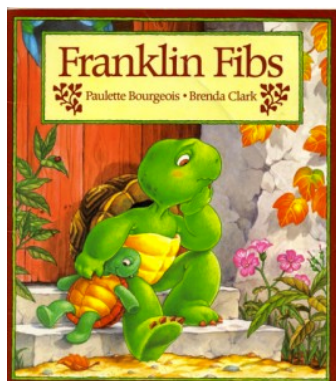


Author: Rick Noguchi and Deneen Jenks

Plot Summary: A story about Japanese internment, *Flowers from Mariko* tells the story of one girl, Mariko, and her family as they were taken away to camp during WWII. In the story, as the family prepares to leave, they entrust some of their valuable belongings to family friends, but upon their return, discover they have lost their possessions. The internment takes a mental, emotional, and physical toll on the family, but Mariko and her father find hope in gardening, both in the camp and upon returning home.

Questions:

Why was internment seen as a solution to the “problem” of Japanese in America?
 Were the neighbors doing the right thing? The patriotic thing?
 What is patriotism? How did Japanese Americans display or not display patriotism?
 Did the neighbors violated Mariko’s family’s trust by not taking care of their car as promised?
 Was this a sort of betrayal?
 What is a promise? Are humans capable of making promises?
 Was it the responsibility of the neighbors to stay in one place until the family returned?
 Can you identify an enemy of the nation based on a person’s ethnicity?
 What does it mean to be patriotic? To be a friend?
 Is it okay to lie to your enemy?
 What role do intentions play in the ethics of helping or not helping others?
 What does it mean to be American?
 What does it mean to be Japanese American, African American, Caucasian American?
 What does an American look like?



Author: Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark

Plot Summary: Franklin's friends are all boasting about the things they can do. Bear can climb to the top of the highest tree. Hawk can soar over the woods without ruffling a feather. Beaver can chop down a tree with just her teeth and use it to make her own dam. Franklin wonders what to say. He forgets all the things he can do — slide down a riverbank by himself, count forwards and backwards, etc. — and so he fibs, saying that he can eat seventy-six flies in the blink of an eye. Doubtful, his friends egg him on to prove it. Franklin gobbles six flies, and when his friends question him, he

claims that he could have eaten seventy more. Franklin ponders what he should do now. Should he practice until he can eat seventy-six flies in the blink of an eye? Should he desert his friends so they'll never know he lied to them? Should he come clean? The next day, Franklin meets up with his friends and admits that he can't eat seventy-six flies in the blink of an eye. "But," Franklin says, "I can eat seventy-six flies." Franklin's friends sigh. Franklin makes a pie with seventy-six flies and eats the entire fly plate. His friends are impressed. The story ends with Franklin about to brag that he can eat two fly pies in a gulp, but he thinks the better of it.

Questions:

Why did Franklin tell a fib in the first place?

Is "fibbing" the same as lying? If not, what is the difference?

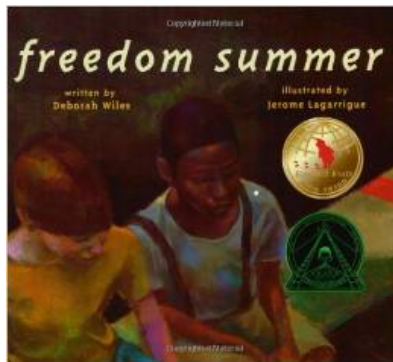
Is it ever okay to lie?

Is lying for a greater good okay? In what cases would lying be acceptable?

Why did it take Franklin so long to tell the truth?

Does lying sometimes improve our relationships? Does it hurt them?

Is truth important in friendship?



Author: Deborah Wiles

Plot Summary: This picture book tells the story of a friendship between two boys in the early 1960s in Mississippi: Joe, who is white, and John Henry, who is African American. They love to swim and they spend time in the creek, because the town pool is closed to John Henry. When the boys want ice pops, Joe goes into the store to buy them, because John Henry is not allowed into the store. After the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the town pool is required to be open to everyone, but when the

boys arrive at the pool, the pool is being emptied and filled with asphalt. John Henry says, "White folks don't want colored folks in their pool." Joe thinks to himself, "I want to go to the Dairy Dip with John Henry, sit down and share root beer floats. . . . I want to see this town with John Henry's eyes." At the end of the story, the boys walk together into the store to buy ice pops.

Questions:

Why is the book called Freedom Summer? Who is free in the story? Who is not?

Are Joe and John Henry friends?

Why does John Henry eat in the kitchen at Joe's house, while Joe and his family eat in the dining room?

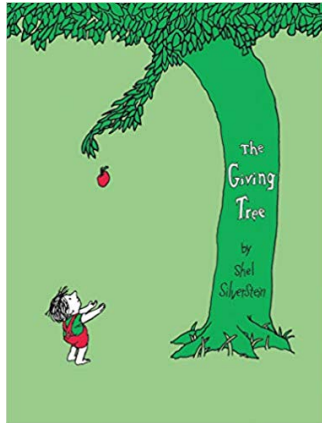
Why isn't John Henry allowed in the store? Who decides?

Who controls the town pool? Why is it filled with asphalt after the law requires it to be open to everyone?

Why don't "white folks want colored folks in their pool?" Why is the pool considered the white folks' pool?

What does Joe mean when he thinks that he “wants to see the town with John Henry’s eyes?” Is this possible?

When the boys walk into the store at the end of the story, who is taking the greater risk? Why?



Title: The Giving Tree

Author: Shel Silverstein

Plot Summary: A young boy plays with a tree and both are happy. As he grows up, he asks the tree for a variety of things he needs; the tree gives to him generously and without any expectation of return. The boy becomes a man, and then an old man. In the end, all he needs is a place to sit, which the tree, now reduced to a mere stump by all it has given, is happy to provide.

Questions:

Why does the tree give so much to the boy?

Is the boy right to keep asking for me?

What should the tree give to the boy?

What should the boy ask of the tree?



Author: Charles M. Schulz

Plot Summary: This is a Peanuts book with every page containing an instance of happiness. A few examples include: Happiness is a bread and butter sandwich folded over. Happiness is finding someone you like at the front door. Happiness is a fuzzy sweater. Happiness is a pile of leaves. Happiness is a nightlight. The story ends with the line: Happiness is one thing to one person and another thing to another person.

Questions:

What is happiness?

Can what makes you happy change?

Is happiness the same for everyone?

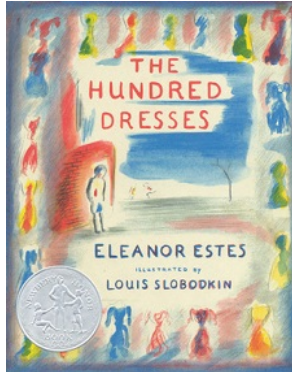
Is happiness a good thing?

Is happiness the most important thing?

What's the relationship between happiness and pleasure?

Should you always do things that make you happy?

Are there any things that are bad that some people do that make them happy?



Author: Eleanor Estes

Plot Summary: Wanda wears the same faded blue dress to school every day-yet she says she has one hundred beautiful dresses at home, “all lined up.” The other girls don't believe it, and when Peggy starts a daily game of teasing Wanda about the hundred dresses, everyone joins in. Maddie, Peggy's best friend, goes along with the game, but she secretly wonders whether she can find the courage to speak up in Wanda's defense. The story depicts the conflicting feelings faced by someone who is participating in or witnessing something that they sense is

morally problematic, but who do not want to risk their own friendships and reputations by speaking up.

Chapters 1-2 – Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think that Wanda didn't have any friends?
- Why do you think that Wanda said that she had one hundred dresses in her closet? Was she lying? Why?
- Are lying and storytelling the same thing?
- Was the “hundred dresses game” a cruel way to treat Wanda?
- Why was how they were treating Wanda bothering Maddie?

Chapters 3-5 – Discussion Questions:

- Was Wanda different from the other girls – how?
- Was Maddie a coward?
- Why was Maddie afraid to speak to Peggy about her feelings about making fun of Wanda?
- Why didn't Maddie do anything? What were the effects of her silence?
- How do you think Peggy and Maddie felt when they saw Wanda's drawings on the walls?
- Why did Wanda move away?
- Are Peggy and Maddie friends? What is a friend?

Go around the circle and ask if these statements about friends are true or not true:

A friend is someone you see all the time.

A friend is someone you talk to a lot.

A friend is someone you share your thoughts with.

A friend is someone you trust.

A friend is someone you share your toys with.

A friend is someone who always agrees with you.

A friend is someone who helps you when you need help.

A friend is someone who is always nice to you.

A friend is someone you like to be around.
 A friend is someone who lives in the same town that you do.
 A friend is someone you like.
 A friend is someone you think about a lot.
 A friend is someone you can say anything to.
 A friend is someone who likes the same things you do.

Chapters 6-7 – Discussion Questions:

- Peggy says that teasing Wanda about the hundred dresses probably gave her good ideas for her drawings, and maybe she wouldn't have won the drawing contest otherwise. Do you think that this makes sense? Is Peggy making excuses for her own behavior? Why? Do you think she is troubled by what happened?
- Was writing a letter to Wanda the right thing to do? What would have been better: to write a friendly letter to Wanda, as Maddie and Peggy did, or to write a real apology letter? Why?
- When Maddie and Peggy get the drawings Wanda made, Peggy concludes that Wanda really liked them and that everything was all right. Maddie isn't so sure about that. What do you think? Why was Maddie still sad?
- Maddie decides that she is never going to stand by and say nothing again. Do you think that this is a good rule? Do most people "stand by and say nothing?" Why or why not?

Summary and questions for, The Lorax are contributed by Jayme Johnson



Author: Dr. Seuss

Plot Summary: The Once-ler moves into the Lorax's community and begins chopping down truffula trees in order to build a business of selling thneeds made from truffula tree tufts. This causes the destruction of the truffula trees and the loss of Bar-ba-loots, Swomee-Swans and Humming-Fish in the story.

Questions:

Was the Once-ler responsible for the environmental destruction that ensued as a result of his decisions?

Does the fact that the Once-ler ultimately regrets his actions make him a better person?

What about the other members of the Once-ler family who worked in the business, and all the people who bought thneeds—were they all responsible for the destruction of the truffula trees and surrounding habitat?

When we purchase something, are we obligated to ask how it was made?

Were the thneeds “useful?”

Why do you think the Once-ler didn’t listen to the Lorax?

If you were the Once-ler would you have listened to the Lorax? Why or why not?

Do you think there was anything else the Lorax could have done to stop the Once-ler?

What does it mean to be greedy?

Do you think the Once-ler was greedy?

What is the balance between creating things that make human life easier or more enjoyable, and caring for the environment in which we live?

What is our responsibility to the environment and to other species affected by human decisions?

When the Lorax first appears to speak on behalf of the tress, the Once-ler claims he is doing no harm by cutting down Truffula Trees to make Thneeds.

1. Was it harmful when the Once-ler cut down the first tree? If so, who, or what did it harm?
2. What does it mean to do something harmful? How can you tell things that are harmful from things that are not? Is it harmful to cut down just one tree?
3. Why do the Lorax and the Once-ler disagree on this? Who do you agree with?
4. The Lorax claims that it was harmful for the Once-ler to cut down the tree. Are trees the kinds of things that can be harmed? Can anything not be harmed?
5. The Lorax tells the Once-ler that his idea for Thneeds makes him sound crazy with greed. What is greed? How can you tell if a person is greedy?
6. Is the Once-ler greedy? Why do you think so?
7. Is being greedy harmful? Is it ever not harmful to be greedy? Is the Once-ler's greediness harmful?

The Lorax also tries to speak for the Brown Bar-ba-loots, the Swomee Swans, and the Humming Fish. The Once-ler ignores the Lorax and continues quickly expanding his business, cutting down more and more trees at a faster and faster clip...

1. The Once-ler's business making and selling Thneeds is very successful. Is the Once-ler's success a good thing? Why or why not? What might make it good? What might make it bad?
2. Now that the Once-ler is cutting down lots of trees, is this harmful? Why is cutting down one tree ok, but cutting down many trees harmful?
3. What happens to the Brown Bar-ba-loots? Why does this happen? Did cutting down the trees harm the Bar-ba-loots?
4. Why does the Once-ler keep expanding his business after the Brown Bar-ba-loots leave? Why does the Once-ler think that everyone needs Thneeds? Is he right?
5. Why do the Swomee-Swans leave? How about the Humming Fish? What happened to their habitats? Why doesn't the Once-ler care about what is happening around him?
6. How are the problems for the Bar-ba-loots, Swomee-Swans, and Humming Fish all related to the Once-ler cutting down Truffula Trees? Can the same thing happen in real life?

7. Why do you think the Once-ler keeps expanding more and more anyway? Is what the Once-ler doing morally wrong? Why? Is it morally wrong when these same things happen in real life?

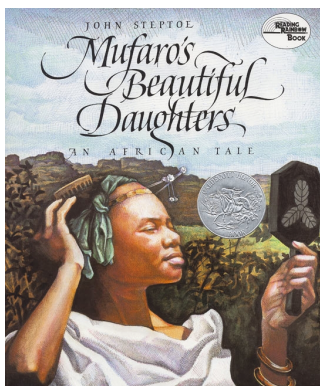
When the Once-ler realizes what has happened, it seems like it is already too late

1. What happens to the Once-ler's factory once all the Truffula Trees are gone?
2. What is the world around the factory like? Describe the details. Is this a nice place to be?
3. Could the Once-ler have prevented this from happening?
4. Do you think that there could have been a way for the Once-ler to make Thneeds, without causing harm? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that if the Once-ler was not greedy, that he would have tried harder to be less harmful?

Once the Lorax leaves, and the Once-ler is alone, he discovers a message on a pile of small stones.

1. Why does the Lorax leave the word "UNLESS" on a pile of rocks? What does "unless" mean?
2. The Once-ler says that he didn't mean to cause the harm he caused. Does not meaning to cause harm make you less responsible? How do you take responsibility for the things you have harmed? # Do we ever have a responsibility to repair the harm someone else has caused? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that if we take the seed and follow the Once-ler's new advice that the Lorax and his friends will come back?
4. In the beginning of the story, the Once-ler claims that everyone needs Thneeds, but at the end he claims that what everyone really needs is Truffula trees. Why does he change his mind? What is different about the value of trees and the value of Thneeds? What makes trees more valuable?

Questions and summary for Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters are contributed by Gobe Hirata



Author: John Steptoe

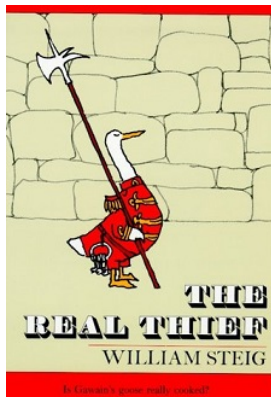
Plot Summary: A beautifully illustrated telling of an African tale, this story is about two sisters, Nyasha and Manyara, who learn that the king of their land is looking for a wife and calling all eligible women to come before him so that he may choose one. Manyara and Nyasha are urged by their father to make the journey to town to meet the king in hopes that he will choose one of them to marry. Manyara leaves town early so as to get a head start to the palace and give herself an advantage, while Nyasha waits to travel with the others as they had previously agreed upon. Along their journeys,

each of the girls encounters various obstacles and handles them differently. Manyara, being greedy and competitive, often reacts in selfishness and haste, where as Nyasha, being gentle and

loving, tends to respond to the obstacles with compassion and patience. When they reach the palace, the King meets each of them in a different form and reveals that he was present at each of the obstacles along the way, disguised to learn the true nature of each girl's identity. Because of her kindness and generosity, the King chooses Nyasha to be his wife.

Questions:

When did the story take place?
 Why was Manyara so mean?
 How did the king shape shift?
 How did Nyoka get back to the castle so quickly?
 Why do the sisters have opposite behavior?
 How old was the girl who got married?
 Is the story saying that you should never have anger?
 Did Nyasha get an elephant when she became queen?
 Why does the King disguise himself?
 Are the King's disguises deceitful?
 What do the priorities of the sisters say about their personalities and vice versa?
 What does the title of the story suggest?
 What is true beauty?
 Are the traits that Nyasha displays always favorable over the ones that Manyara displays?
 What does this story tell us about the community it belongs to?
 How do we feel about the King choosing a wife?
 How might this story look if it were set in present day in our community?



Author: William Steig

Plot Summary: Gawain, a goose that is the Chief Guard of the Royal Treasury, is blamed when jewels from the Royal Treasury go missing. The Prime Minister, Adrian the cat, makes the following argument: (1) The only way to get into the Royal Treasury is through the door; (2) No locks were broken; (3) Only Gawain and the King have keys; (4) The King has no reason to rob his own treasury; (5) "It is unthinkable" for the King to be wrong about any earthly thing; therefore (6) Gawain must have done it. Gawain is found guilty of the theft and escapes after he is sentenced. The perspective then shifts to that of Gawain's friend, Derek the mouse, who is the real thief, and who has remained silent while Gawain was blamed.

Questions:

What should Derek have done?

Why did Derek stay silent?

How do you think Derek felt when Gawain was blamed and he didn't get in trouble?

Would you have felt the same way?

Was Derek a good friend to Gawain? What makes someone a good friend?

Was Derek punished for what he did? If so, how?

What were the consequences for the king of his own actions? Did the king have any obligations to Gawain? What were they?

Did the king and the court act unjustly?

Should Gawain have forgiven the king and the rest of the community?

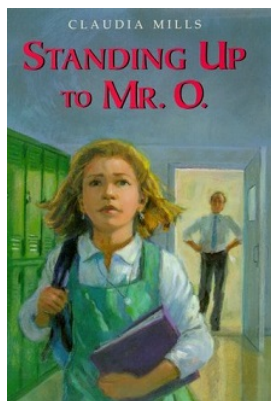
What is forgiveness? Does forgiveness require forgetting? When does someone deserve forgiveness?

Logic

Does the conclusion (6) in Gawain's argument follow from statements (1) through (5)? Why or why not?

What makes an argument persuasive?

Do all the statements in an argument have to be true for an argument to be a good one?



Author: Claudia Mills

Plot Summary: Maggie admires and likes her biology teacher, but she is against dissection and refuses to dissect a worm, declaring to the class that killing is wrong. Some of her classmates support her and some don't, and her best friend agrees with her but doesn't stand up to the teacher herself. Maggie finds that her principled stand also leads her to act in ways she later questions.

Questions:

Should all of our views be consistent? For example, if we say we love animals, does that mean we can't eat meat?

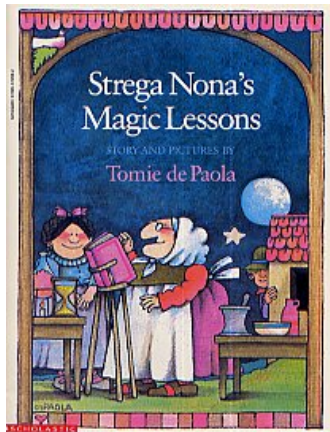
Do animals have rights?

Is not feeling comfortable doing something a good reason not to do it?

Are we always required to do what authorities tell us to do? When is it acceptable to resist authority?

How do we decide when moral rules apply and when they don't?

Can we admire someone and at the same time think they're wrong about something?

Questions and summary for, Strega Nona's Magic Lessons are contributed by Gobe Hirata**Author:** Tomie de Paola

Plot Summary: Strega Nona (or Grandma Witch in Italian) imparts her knowledge of magic to Bambalona, the baker's daughter, so that Bambalona may use it to her advantage when dealing with her lazy and leisurely father. When Big Anthony hears that Bambalona is getting magic lessons, he asks Strega Nona if he can learn as well. She turns him away saying that a man cannot be a Strega. Big Anthony decides he'll show her and dresses up like a woman, Antonia, to seek out Strega Nona's magic again. However, Strega Nona knows what Big Anthony is up to and plays a prank on him when he tries to cut corners with magic. Horrified that he may have

turned Strega Nona into a toad, Big Anthony reveals his identity in a cry of apology and forgiveness and, poof, Strega Nona magically appears once again.

Questions:

How could magic help Bambalona?

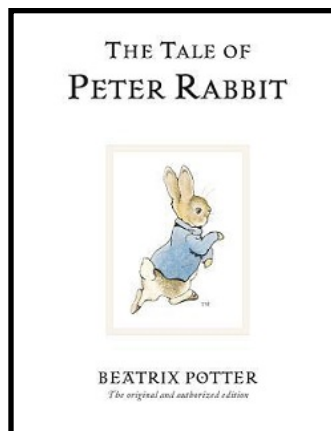
Is it possible to get what you want without hard work?

Why did Big Anthony want to learn magic? Why couldn't he?

Was it fair for Strega Nona's to trick Big Anthony?

Did Bambalona actually learn how to do magic? Did Big Anthony?

What is magic?

**Author:** Beatrix Potter

Plot Summary: Peter Rabbit and his siblings are forbidden to play in Mr. McGregor's garden, as it was there that their father died. Peter nevertheless sneaks into the garden and has several close encounters with Mr. McGregor. Finally he escapes and his mother puts him to bed.

Questions:

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD?

Is Peter behaving badly?

Is the mouse carrying the seeds out of the garden behaving badly?

Is the cat behaving badly?

Was Mr. McGregor behaving badly when he killed Peter's father?

Are the following things good or bad:

A hammer, an ice cream cone, a friendship, a song, a word, a person, a thought, a day, a year?

WHAT ARE ACCIDENTS?

Were the following accidents?

Peter going into Mr. McGregor's garden?

Peter eating from Mr. McGregor's garden?

Peter losing his coat and shoes?

Peter getting caught in the gooseberry net?

How can you tell if something is an accident?

How can you tell if something is on purpose?

Do the following things happen by accident or on purpose:

The sun comes up, sun sets, train crashes, getting angry, rain, your birth, trees grow?

WHAT IS STEALING?

Are these things stealing:

Peter taking vegetables from Mr. McGregor's garden.

The mouse taking vegetables from Mr. McGregor's garden.

Getting in a stranger's car and driving it away.

Eating a grape in the grocery store.

Finding a toy in the street and keeping it.

Taking food from a store when you are starving.

Taking a cookie at home when you aren't supposed to have one.

Taking a toy from a baby who doesn't care.

Taking a toy from a friend who does care.

GOOD RULES OR BAD RULES?

Don't hurt other people's feelings?

Don't laugh at other people?

Always say please?

Don't wear your shoes in the house?

Never speak to people you don't know?

Eat with your fingers?

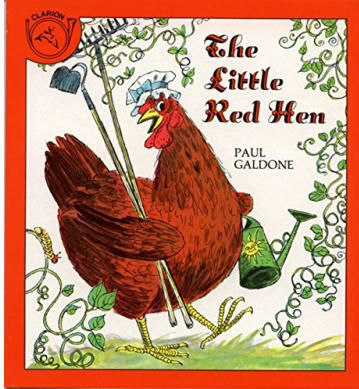
No ice cream before dinner?

Go to sleep at 8:00?

Don't lie?

Don't hit other people?

Summary and questions for, The Little Red Hen were contributed by Karen Emmerman.



Author: Paul Galdone

Plot Summary: The industrious little red hen lives in a house with the lazy cat, mouse, and dog. While the hen does her various chores and farming, she regularly asks “Who will help me...?” to be met with “Not I!” answers from her housemates. After planting, tending, and harvesting wheat all by herself, the little red hen bakes a cake and devours it herself in front of the other animals. This prompts them to start helping with chores.

Questions:

Why are the other animals refusing to do any work?

Should the other animals be helping the hen with house work?

Does everyone in a household need to contribute the same amount to getting work done?

Should the hen do all the work the others refuse to do, or should she also refuse?

Is it fair that the hen wouldn't share the cake?

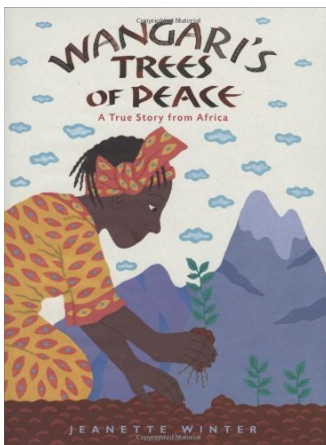
Might it be fair for her to eat the whole cake, but not very kind to do so?

Can an action be fair and also unkind?

Does the hen actually ask the others to help or does she try use guilt to try to motivate them?

Is there one person in your home who does most of the work? Who? Why do you think that person ends up doing most of the work around the house?

Summary and questions for, Wangari's Trees of Peace were contributed by Morgan Lindberg



Author: Jeanette Winter

Plot Summary: This is a true story about a woman from Kenya named Wangari Maathai. As a child, she helps her family farm and collect wood from the forest. When she does really well in school, she gets a scholarship to study in the United States. When Wangari returns to her village, all the trees have been logged. She decides to start planting more. Her neighbors catch on and eventually a tree planting movement is started across Africa. She is laughed at for her

work and for being a woman, and even imprisoned when she tries to stop the cutting of trees. In the end, she succeeds in restoring the forest around her village.

Questions:

Why were all the trees in Wangari's village cut down?

Why do we cut down trees?

Is it ever okay to cut down a tree?

Who is responsible for taking care of the land?

Who decides how the land is used?

Why does Wangari leave her village to study in the U.S.? Why can't she study in Africa?

Why is Wangari imprisoned for trying to protect trees? Isn't that a good thing?

Are laws always just?

Who decides who makes the laws?

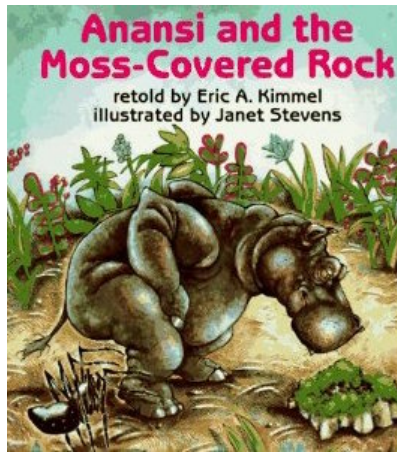
Why are only women planting trees in this book?

Why do some people say, "Women can't do this?"

Who decides what we can and cannot do?

Books on Ethics: Resources by teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

Summary and questions for, Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock are contributed by Jake



Author: Eric A. Kimmel

Summary: This story, retold by Eric A. Kimmel, is about a spider named Anansi who deceives fellow animals in order to take food they have gathered for themselves. When anyone looks at the magic rock Anansi finds and says a certain phrase, they fall unconscious. He uses this trick on six of the animals by bringing them to the rock. Little Bush Deer plays this trick on Anansi but in the end, although the animals take back all the food stolen from them, Anansi does not learn his lesson.

Questions:

Deception

He couldn't wait to play his trick again.

1. Is it ever okay to lie to others?
2. Little Bush Deer deceived Anansi to teach him a lesson, was it wrong to lie in that situation?
3. In the end of the story, Anansi did not learn his lesson, why do you think he didn't learn it? Was it because Little Bush Deer used deception to try to teach him?
4. Are there situations where trickery is acceptable? Is tricking people always wrong?
5. Is lying in a situation to help yourself okay? Why or why not?

Stealing

Anansi loved bananas, but he was too lazy to pick them himself. Anansi ran back to Elephant's house and made off with all the bananas.

1. Was it right for the animals to take back the food stolen from them?
2. Is it wrong of Anansi to steal from the other animals so he could have food?
3. If Anansi was stealing to feed his family, would that be an acceptable time to steal?
4. Is there ever a situation where stealing is justified?
5. Why is stealing wrong? If it does not hurt anyone, is it still wrong?

Happiness

Lion was very sad. But Anansi was very happy.

1. Is Anansi actually happy when he takes from the other animals?

2. The book says several times that he is very happy after he steals, is making other people sad to make yourself happy really attaining happiness?
3. Has there ever been a time when someone has taken something from you? How did that make you feel?
4. Does gaining material things result in happiness? If not, what is an important part of life that makes you happy?
5. Are you happier when others around you are happy?
6. Are you happier when you work hard to get things you want?
- 7.

Summary and discussion questions for Anansi the Spider contributed by Ysanne Bethel and Olivia Vicioso



Author: Gerald McDermott,

Summary:

Anansi, the spider, is an African folktale character who is synonymous with skill and wisdom, and triumphs over foes larger than he. In the story, Anansi the spider goes on a journey only to find himself in great peril, fortunately, one of his six sons has the ability to sense trouble and alerts his brothers to come to Anansi's rescue. With the help of each son and their individual talents, Anansi is rescued and arrives back home safely.

As a reward for saving him, Anansi wants to present a "globe of light" to the son who assisted him the most. Unable to determine which son is most deserving, he consults Nyame, the "God of All Things" to assist, who is also unable to determine which of the six sons deserves the prize. Nyame decides to give the prize to all, placing the globe of light in the sky.

Questions:

Rewards/Credit

"O mysterious and beautiful globe! I shall give this to my son, to the son who rescued me."

1. Should you always receive a reward for your work?
2. Would it be okay for Anansi to just say thank you for his son's help? Does he even need to say thank you?
3. Do people expect credit for helping others?
4. Is accomplishing the task before you reward enough?
5. Does receiving a reward for actions make one feel appreciated?
6. Do people need to be rewarded to know they are appreciated?
7. Is it unfair sometimes not to receive a reward for your work?

8. If no one received credit for their actions, would rewards/credit still be expected?

Reciprocity

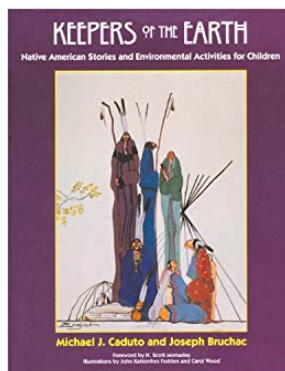
"And so they tried to decide which son deserved the prize. They tried, but they could not decide. They argued all night."

1. Why do you think Anansi decided to reward his sons/ why does he want to give them the globe of light?
2. Who should decide which son gets rewarded?
3. What makes someone capable of deciding who should receive a reward? What are qualities of someone who is well suited for rewarding others?
4. Why does Anansi choose to ask Nyame for help deciding who deserves the globe of light?
5. How do those who take charge of rewarding others decide what reward is appropriate?
6. Is there a process for deciding what reward is fair or appropriate?
7. Should more credit be given for physical or psychological work? Which is more important?

Rewards in a group setting

"But which of the six deserves the prize?"

1. Should each son get his own reward? Can they share the globe of light?
2. When you work in a team, who should receive credit for the teamwork?
3. Does every member of a team contribute equally? Should all team members be rewarded equally?
4. If you cannot accomplish something without the help of others yet you put forth most of the work, how should the credit be distributed?
5. Can you share credit? Rewards?
6. Is the person who tries the hardest in a team always the one who submits the best work? Who deserves more credit, the person who tries the hardest or the person who contributes the most? Do they deserve equal credit?



Authors: Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac

Anthology: Keepers of the Earth

Folklore: Awi Usdi, the Little Deer

Summary: *Awi Usdi, the Little Deer* is a story about respect and responsibility. Hunters and animals lived in peace until the hunters learned to use weapons. The hunters began to hunt all the animals they wanted. Some animals tried to fight back and failed. Now it is up to Awi Usdi, the Little Deer, to make peace between the animals and the hunters once again. How will Awi Usdi get the hunters to show respect

for the animals? Maybe if there are some consequences for the hunters, they will learn to live in peace with the animals once again.

Questions:

Necessity vs. Desire

The animals got worried when the hunters started using more than they needed, just because they wanted to: "They began to kill animals when they did not need them for food or clothing"

1. What are some examples of things we need?
2. What are some examples of things we want but might not need?
3. What is the difference between wanting something and needing something?
4. Can you always get what you want? Why? Why not?
5. Is it ok to take whatever you want? Why? Why not?
6. Do people need animals? If so, in what ways?
7. Are there reasons people want animals but don't need them?
8. Are you allowed to have any animal you want as a pet? As food? As clothing? Why? Why not?

Authority

The animals couldn't protect themselves against the hunters.

1. If someone can't protect themselves, like a baby, how do you treat them? Why?
2. If an animal can't protect itself, like a baby bunny, how do you treat it? Why?
3. If you are stronger or bigger than someone else, can you treat that person however you want? Why/Why not?
4. If you are stronger or bigger than an animal can you treat the animal however you want? Why/Why not?

Animal Rights and Human Responsibility

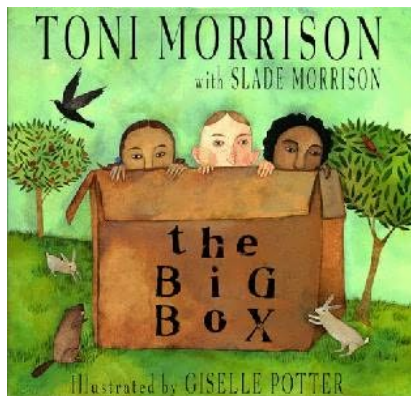
Little Deer and the other animals want the hunters to respect them, not to stop hunting: "Respect us and hunt us only when there is real need."

1. How do you show respect to your teachers? Parents? Friends?
2. Is it important to be respectful? Why? Why Not?
3. What are examples of being disrespectful?
4. Is it important to be respectful to animals? Why? Why not?
5. Can people be disrespectful to animals? How?
6. What are some ways we can show respect to animals?

Human Threats to Ecological Biodiversity

The hunters had weapons that the animals did not have and the animals are afraid they will become extinct.

1. What are the animals afraid of?
2. What does it mean to be extinct?
3. What is an endangered species?
4. Can humans cause animals to become endangered or extinct? How? (overhunting, poaching, pollution, destroying habitats, etc)
5. Have any animals become extinct because of humans? Examples. (Tazmanian Tiger extinct since 1936: intensive hunting/habitat encroachment by people, Caspian Tiger since 1970, Cascade Mountains Wolf since 1940, etc.)
6. What are some animals that are endangered because of humans? (tigers: poaching, rainforest animals: deforestation, bald eagle, etc.)
7. Think about the hunters in the story. What did they do that helped the endangered animals survive?
8. What can people do to save endangered species?
9. Is it important to help endangered species? Why? Why Not?
10. What would be different if there were no animals left in the world?
11. Would it be good/bad? Why?



Summary for The Big Box contributed by Taryn Hargrove

Author: Toni Morrison & Slade Morrison

Summary: Because they do not abide by the rules written by the adults around them, three children are judged unable to handle their freedom and forced to live in a box with three locks on the door.

Questions: By Mary Cowhey and Thomas Wartenberg

Life in the Box

1. What is a one-way door?
2. Does our classroom open two ways or one?
3. What are the locks for?
4. What's good about life in the box?
5. Do kids need toys, snacks, and cool clothes?
6. If they have cool toys, clothes, snacks and other stuff in the box, why aren't they happy?
7. What would we need to give you that would make you happy to live in the box?

8. Why do they stay in the box?

The Meaning of Rules

1. Do we need rules in our homes, classroom, school, and community? Why?
2. Who makes the rules?
3. Who has to follow them?
4. What if there were no rules?
5. Would you like to go to a school with no rules?
6. What would be good about it? What might be bad about it?
7. What are some good rules that you like at home or at school?
8. What rules did the kids follow?
9. Did anyone even notice what they did right?
10. What are appropriate consequences for breaking rules?

The Concept of Freedom

1. What does that line mean, when the adults say to the kids, "You simple can't handle your freedom."?
2. What if parents decided that their two year old could handle her freedom and just let their baby go free? What would happen?
3. What if the parents decided you could completely handle your freedom and just told you to go free? What would happen?
4. When you are 18 years old, do you think you will be ready to "go free"?
5. When you are free, do you still have to follow some rules?
6. Why do people call the United States of America a free country if there are rules here?
7. If a two year old is not able to handle freedom, what would make someone older ready to handle freedom?
8. What does the older person know or have that the two year old doesn't?

Summary and questions for, Bumble-Ardy contributed by Alarissa Haak



Author: Maurice Sendak

Summary: The tale of *Bumble-Ardy*, written by Maurice Sendak ([*Where the Wild Things Are*](#)) is about a neglected eight turning nine year old pig, who had never had a birthday party. This all changed when his parents had gorged themselves to their death and his aunt Adeline adopted him. Aunt Adeline gives Bumble-Ardy a cake and a present and goes to work. Bumble-Ardy then decides to throw himself his own party without telling his aunt. The party gets out of hand and,

when Adeline comes home early from work, she ends the party sternly. In the end, Aunt Adeline and Bumble-Ardy make up and he learns lessons of love, friendship, and trust.

Questions:

Trust

Adeline ... just hated swine to drink her brine, not even days so fine as Bumble's birthday number nine. So he simply didn't tell her.

1. Is trust important? Why?
2. Why did Adeline show trust in Bumble?
3. How do people generate trust?
4. Does learning how to trust have an age restriction?
5. Does your past affect your ability to trust in the future? Why/why not?
6. How can you heal from a betrayal of trust?
7. When, if ever, can you not trust someone and still rely on them at the same time?

Guilt

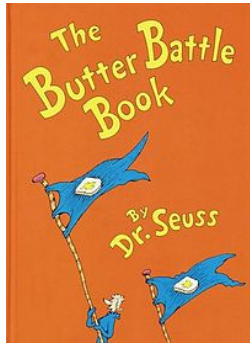
I promise! I swear! I won't ever turn ten!

1. What is guilt? Why does it occur?
2. Is guilt just an emotion? Why is it so important?
3. Is Guilt a good thing? Why/ Why not?
4. Did Bumble-Ardy really feel guilty? Be specific.
5. Can only one person feel guilty over a situation?
6. Did the people at the party feel guilty? Explain.
7. What would happen if no one felt guilty? When would this have a positive effect?

Forgiveness

So Adeline, that aunt divine, took in her Bumble valentine, and kissed him nine times over nine

1. What is forgiveness?
2. What are the boundaries of forgiveness?
3. What causes a person to forgive? Does family influence this tendency?
4. Should Aunt Adeline have forgiven Bumble Ardy so easily? Why?
5. Is it easier to forgive someone you love? When is it harder to forgive someone you love? Be specific.
6. When can it be both easier and harder to forgive someone you love?

Summary and questions for, The Butter Battle Book are contributed by Nathan Treloar**Author:** Dr. Seuss

Summary: The Yooks believe firmly that bread should only ever be eaten with the butter side up while the Zooks believe just as strongly that bread should only ever be eaten with the butter side down. A grandfather gives an account to his grandson of how the two societies segregated themselves by increasingly threatening means until the present day has come when the grandfather and his Zook rival VanItch come to an ultimate standoff over how far their mounting aggressions will go.

Questions:

What is War Really Like?

1. What is war?
2. Where have you seen war?
3. Do movies or television shows about war show what war is really like?
4. What is war really like?
5. Why do wars happen?
6. Are there any good things about war? What are they?
7. Are there any bad things about war? What are they?

Violence, War and the Implications

1. Ask the children if they thought that the Yooks and Zooks were at battle. Ask them to show you in the book when they thought that the Yooks and Zooks went from not fighting to fighting.
2. Does anyone know what the the Yooks and the Zooks were fighting about in the story?
3. Is that a good reason to be fighting?
4. What does it mean when people are going to war?
5. When is it good to go into war?
6. When is it bad to go into war?
7. Are there times when it is okay to start a war against someone else?
8. Are some ways of fighting okay while other ways of fighting are not?

When is War Appropriate?

1. At the end of the book Grandpa and VanItch are ready to drop Big-Boy Bommeroos on each other's homes. One of the Big-Boy Boomerroos will destroy everything that is not safely underground. Should VanItch drop a Big-Boy Boomerroo on the Zooks if Grandpa drops one on the Yooks even though it won't bring back any of Yooks' homes?
2. If someone has started a war against you is okay for you to fight back against them?
3. When VanItch shot the sling shot and broke Grandpa's Snick-Berry Switch, would it have right for Grandpa to go to war against VanItch?

The Responsibility and Role of a Soldier

Grandpa is a member of the Zook-Watching Border Patrol. As a member of the Zook-Watching Border Patrol he takes his orders from the Chief Zookeroo.

1. Ask the children if they know what "responsibility" meant. Ask them if they can give an example. Ensure they understand what it means to take responsibility for one's actions vs. the behaviour of responsibility.
2. Because Grandpa is doing what the Cheif Zookeroo orders him to, is he responsible for his own actions?
3. When Grandpa threatens to twitch the Yooks with the Snick-Berry Swtich, would it be Grandpa's fault if one of the Yooks got hurt or killed?
4. Was it wrong for VanItch to destroy Snick-Berry Switch?
5. When Grandpa crossed over wall to cover the Zook in Blue Goo he stopped because VanItch had an Utterly Sputter as well and he said that he would cover the Yooks with Blue Goo if Grandpa did so to the Zooks?
6. If some of the Yooks got hurt by Grandpa when he covered them would Grandpa have been responsible?
7. If Grandpa dropped the Bitsy Big-Boy Boomeroo and destroyed all of the Yooks' homes, would Grandpa have been responsible?

Leadership

1. What is leadership?
2. Who are some leaders?
3. Who were the leaders in The Butter Battle?
4. Why were they leaders?
5. What were the things they did that made them leaders? (Can you point it out in the book?)

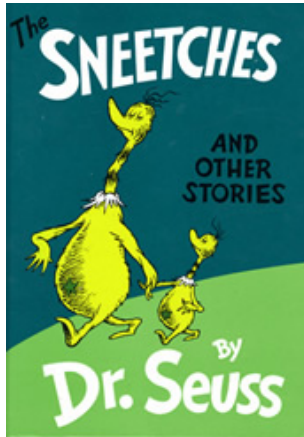
Leadership in the Face of Adversity

When the book ends, Grandpa and VanItch are both ready to drop a Big-Boy Boomeroo on each others home. If either do drop it, they will destroy the home land of the other.

1. When the Chief Zookeroo tell Grandpa drops the Big-Boy Boomeroo on the homes of the Zooks, and then VanItch drops the Big-Boo Boomeroo on the homes of the Yooks, and then everybody's home is destroyed, is it right for Grandpa to drop the Big-Boy Boomeroo?
2. Would Grandpa be a leader if he drops the Big-Boy Boomeroo?
3. If Grandpa doesn't do what the Chief Yookeroo tells him to, would Grandpa be doing what is right?
4. If Grandpa doesn't drop the Big-Boy Boomeroo, is Grandpa showing leadership?
5. Can people ever show leadership by not doing what they are told to do?
6. When are people leaders by not doing what they are told to do?

7. How do leaders show leadership by not following through with something they promised in the past?
8. Can you think of anyone famous in history who rebelled against something they were supposed to do because they did not believe it was right?

Summary and discussion questions for, The Sneetches contributed by Lena Harwood



Author: Dr. Seuss

Summary: In *The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss, some Sneetches had green stars on their bellies while others did not. “Those stars weren’t so big. They were really so small. You might think such a thing wouldn’t matter at all.” However, the stars served as a source of discrimination until Sylvester McMonkey McBean came to town with a machine to add and remove stars, forcing the Sneetches to question their differences.

Questions:

Prejudice

1. What makes the Sneetches different from one another?
2. How do the Sneetches treat those who are different from them?
3. Do you think it is all right to treat those who look different than you differently? What about those who act differently?

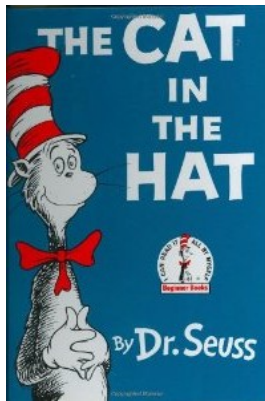
Difference

1. What makes a Sneetch a Sneetch – what makes it different from other animals or things?
2. How do you know one thing is different from another thing? Is it based on things you can see, things you cannot see, or both?
3. Based on the qualities we chose for deciding what makes something different, are the Star-Bellied Sneetches and the Plain-Bellied Sneetches the same or different?
4. Are there things that make people different from one another? Do any of these things make certain people better than others? (Think about physical differences and personality/characteristic differences.)
5. Are there any situations in which it is okay to treat two things differently because they are different? Imagine that one person in class is really smart. Should they be treated differently? If not, are there any examples you can think of where you would treat someone differently?

After the Plain-Bellied Sneetches go through the machine the first time and come out with stars, the Star-Bellied Sneetches say, “We’re still the best Sneetches and they are the worst.”

1. What makes the Star-Bellied Sneetches think that there is still something different about the Plain-Bellied Sneetches since they now have stars on their bellies?
2. If there was something that made the Sneetches different, other than their appearance, would it be okay for them to treat each other differently? Are there any qualities that would make that okay?
3. Is there a rule we can apply to determine when it is okay to treat others differently and when it is not? How does this rule apply to the Sneetches? Based on the rule you develop, is it okay for the Star-Bellied Sneetches to treat the Plain-Bellied Sneetches differently?

Summary and questions for, The Cat in The Hat are contributed by Joey Shaughnessy



Author: Dr. Seuss

Summary: There were two kids, Sally and Sam, whose mother was out. They were having a very dreary day, and then were graced with a surprise visit from a stranger, the Cat. He comes in, assures them their mom won't mind, and makes a very big mess. Before the Cat leaves, he cleans up his mess, and when Sam and Sally's mother returns home, nothing is amiss. The story ends with the question "What would YOU do, if your mother asked YOU?"

Questions:

Trust

The Cat reassures the children that what he is doing is okay and that their mother won't mind...

1. Would have you trusted the cat?
2. When can you trust strangers? What if they're a teacher, or a policeman?
3. How do you know that you can trust your friends?
4. What is trust?

Responsibility

The Cat, with all of his games, made quite a mess in Sally and Sam's house...

1. Is it okay that the Cat made a mess?
2. Since the Cat cleaned up his mess, was it more okay that he made it?
3. When is it okay to make a mess?
4. Is it okay to make a mess in your house?
5. Is it okay to make a mess if it isn't in your house?
6. Can you be responsible for a mess someone else makes?
7. What if it's in your house? What if they're your friend? Or a stranger?
8. Did the children have a responsibility to their mother to keep the house clean?

Wrongness

In the story, Sally and Sam had a very different view on what is right and wrong than the Cat did...

1. Is it okay if the children were entertained by the Cat, even though what he was doing was dangerous?
2. Is it okay to do things that are wrong to try and impress people?
3. Is it more okay to do something wrong if it's fun? Why or why not?
4. What makes something wrong?
5. Who decides if something is wrong?
6. Can something/someone be right even if everyone says it's wrong?

Social Expectations

In the story, the Cat invited himself in, and started taking action...

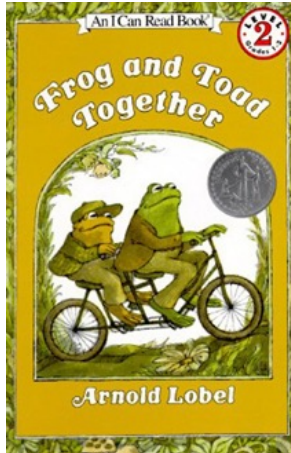
1. Was what the Cat did an okay way to act?
2. What are inappropriate things to do in a friend's home?
3. What makes them inappropriate?
4. Are they different things than what is inappropriate to do in your home? Why?
5. Should you make a friend leave if they are acting inappropriately?
6. Is it ever okay to be rude to someone?
7. Is it okay to be rude to someone to try and make them leave your house if they're causing harm?

Lying

At the end of the story, the reader is left to wonder if they would tell their mom what had happened...

1. Would have you told your mother what happened? Why?
2. Is it okay to lie to hide something that you've done wrong?
3. If we lie and get away with it, can people still be hurt by what we've done?
4. Should we tell the truth, even if no one would believe us?
5. If you tell someone only part of what happened, is this lying?

Summary and questions for “Frog and Toad - Cookies” are contributed by Jayme Johnson



Author: Arnold Lobel

Summary: In order to have cookies for later, and to avoid some serious belly aches, Frog and Toad need to stop eating cookies. Will Frog and Toad be able to muster up the *will power* they need to stop eating cookies before they become sick?

Questions:

In the story, Frog and Toad eat so many cookies that they fear they will become sick.

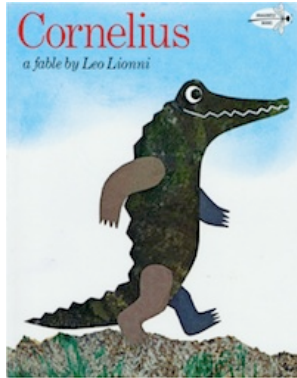
1. Is there something that you like to eat or drink so much that you can't stop yourself, even when you fear that you will get sick?
2. If you know that eating so much of something will make you sick, why do you continue to eat it?
3. Is wanting to continue to eat or drink something even when you fear you will get sick the same as wanting to get sick?

Frog defines will power as “trying hard not to do something that you really want to do.”

1. If you really want to do something, why would you try not to do it?
2. Can part of you want to do something, while another part does not?
3. If part of you wants to do something, and another part doesn't, where are these parts? Are they in our minds?
4. What kind of parts are they? Are they like fingers and toes? Or more like ideas?
5. Are any of these parts in charge of the rest of them? Which one?
6. Does thinking about ourselves as having different parts help us understand the problem that Frog and Toad have with the cookies?

At the end of the story Frog says that they have lots and lots of will power because they want to eat more cookies but cannot because they have given them all away.

1. Who do you think has more will power, Frog, or Toad? Do you think Frog will visit Toad later and eat cake?
2. If there are no more cookies left to eat, are Frog and Toad really exercising will power by not eating them?
3. Does something have to be tempting you in order for you to have will power?
4. Do you have will power even when you are not using it?

Summary and Questions for, Cornelius are contributed by Sanaa Sayani**Author:** Lio Lionni

Summary: This story is about Cornelius a crocodile who is born walking upright. This enables him to see far beyond the bushes and see fish from above, things the other crocodiles cannot do. Though Cornelius thinks that his abilities are special, his fellow crocodiles are not impressed. In the end, Cornelius walks away angrily after his friends and family still don't seem to care about the cool tricks a monkey taught him. But as he is walking away he looks back and sees everyone trying to stand on their heads, one of the tricks Cornelius learned from the monkey and was trying to show them. "Life on the river beach would never be the same again."

Questions:

When Cornelius told his friends and family about his accomplishments.

1. Was Cornelius bragging or was he just proud of what he could do?
2. If you think he was bragging do you think he knew he was bragging?
3. Should people be proud of skills they have even if they are born with them?
4. Do the other crocodiles have a good reason to be annoyed by Cornelius?
5. Do you think that Cornelius' peers were being selfish when they wouldn't admit that they were in fact fascinated by the new things he was learning to do?

When Cornelius turned around and saw the other Crocodiles actually interested in Cornelius' new tricks.

1. What are some of the ways we show our feelings?
2. Do the words that we say show the feelings that we have? How can you be sure that someone feels the way she says she does?
3. Have you had an instance when what you said doesn't match how you felt?

Summary and questions for, The Crayon Box That Talked are contributed by Zuha Shaikh**Author:** Shane DeRolf**Summary:**

A girl goes into a shop and overhears crayons arguing. Yellow and green hate red and no one likes orange. So the girl buys the box of crayons and uses all colors to paint a picture all while the colors watch how others have contributed to the picture.

Questions:

Forming Opinions

"I don't like red!" said Yellow. And Green said, "Nor do I! And no one here likes Orange, but no one knows just why."

1. Why did the crayons dislike each other?
2. Can people dislike others without knowing why? How?
3. Do we mostly dislike people who are like us or who are different from us?
4. Show the students pictures of different people in different cities/countries who speak different languages and wear different clothes. Do you like some of these people more than others? What reason might people have for doing so?
5. Is it morally wrong to like or dislike someone before you really know them?
6. What can make us like someone we dislike or vice versa?

Cooperation

We are a box of crayons, Each one of us unique. But when we get together...The picture is complete.

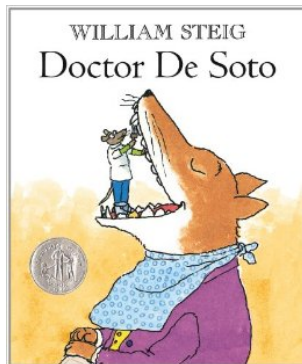
1. How were the crayons different?
2. If the crayons were exactly like each other, would the picture be as beautiful?
3. Do people need to like each other to work together and produce great results?
4. How can different people contribute together to the world?
5. Is it better to work together or alone?
6. Do people who don't like each other need a third party to make them work well together?
7. Is it better for friends or people who work/study together to be similar to one another or different from one another?
8. Can we enjoy work if we don't like the people we are working with?

Identity

Colors changing as they touched, Becoming something new.

1. What does the author mean when he says that the crayons become something new?
2. Can people also become something new when they interact with different people?
3. How can we decide if people have changed?
4. Is it better to accept new ideas and become new people or is it better to stay the way we are?

Summary and Questions for, Doctor De Soto are contributed by Ezra Frankel and Kharmen Bharucha



Author: William Steig

Summary: Doctor De Soto and his wife are mice dentists who treat all sorts of animals, except those that hurt mice. One day, Doctor De Soto and his wife see a fox with a bandaged jaw waiting outside their office. Doctor De Soto and his wife decide to treat him at the risk of being eaten. Everything goes well until the Fox is gassed, at which point he dreams about eating the mice. The next day, the Fox returns for follow-up treatment with the intention of eating Dr. and Mrs. De Soto, but the De Sotos have a plan in mind to outfox the fox.

Questions:

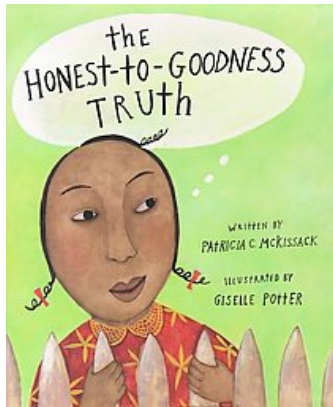
Self-Interest and Morality

1. Why did the De Sotos treat the fox?
2. Were the De Sotos obligated to treat the fox? Why or why not?
3. Are there jobs where you can be paid to do things you might not agree with? Why?
4. Would the De Sotos be justified in not treating the fox? Why or why not?
5. Would the De Sotos be morally justified in not treating the fox? Why or why not?
6. Should you ever put yourself at risk to help other people?
7. Is acting morally always obligatory?
8. When does self-interest trump morality?
9. How much self-sacrifice does morality demand?

Freedom of Conscience

1. Why did the De Sotos treat the fox?
2. Were the De Sotos obligated to treat the fox? Why or why not?
3. Suppose the De Sotos were the only dentists in town. Are they still obligated to treat the fox? Why or why not?
4. Suppose the De Sotos do not want to treat hamsters because they do not like hamsters. Are they still obligated to treat hamsters? Why or why not?
5. Suppose the De Sotos practice a religion according to which hamster teeth should never be adjusted, and now a hamster asks for treatment. Are the De Sotos still obligated to treat the hamster? Why or why not?
6. What does it mean to have a conscience?
7. Can you ever be required to act against your conscience?
8. What if you have a job that requires you to treat someone against your conscience?

Summary and questions for, The Honest-to-Goodness Truth are contributed by Ronteau Coppin



Author: Patricia C. McKissack

Summary: When her mother catches her in a lie, Libby is punished and vowed “From now on, only the truth.” Libby begins to blatantly tell the truth about everything and everyone, and soon enough, Libby’s friends become angry with her. But since she thinks that she’s doing the right thing, Libby finds it hard to understand why her truth-telling turned out to be a bad thing. It takes Libby being on the receiving end of truth-telling for her to understand how the truth can be hurtful, and she proceeds to make amends with her friends. By the end, Libby learns that while she should not lie, it is not always

necessary to blurt out the whole truth either and there is a right and wrong way to tell people the truth.

Questions:

Truth and Punishment/Consequences

When Libby is punished for lying to her mother, she vows “From now on, only the truth.”

1. Do you think Libby should have vowed always to tell the truth? Why or why not?
2. If she never got caught, do you think Libby would have continued to lie?
3. Is lying only wrong if you get caught?
4. If there were no consequences, would lying be okay?

Truth regarding Someone’s Feelings

Ruthie Mae tells Libby that what she said was mean and all of Libby’s other friends are upset with her.

1. Why were Libby’s friends mad at her?
2. Do you think that Libby began to change her truth-telling only because she lost her friends? Should she have known better?
3. What harm can be caused by being too truthful?
4. Does it even matter if the truth is mean, or if it hurts?
5. Should the truth be “watered-down” so as to spare someone’s feelings?
6. Does that become a lie?

Libby tells her teacher that another student didn’t do his homework.

1. Do you think it was right for Libby to do that?
2. Is there a difference between telling the truth and tattling on someone?

Libby's mother tells her that "Sometimes the truth is told at the wrong time or in the wrong way, or for the wrong reasons. And that can be hurtful. But the honest-to-goodness truth is never wrong."

1. What do you think her mother means?
2. What is the "honest-to-goodness truth?"
3. Why didn't Libby understand what her mother meant?
4. Do you think Libby really needed to experience a hurtful truth herself to finally understand why her friends were mad at her?

Choosing between Truth & Fiction

1. Which is easier: telling a lie or telling the truth?
2. Is it always necessary to speak the truth?
3. Can the truth ever be wrong? In what sense?
4. Is there ever a good reason to lie?
5. What about lies that are not deceptive, like flattery? Are those wrong too? Why or why not?
6. Why do we tell the truth? What are our reasons for telling the truth?

The Nature of Truth

1. Is not telling the truth automatically lying? Is there a middle ground?
2. Is there actually a time or a situation where deceit is not only allowed, but necessary?

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Traditional: Fable

Title: The AESOP for Children

Genre: Fables

Author: Unknown

Illustrator: Milo Winter

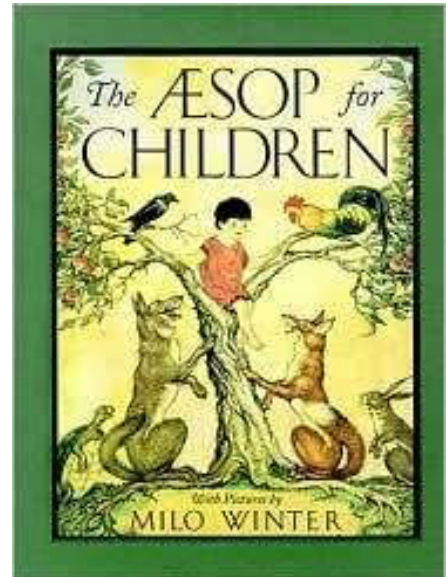
Originally Published: 1919 by Checkerboard Press, Inc.

This Edition's Publisher: Barnes & Noble Books

Year of Publication: 1993

Approximate reading level: 5-8

Page Count: 112



Chosen Fable: The Lion and the Mouse

Main Characters: Lion and Mouse

Plot: Lion was woken up by Mouse and caught Mouse with the intent to eat her. The mouse pleaded for mercy and the lion to let him go. The mouse promised that one day she would repay the favor. The lion thought it was funny; how could a mouse ever help him? Yet, a few days later Lion got caught in a hunter's trap. Lion roared in anger and fear. Mouse heard the roar and knew it was him, so she came to his rescue and gnawed the Lion free.

Theme Main Idea: Every little bit of kindness counts.

Vocabulary: Roused, timid, generous, and gnawed.

Discussion questions: Why did the Lion catch the Mouse? What did the mouse do? How did the Lion react to that? What happened to the Lion a few days after he let Mouse free? Did this surprise the Lion? What did we learn from this story? Should we be nice to someone even if we think they won't return the favor?

CCSS:CCSS:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B

Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.C

Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.3

Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

Ethics warm up activities

Contributed by: University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children

Warm-up #1:

Think of someone you know who you think is a really good person.
What makes that person a good person?

Warm-up #2:

Think of something that's pretty good.
Now think of something that's better than pretty good, that's good.
Now think of something that's better than that, that's really good.
Think of something that's pretty bad.
Now think of something that's worse than pretty bad, that's bad.
Now think of something that's worse than that, that's really bad.
Now think of something that's both good and bad.
Now think of something that's neither good nor bad.

Warm-up #3:

Do you have memories that make you feel a certain way? Can you have a memory that makes you happy?
What is happiness?
Can you be happy but feel sad?
Can you feel sad but be happy?
Can you be happy and sad at the same time?
What makes you happy?

Warm-up #4:

Think of something: You're glad has happened You wish had happened
You wish hadn't happened You're glad didn't happen

Ethical Scenarios:

Finders Keepers (Created by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz)

Initial question: You found a wallet with \$100 in it. What do you do?

Follow up questions: How would you feel if you lost your wallet? What would you want someone to do if they found it? How does putting yourself in someone else's shoes help you make decisions?

Heinz Dilemma (Kohlberg's classic moral development question)

Your spouse is dying of cancer. There is a prescription drug that can save her, but you cannot afford it. You tried to raise money with help from families, friends, and the community, but still do not have the money for it. Should you steal the drug? Why or why not?

Opportunity to cheat (Created by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz)

You are the recycler this week and take your class's recycle bin to the school's bin to empty it. Just as you are about to empty your class's bin, you notice an answer key with your teacher's name on it. It is for a math test is coming up, and you have been struggling with this area. Your parents told you if you get your grade up in math that they will get you a new bike. Do you take the answer key? Why or why not?

Additional resources:

More Ethical scenarios:

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/dilemma/archive.html>

<http://www3.haverford.edu/psychology/ddavis/p109g/kohlberg.dilemmas.html>

<https://listverse.com/2011/04/18/10-more-moral-dilemmas/>

Ethics lesson plan:

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/DoingRight.html>

Center for Philosophy for Children

depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/platos-ring-of-gyges-discussion-questions

What's the moral of the story?

- If we were shielded from the consequences of our actions, how would that change the way we would act?"



Plato's Ring of Gyges

Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the ruler of Lydia. One day there was a violent thunderstorm, and an earthquake broke open the ground and created a crater at the place where Gyges was tending his sheep. Seeing the big hole, Gyges was filled with amazement and went down into it. And there, in addition to many other wonders of which we are not told, he saw a hollow bronze horse. There were window-like openings in it, and peeping in, he saw a corpse, which seemed to be of more than human size, wearing nothing but a gold ring on its finger. He took the ring and came out of the crater.

Gyges wore the ring at the usual monthly meeting that reported to the king on the state of the flocks of sheep. As he was sitting among the others, he happened to turn the setting of the ring towards himself to the inside of his hand. When he did this, he became invisible to those sitting near him, and they went on talking as if he had gone. He wondered at this, and, fingering the ring, he turned the setting outwards again and became visible. So he experimented with the ring to test whether it indeed has this power – and it did. If he turned the setting inward, he became invisible; if he turned it outward, he became visible again. When he realized this, he at once arranged to become one of the messengers sent to report to the king. And when he arrived there, he quickly became the queen's lover. With her help he attacked the king, killed him, and took over the kingdom.

Plato has us imagine two magic rings, one given to a morally good person and one to a person who is not morally good. Plato contends that there would be no difference in the way the two would behave. People only behave morally, he claims, because they are afraid of the consequences of getting caught if they behave badly.

What would you do if you had a ring that made you invisible?

If we all had a ring of Gyges, what would happen?

Do you think Plato is right, that we are good only because we are afraid of getting caught?

Do people want to be good, or are they only good because they will get something out of it, like the approval of their parents or some other reward?

What is the difference between someone who is morally good and someone who is not?



Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for KS1 and KS2

The Get Away With It Ring

What if you could do what ever you wanted and get away with it? With the get away with it ring (of invisibility) you can!

Philosophical potential	Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing good, Being good, Instrumental goods, Intrinsic goods, Responsibility, Punishment, Praise, Consequences, Power
Session Objective(s)	Identify your own community and enquiry-focussed objectives e.g. Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should share an idea with a partner Some children should share ideas with the whole group Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should give reasons when prompted Some children should give reasons spontaneously
Facilitation questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What <i>would</i> you do if you found the ring? Why? What <i>should</i> you do? Why? Is there a difference between your two answers? Why/ Why not? If you won't be found out, should you do what ever you like? Are we only good because we're scared of being punished? Are we only good because we want to be praised? How would you feel if you acted badly without punishment? How would you feel if you acted well without praise? Why be good? Why be good without punishment or praise? What is a good person? Is a good person someone who is never punished or always praised? Is a good person someone who follows the rules? Is a good person someone who does good acts? Is a good person someone who has good thoughts? What are good rules? What is a good act? What are good thoughts? Are there different kinds of goods, e.g. those that lead to good outcomes, those good in themselves, and both? Can you be a good person even if you do bad things? Can you be bad person, even if you do good things?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ring (An old ring – a toy or a piece of costume jewellery will do) Circle of chairs Passing Pom-pom, flash cards, flip chart / white board, pens

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	Only if necessary, introduce one another.	
Warm up	<p>In pairs ask: What <u>would</u> you do, if you were invisible for the day?</p> <p>Feedback - You'll get a range of different responses to this question including some morally questionable ones like stealing sweets and spying. Resist the temptation to comment on these. These examples will be useful for creating debate later.</p>	
2. STIMULUS		10 min
Presenting stimulus	<p>Present the Ring</p> <p>This is the 'Get Away With It' Ring and this is how it works. When someone wears this ring – we imagine – they are completely invisible. They can go where they please, listen in to what they like, watch whatever interests them ... and no one will know. Even if they are naughty they will get away with it.</p> <p>Imagine you found the Ring and you slipped it on to your finger to wear it, only for the day!</p>	
Thinking time	<p>A minute in silence. Focus question:</p> <p>What <u>should</u> you do if you were invisible for one day? Why?</p>	
Sharing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a partner • Then brain storm as a whole group • Co-facilitator write up on the white board <p>Highlight to the children that the question has changed from 'would' to 'should'. You might do this by asking: <i>"Does anyone notice anything important about this new question?"</i></p>	
3. QUESTION(S)		10 min
Composing Questions	In fours, strictly just one question.	
Sharing Questions	Each group shares their question. Questions written up on white board by co-facilitator, with names of group members.	
Sharpening Questions	Identify themes, duplication and ambiguity. Redraft if necessary	
Selecting Questions	Blind vote, hands up - all children close their eyes, the facilitator reads out the group questions and the children put their hands up to pick one.	
4. DIALOGUE		25 min
First Words	Return to paired discussion first.	
Collecting Ideas	Facilitated discussion gathering a range of responses. Notice where children's answers have changed.	

Getting Focused	Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth	
Digging Deeper	<p>Paired break-out discussion on particularly challenging aspects of emerging ideas(s)</p> <p>The following questions might be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you won't be found out, should you do what ever you like? • Are we only good because we're scared of being punished? • Are we only good because we want to be praised? • How would you feel if you acted badly without punishment? • How would you feel if you acted well without praise? • Why be good? Why be good without punishment or praise? • What is a good person? • Is a good person someone who is never punished or always praised? • Is a good person someone who follows the rules? • Is a good person someone who does good acts? • Is a good person someone who has good thoughts? • What are good rules? What is a good act? What are good thoughts? • Are there different kinds of goods, e.g. those that lead to good outcomes, those good in themselves, and both? • Can you be a good person even if you do bad things? • Can you be bad person, even if you do good things? 	
Final Words	<p>Return to the original question or to an appropriate reformulation of the original question.</p> <p>Share: Has anyone changed their mind? Why?</p>	
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on community	Revisit our 'One rule' for philosophy. <i>"Did we keep it?"</i>	

Royal invitations

By: Sara Stanley

Stimulus: Fairy tale characters/cards and large paper/pens.

Stimulus details: Prepare an invitation from the 'King' requesting help from the children to decide which characters should be invited to the royal party and why.

Skill focus: Making a decision and justifying it. Persuasive argument. Working as a community to reach agreement. Listening to others. Sensitivity to disagreement.

Thinking focus: Identifying behaviours of fairy tale characters. Thinking about what constitutes good behaviour. Caring thinking.

Preparation

Ensure children are familiar with fairy tales. Allow opportunities for role-play as fairy tale characters.

Presentation

Read the invitation asking the children to help. Enlist the children to take out the figures/cards from a bag one at a time and talk together about who/what the

characters are. Allocate each child with a figure/card of his or her choice. Explain that the children will be speaking on behalf of their characters to give a reason why they should be allowed to attend the royal party.

Conversation and thinking time

Ask children to look carefully at the collection of figures/cards and discuss in small groups their first thoughts on the behaviours of each other's characters.

First words

Ask volunteers to ask explain why their character should be allowed to attend the party.

Building

Encourage the children to help each other find reasons why characters should be allowed to attend, and to wonder if there are reasons why characters might have behaved badly. For example, is the wolf really bad if he only ate the pig because he was starving? Do dragons know they are scary and can they help it? Was the giant right to have been cross if Jack had stolen his gold?

Last words

Ask the children which characters they found hardest to allow into the party. Were there any that they felt really were not good enough to come?

Albert worked in the city, earning good money.

But as he walked from his first-class train compartment to work, he noticed there were people in London who had very little money at all, because they were sitting on the streets asking him for some of his.

Sometimes he felt guilty about having so much when they had so little. So he sometimes gave them a few coins.

Albert's job was to invest the money of rich customers to help make them even richer. Sometimes he felt it was unfair that they were incredibly rich when he was just comfortable.

So he sometimes overcharged them, knowing they had so much money they wouldn't notice.

One day, Albert decided he was fed up with the whole business of people being so unequal. He was going to get a job where you could make a difference to that.

So he went back to university and trained to become a teacher. And when he started teaching, and came to your school, he was determined that he was going to treat all of you equally.

So he made sure he learned all your names at the same time... the brightest, the naughtiest and the quietest.

He smiled at all of you the same when he saw you around the school.

He made the same effort to get to know each of you.

He spent the same time helping each of you with your work.

Every time any of you answered a question, he said the same thing: 'Well done, that's excellent.'

He made sure he set you all the same work... and gave you all the same time to do it.

Whenever someone did something wrong, he set you all the same detention.

Whenever you wrote an essay, he gave you all the same grades.

At parents evening, he said the same things about all of you.

And at the end of the year, he gave every single one of you the same report.

Albert was pretty pleased that he'd done such a good job of treating all his students equally.

So he was upset and puzzled when every single one of you said, in the same angry way, the same thing, 'It's not fair, you treat us all the ____.'

The Fairest Teacher of Them All?

This enquiry often leads to interesting questions about fairness and equality.

Warm ups

Perhaps the best way to warm up for it is 'arbitrary discrimination'. While the others are arranging the chairs in a circle, pick out three or four pupils according to an arbitrary trait, such as 'name begins with J' or 'is wearing a hairband'. Treat these pupils with especial kindness at the start of the lesson – asking them to decide whether your bag of Minstrels taste better crunched or melted, for example. Meanwhile, be severe with the others, who will soon notice, and, with luck, complain that you are treating them differently.

An alternative/additional warm up is the 'stand by' exercise included here. Space the four sheets around the circle. Pupils have to choose which of the four is the most unfair, and then give their best reason for choosing it.

The Stimulus - The story makes exactly the opposite point to the 'arbitrary discrimination' warm-up: sometimes unfairness arises precisely because people are treated the same. The last word of the story is deliberately left blank: prime the pupils that when you give them a signal, they all have to say what they think is the final word of the story – practice them chorusing a word in response to the signal before you start.

It helps if you slow down during the last section of the story, so they have time to take in the shift from sensible to ridiculous.

Thinking Time/Sharing - Give pupils a minute of quiet thinking time to choose three words or phrases that are important to the ideas in story – they can be words from the story, or things the story makes you think about. Then form small groups for the sharing of those ideas in conversation.

Question Formulation - Get each group to frame a juicy, philosophical question. A good prompt is to say it should be a question that would make sense to someone who hadn't heard the story – so one about the ideas and issues in the story, not about the character Albert in particular. Have them write it on an individual sheet of A3 paper big and bold in fat pen, with their names.

Airing - After each question has been read out loud, place them in the circle and ask for a volunteer to rearrange them to show any connections or groups they can see between the questions. Repeat with an alternative layout, with different reasons given by another pupil.

Voting - Try an "invisible omnivote" – pupils stand and face outwards, hands behind backs. They can vote as many times as they like. As each question is read, pupils give a thumbs up to indicate that they want to vote.

First Words – Ask the pupils who framed the question to give their first thoughts at an answer, then ask if anyone disagrees with them, to establish a starting range of opinions for the enquiry and get pupils used to referencing one another's thinking.

Discussion - Themes and Questions - A key thing to get across in a first lesson is the "pass it on" turn-taking system of pupils passing the discussion from one to another. The most likely questions are around fairness, and you can probe into what sort of differences make it right to treat people differently, such as needs, and which ones don't, such as appearance (or, at least, those aspects of appearance that can't be changed).

You might also get questions about teaching. If so, to avoid potential awkwardness, get the community to agree some rules about not making the enquiry personal. Other themes are the gap between rich and poor, or whether crimes matter if no-one notices.

Last Words – Just go round the circle giving all a final chance to speak, or pass if they prefer.

**A teacher treating
you better
because they like
you.**

**A teacher treating
you better
because you are
like them.**

**A teacher treating
you worse
because they do
not like you.**

**A teacher treating
you worse
because you are
not like them.**

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/ethical-dilemmas



Four Ethical Dilemmas

Lying:



A girl is taken to a carnival by her dad. It is her tenth birthday and he's promised her that she can choose any 5 rides. But as they approach the gate, he discovers that he's forgotten his wallet. This is the last day of the carnival and it's too far to go home and

come back before it closes. He counts the change in his pockets and tells his daughter that he has enough money to pay the entrance fee and they can go inside and look at all the exhibits and the parade, but there wouldn't be any money for rides, OR she could lie about her age and say she was five and get in for half-price, which would leave enough money for the 5 rides. They walk to the gate and the ticket seller asks the girl, "How old are you?" What should she say?

What would you do in this situation and why?

Friendship:

You are spending the afternoon with a friend of yours who isn't very popular. You run into a group of your friends who invite you to go to a movie but they say that your unpopular friend can't come.

What is the right thing to do?

Animal Rights:

You have a little sister who is very sick. The only way to save her is to inject many kittens with the illness she has and experiment with various medicines to see if they will work.



What should the doctors do?
 Do animals have a right to life?
 Are we justified in using them in experiments?
 In eating them?

Obedience and Authority:

You are in an art class at school. The teacher tells the class that today each student is to paint a painting of their best friend in the class. The class is uncomfortable with this, and one student points out to the teacher that some kids will have lots of kids painting them,

and other kids won't be chosen at all. The teacher insists that this is what the students should do. Almost all of the students don't want to do this.

What should you do?

Is it disrespectful to disagree with your teacher?

With your parents?

Your friends?

Can you disagree and still be respectful?



Enquiry Plan

The Test

Just one test away from your dream school...
but what if you could take a shortcut?

Philosophical Content	Possible Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairness, Achievement, Cheating, Honesty, Consequences, Secrets, Lies, Friendship, Betrayal, Loyalty, Opportunity, Chance, Future Prospects, Punishment, Integrity, Testing (Ethics) Example Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would you take a look at the answers? Should you take a look at the answers? If there is a difference between you answers, what explains it? What are your other options besides looking? E.g. Do you tell the teacher? Do you say nothing? If your friend looks at the answers, is it okay to look too? If you <i>really</i> want to get into the school, is it okay to look? If your parents <i>really</i> want you to get into the school, is it okay to look? If you've revised for the test really carefully, is it okay to look? Is it ever okay to look? What – if anything – is wrong with looking at the answers? If we think looking is unfair, cheating, dishonest etc. What do we mean by these terms? Is it right that children should have to do tests? What do tests, test?
Philosophical Method	Participant Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judging, Justifying, Comparing and Contrasting , Drawing on experience Facilitator Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting in role, Temperature Checking, Debate Spotting and Stirring.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A manila file with 'Test Answers' peeping out. Circle of chairs Passing Pom-pom, flash cards, flip chart / white board, pens

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	Introduce everyone if necessary.	
Ethos	Where needed, recap enquiry rules and conventions.	
Warm up	<p>I wonder</p> <p>Put the file in the centre of the circle and ask the group to spend a few minutes wondering about it. If needed model some wonders first. E.g. 'I wonder who that belongs to'; 'I wonder if they are the answers to our next spelling test' etc.</p>	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presenting stimulus	<p>Share the scenario with the class:</p> <p>You are about to take a test for a scholarship that would allow you to go to your dream school*. You have prepared thoroughly but tests make you really nervous and your mind often goes blank. Getting into this school will change your life. If you mess this up, you won't get this chance again. You notice that the examiner has left the answer sheet on the table. Your best friend notices this too. There are only two of you in the room. After staring at the folder for a long time, your friend gives you a secretive wink, and takes a long look at the answer sheet.</p> <p>What should you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you take a look too? • Do you tell the teacher? • Do you do nothing (don't look, don't tell)? <p><i>* Or taekwondo club, football team, brass band, summer camp etc.</i></p>	
Thinking time	A minute in silence.	
Sharing time	<p>Encourage the group to share their initial answer first in pairs and then with the whole group.</p> <p>Take note of the options the children offer and add any new ones to the list below.</p>	
3. QUESTIONS		1 min
Prepared Question:	<p>Write up the question on the board and the various options on pieces of paper. Lay out these options on the floor in different corners the classroom.</p> <p>What should you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you look too? • Do you tell the teacher? • Do you do nothing (don't look, don't tell)? 	

4. DIALOGUE		30 min
First Words	Vote with your Feet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay out the options on the floor • Ask the group (or a few children) to stand by their choice • They should first share their reasons in a huddle with the other children standing with them • Then feedback as a whole group • Allow children who have been persuaded by something they have heard to change positions. • Ask any children who move to explain what has persuaded them. 	
Collecting Ideas	Begin the whole-group discussion gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	Continue to facilitate the whole group discussion, encouraging the group to identify and explore key emergent idea(s). <i>E.g. Fairness, Achievement, Cheating, Honesty, Consequences, Secrets, Lies, Friendship</i>	
Digging Deeper	Help the whole group to identify a particularly interesting and challenging issue arising from the ideas already discussed. If necessary instigate a paired discussion to allow them to explore this in greater depth.	
Final Words	Vote with your Feet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay out the options on the floor again • Add any new options that have emerged during the discussion • Ask the group (or a few children) to stand by their choice • Ask any children who have changes paces since the first vote, to explain why 	
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the Content	Ask the group to identify one concept think they've explored in this session giving an example of when they explored it.	
Reflection on the Method	Ask the group to identify one thinking skill they think they've used in this session giving an example of when they used it.	

Center for Philosophy for Children

depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/moral-spectrum-exploration-exercise



The Moral Spectrum Exercise

In this exercise, students are introduced to “the moral spectrum”—seven different perspectives on the right thing to do, seven different questions to ask themselves to determine whether a particular course of action is right or wrong. These questions are drawn from the dominant moral theories in Western philosophy over the past 2500 years or so. They are presented, however, in a form that is quite accessible; the focus is on questions to ask rather than principles to follow. The questions explore issues of liberty, duty, compassion, community, happiness, virtue, and self. They thus mirror the central concerns of, respectively, existentialism, Kantian deontology, an ethic of caring, Humean communitarianism, utilitarianism, Aristotelian virtue theory, and ethical egoism.

We refer to these questions as different “moral prisms” to emphasize their function as different perspectives on the right thing to do, perspectives that, together, form what can be called a “moral spectrum.” The prisms and their questions are as follows:

- The Existentialist prism asks: “What course(s) of action will set people most free?”
- The Deontological prism asks: “What would I do if everyone in the world were to do as I did?”
- The Ethic of Caring prism asks: “What course(s) of action will best sustain and nurture a caring relationship between myself and others?”
- The Communitarian prism asks: “How would I act if everyone in my community knew exactly what I were doing?”
- The Utilitarian prism asks: “What course(s) of action will best maximize total happiness in the world?”

- The Virtue Ethics prism asks: “What would the most virtuous person I know of do in this situation?”
- The Egoist prism asks: “What course(s) of action will most effectively ensure that my short- and long-term goals are reached?”

Explain to the students that the way to use the moral spectrum model is, in keeping with the many-hued theme, as a palette. When considering a moral issue, most of us tend to paint with a limited number of colors. Using the moral spectrum model enables us to expand our palette and see different perspectives that we can then bring to the issue. For instance, if we generally gaze through the Deontological prism, we’re apt to be focused less on results than on outcomes, which may lead us to making choices that underplay their effect on people’s happiness. It may be worth our while, therefore, to gaze through the Utilitarian prism and see if our judgment of what we ought to do changes. Considering the issue from this new point of view won’t necessarily change our mind, but it will bring new options to the table. In short, the moral spectrum model enables us to expand our moral perception and with any luck, choose more wisely.

Students are then given a variety of moral dilemmas to work with. For example, they might be asked the following:

“You are spending the afternoon with a friend of yours who isn’t very popular. You run into a group of your friends who invite you to go to a movie but they say that your unpopular friend can’t come. What is the right thing to do?”

Asking different questions about this scenario may yield different judgments. For instance, an existentialist, focused on liberty, may say that a person ought to do whatever maximizes freedom in this situation—probably leaving the friend behind. But other perspectives—notably utilitarianism, an ethic of caring, and communitarianism—would, for different reasons, judge that the right thing to do would be to stay with the unpopular friend.

You can also do this part of the exercise as a game. The class is broken into two teams and teams are given 8-sided dice. A dilemma is presented and then a student on the team rolls the dice. Depending on the number rolled, the student has to answer the dilemma from a different perspective. For instance, if a 1 is rolled, the student has to answer from the Existentialist perspective, 2 Deontological, and so on. (If an 8 is rolled, the answer has to be an amalgamation of all seven perspectives.)

In any case, exploring scenarios like this from different moral perspectives enables students to flex their moral reasoning abilities in surprising ways.

When the exercise works well, students come to see that bringing a wide variety of perspectives to bear on an issue tends to result in choices that are more consistent with their deepest values. That is, by examining issues from a variety of viewpoints, they are

able to engage in the sort of self-reflection that makes it more likely that their moral positions are congruent with their authentic feelings.

For example, one group of students was working on a dilemma that had to do with choosing between breaking a promise to a friend and going to see a much-loved musical group perform. Initially, one student, a pretty boisterous and not particularly reflective 11-year old boy named Joshua, said that he'd ditch his friend to go hear the band. But when he worked through the moral spectrum, he came to realize that, as a matter of fact, he didn't really feel that way he thought he did. His initial response was a vaguely Utilitarian one: he said that it would make him happier to go to the concert than it would make his friend sad to be left alone. However, when he thought about it in terms of the so-called "Ethic of Caring prism" and asked himself what would best sustain and nurture his relationship with his friend, he began to think about it differently. And when he considered the situation from the "Communitarian prism" and wondered about how he would act if everyone knew what he was doing, he changed his mind about what he thought was justified. Afterwards, he said he was glad he had the chance to look at things in different ways; if he hadn't, he said, he probably would have gone to the concert and then felt bad about himself later.

Silent Discussion on Ethical Dilemmas

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/silent-discussion-ethical-dilemmas

Goals:

- Explore ideas and questions regarding ethical rules and principles.
- Carry on a philosophical discussion in an alternative way that encourages all students to participate. Students who are traditionally more quiet cannot be crowded out of the discussion by students who love to talk.
- Encourage students to think about the principles that they truly believe are correct to live by.



Time Needed: 40-50 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Several very large sheets of butcher paper (especially with younger students, writing is big and fills up the paper quickly).
- A few good ethical dilemmas (I list my favorites below).
- Various colored markers/pens for each student.

Preparation:

- Write or glue one ethical dilemma onto each sheet of butcher paper.
- Arrange desks/tables into several small groups.

Description:

1. (Optional) Warm up and get a sense of our intuitions about the topic either by presenting anecdotes, questions, or connecting to previous discussions.
You can begin by asking everyone to write down a list of "the most important rules to live by". "Treat others how you want to be treated (the golden rule)" is really popular, and "do not kill" shows up occasionally. These sorts of rules are interesting to examine in the context of some ethical dilemmas, and afterwards the students may be forced to think twice about the rules they've chosen.
2. If everyone isn't already arranged in small groups, split students up according to

how many pieces of butcher paper you have. Each sheet of paper should have one ethical dilemma written into the center, and perhaps a small picture illustrating the situation. A list of some dilemmas appears at the end of this lesson plan.

3. Clearly outline the rules for Silent Discussion:

1. It is just that—a *Silent Discussion*. Absolutely no talking is allowed.
 2. Everyone will have about 5-10 minutes to respond to the ethical dilemma in front of them by writing on their group's piece of paper.
 3. Responses can include thoughts, ideas, questions, and drawings, as well as lines which show connections between different responses.
 4. Every 5-10 minutes each group will switch to the next table to respond to the next dilemma and/or the thoughts of the previous group.
 5. *Everything should be related to the question*. The anonymity of a Silent Discussion sometimes motivates students to write things that are completely silly, inappropriate, or off-topic.
4. After everyone has had a chance to respond to each dilemma, and each sheet of paper is full of thoughts, questions, drawings and lines, ask everyone to circle one thought, drawing, or question that they find particularly thought-provoking.
5. As a large group, use the remaining time to discuss one or more of the "circled" thoughts, either by going through them one by one or by voting. This is also a good chance to think about whether the "rules" that everyone created could still apply to the ethical dilemmas that were discussed.

Connects to:

Friendship & Betrayal "Split or Steal" Game – Can we always act according to the principles we believe we should live by?

Sample Dilemmas:

1. You're standing by the side of a track when you see a runaway train hurtling toward you: clearly the brakes have failed. Ahead are five people, tied to the track. If you do nothing, the five will be run over and killed. Luckily you are next to a signal switch: turning this switch will send the train down a side track just ahead of you. On the side track you spot one person tied to the track: changing direction will inevitably result in this person being killed. You do not have time to untie the victims. What should you do?
1. You're on a footbridge overlooking a railway track. You see a trolley hurtling along the track: clearly the brakes have failed. Ahead of it are five people tied to the rails. There's a very large man leaning over the railing watching the situation unfold. If you were to push this man over the bridge and onto the tracks, his size would be enough to stop the train. This would kill the large man– but it would also save the lives of the five who are tied to the track. What should you do?

1. A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the pharmacist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000 which is half of what it cost. Heinz told the pharmacist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the pharmacist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." Heinz is desperate, and is thinking about breaking into the pharmacist's laboratory to steal the drug. Should Heinz break into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

This lesson plan was contributed by Dustin Groshong and Janice Moskalik.

Friendship & Betrayal – Split or Steal Game

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/friendship-betrayal-split-steal-game

Goals:

- Explore issues about friendship, cooperation, trust, and betrayal in a highly authentic and non-abstract way.
- Create the necessity for co-operative conversation between individuals or small groups.
- Have fun doing philosophy with a game involving prizes.



Time Needed: 40-50 minutes.

Materials Needed:

- Equipment to display a YouTube video clip for the class (with sound).
- A pair of red and green leaflets for each participant or group.
- Prizes for each student
 - For younger students: Treats like donuts or strawberries which can be split in half.
 - For older students: Treats like pizza or even money(!). *Prizes must be compelling for the students in order to make the game an authentic experience.*

Preparation:

- Cut out red and green leaflets from construction paper. These just need to be small enough to conceal while students are deciding which one to choose.
- Pre-load the “Split or Steal” video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3Uos2fzIJ0>
- Hide the prizes for the beginning of the lesson!
- If playing the game one-on-one, arrange desks so that pairs of students can be face to face, mimicking the face-to-face arrangement in the video clip.

Description:

1. (Optional) Warm up and get a sense of our intuitions about the topic either by presenting anecdotes, questions, or connecting to previous discussions.
Examples: “What makes someone a good friend?”, or “When is right to trust other people?”

2. Next, begin the “Split or Steal” video clip. After the host explains the rules at the beginning of the clip, pause the video and make sure that everyone understands the rules. Once everyone is on the same page, proceed with clip.

This game calls to mind the cooperative nature of the Prisoner’s Dilemma. If both participants pick “Split” they get to split the prize, if one chooses “Split” while the other chooses “Steal” the one who chose “Steal” gets everything, and if both choose “Steal” neither participant gets anything.

3. (Optional) The participants in the video both promise to “split” the prize, and do their best to convince the other that they can be trusted. You can pause the video again after this portion and poll the group about how they think the participants will act. Many students will automatically guess that the man in the video is lying.
4. Proceed with the rest of the video clip. Afterwards, ask the group to share their reactions to the video. Often students are surprised and horrified that the woman could have stolen the prize. Sometimes they’ll label her as a “terrible person.” Pay attention to these reactions, as they can be brought up in discussion after the students play the game themselves.
5. Next, you can reveal that the students are all going to have a shot at playing this game themselves. Everyone will be given a red leaflet and a green leaflet. The red leaflet signifies “Steal” and the green leaflet signifies “Split.” Show everyone what they’ll be playing for by revealing just enough prizes so that there is enough for everyone, but only if they are split in half (for example, in a class of twenty, reveal ten donuts).
6. Explain that the consequences of our decisions in this game are very real: if you choose “Steal” and your classmate chooses “Split,” you will get a full portion of the prize, but deny your classmate anything. Emphasize that If both sides choose “Steal”, no prizes will be given out *at all* (tell them you will just eat the donuts yourself)

It is essential to emphasize that you are not bluffing when you say that some participants may not get a prize—otherwise students may believe that they won’t have to take their decision seriously. Generally students assume that in any classroom situation involving food or prizes, everyone will always end up with the same “fair” amount, and you’ll have to work to convince them that this will not be the case for this game. Whether you actually stick to this is up to you. With younger students you might want to give everyone the same prize in the end—this helps avoid tears.

7. Tell everyone that there will be four stages to the game. In the first stage, ask each side to take a few minutes to think about how they’d like to proceed. In the second stage, each side will have a few minutes to discuss things with the other side. In the third stage, everyone will have a moment to think again about how they’d like to proceed. Finally, each side will submit one of their leaflets signifying whether they choose “Split” or “Steal.”

It’s up to you to decide whether you’d like the game to be played in one-on-one pairs (as in the video clip) or if you’d like to split the group into two teams. Emotions and tensions can be higher in the one-on-one version, which can either make for tears, a more

authentic discussion, or both. When played in teams the game makes a great opportunity for cooperative decision-making and student-directed large group discussion, since each team will have to work together to determine whether they should “Split” or “Steal,” as well as work together to negotiate with the members of the other team.

8. After all of the participants have submitted their decisions and let out their cries of astonishment or relief, divide up the prizes according to what they chose and ask different students to share how they feel about their decision. Students who “Steal” the prize from their classmates will often go from feeling clever to regretful as soon as they realize what they’ve done (choosing sometimes to share the prize anyway).
9. Finally, set aside some time to consider the philosophical questions that the video clip and game have raised for the students, and then vote on which question(s) to discuss. This is usually a good time to compare how the students acted in the game with their reactions at the end of the video clip, but this discussion can go in a number of different directions. “Do we always stick to what we think is right?” “Why do people betray each other?” One student once exclaimed that games like this shouldn’t ever be played since they bring out the worst in human nature!
10. (Optional) If there’s extra time, you can share this thought-provoking clip of a participant who begins by revealing to his opponent that he will “Steal” the prize money: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0qjK3TWZE8>

Connections:

This activity can be connected to prior discussions about ethical dilemmas or rules, especially if students have discussed whether there is a right way to treat others. Did students live up to their own standards about treating others when they were tempted by a prize?

This lesson plan was contributed by Dustin Groshong.



Enquiry Plan

Friends Forever

Could you be friends forever?

Philosophical Content	Possible Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship, commitment, falling out, including and excusing, making decisions about the future, marriage (Ethics) Example Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you give a Friends Forever bracelet? • Would you accept a Friends Forever bracelet? • Can you have more than one friend? • Can you have more than one best friend? • Can you be friends with everyone? • Is it wrong to have a best friend? • Is it wrong to refuse someone's friendship? • Should we always try to remain friends? • Is it ever okay to break friends? • What is a friend? • (Why) Do we need friends? • How is the Friends Forever bracelet the same as / different from a wedding ring?
Philosophical Method	Participant Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judging, Justifying, Comparing and Contrasting, Drawing on experience Facilitator Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature Checking, Debate Spotting and Stirring
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pair of 'Friends Forever' bracelets (i.e. friendship bracelets) • Circle of chairs • Passing Pom-pom, flash cards, flip chart / white board, pens

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	Introduce everyone if necessary.	
Ethos	Where needed, recap enquiry rules and conventions.	
Warm up	In pairs: Do you have a best friend? Does anyone you know have a best friend? How do you tell if someone is your best friend?	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presenting stimulus	<p>Share the scenario with the class:</p> <p>Friends are great: someone to play with and to talk to, someone to sit next to at dinner time. But occasionally you meet a really <i>special</i> friend, someone who finds the same things funny as you do, someone who would never ever tell your secrets to anyone. When you make a friend like this, you often wish you could be friends forever. Well now you can!</p> <p>‘Friends Forever’ bracelets are special. Firstly there are two of them, one for you and one for your very best friend. But be careful who you give yours to. When you give away a Friends Forever bracelet and that person accepts and lets you tie it round their wrist, that’s it. You are friends forever come thick or thin. No changing your mind, no taking the bracelet off, no giving it back.</p> <p>When you give away a Friends Forever bracelet, the wearer is your friend <i>forever</i>.</p> <p>Quick question: Is the Friends Forever bracelets a good idea?</p>	
Thinking time	A minute in silence.	
Sharing time	Encourage the group to share their initial answer first in pairs and then with the whole group.	
3. QUESTIONS		10 min
Composing Questions	<p>Split the class into small groups and ask them to compose a question.</p> <p>Remind them to consider questions that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual (about ideas) • Contestable (not everyone agrees on the answer) • Connected (to the story, to our lives and what we’re learning) • Considerable (worth thinking about, interesting for everyone) 	
Airing Questions	Ask the groups to write their questions down and read them out.	
Sharpening Questions	If necessary, evaluate the questions using your class vocabulary and refine or reject any questions that lack philosophical potential.	
Selecting Questions	Blind vote on the questions.	

4. DIALOGUE		30 min
First Words	Begin by speaking to the group who composed the chosen question.	
Collecting Ideas	Include the wider group by gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	Continue to facilitate the whole group discussion, encouraging the group to identify and explore key emergent idea(s). <i>E.g. Friendship, commitment, falling out, including and excusing, making decisions about the future, marriage.</i>	
Digging Deeper	Help the whole group to identify a particularly interesting and challenging issue arising from the ideas already discussed. If necessary instigate a paired discussion to allow them to explore this in greater depth.	
Final Words	End by moving round the group asking for final remarks.	
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the Content	Ask the group to identify one concept think they've explored in this session giving an example of when they explored it.	
Reflection on the Method	Ask the group to identify one thinking skill they think they have developed this session giving an example of when they used it.	

Good, Bad, or Just You

By: Jason Buckley

If you lived completely alone on an island, would there still be a difference between being good and being bad?

Or, more abstractly:

Can you be good or bad if there's just you?

You might have to “guard the dilemma” here against practical solutions in order to get to the philosophy. Let's assume the island is a liveable sort of place, with plentiful freshwater and food, so that you can stay alive on the island for an indefinite length of time. You are not interested in rescue schemes, or how they got there. It is a thought experiment that aims to bring to the surface questions about the nature, scope and origin of moral ideas.

The first response might be that you could be kind or cruel to any animals on the island. Do animals matter morally? What about fish? What about shellfish? Do arguments for vegetarianism still apply if you are in a natural state and have no alternatives? To go deeper into this scenario, you might say, “What if there were no animals on the island either? Is it possible for you to be good or bad then?” Does the natural environment have a value of its own, so that how you use it is morally important even if no sentient creature is affected?

A Society of One

At the heart of the matter are questions of whether or not good and evil are about how we relate to one another, and only make sense in a society. In a way, the thought experiment is a reversal of the way moral thinking normally moves, from self to others. In Christianity, there is the instruction to love your neighbor as you love yourself; utilitarian philosophy moves from thinking about your future self (prudence) to thinking about others and their interests.

In thinking about how morality works in a society of one, you are starting with moral concepts and seeing if they still work when applied to oneself. Can you be kind to yourself? What would count as selfishness in a world of one person?

Who Defines Good and Bad?

There are also questions about how right and wrong would be defined in a society of one. Would they be whatever you said they were? Do such notions make any sense outside of a society? There are echoes here of famous solitary figures from philosophy and religion, from Wittgenstein's [private language argument](#) to Ibn Sina's [Floating Man](#), Job in the Old Testament alone on the dung heap, for whom God's law still stands in his misery and isolation, and of course Adam (and later Eve) at the start of Genesis.

It's Character Building!

You might look at solitary living as being the ultimate test of character. In *Castaway* (a favorite film of mine) the deserted island protagonist struggles with despair, and then replaces that with resignation to his fate and later with hope, displaying resourcefulness and resilience along the way. There are both secular and religious ways of talking about character that may still function in a world of one – habits of mind, virtue and sinfulness.

Convince your Teacher/Principal

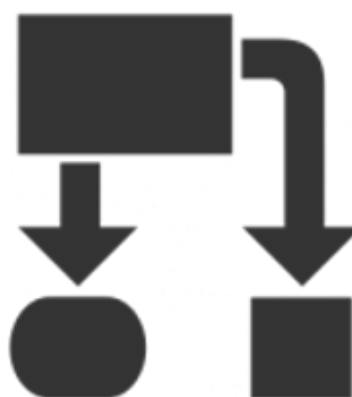
 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/convince-your-teacherprincipal



Posted by: This lesson plan, created by Ayesha Bhavsar, is part of a series of lesson plans in Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Designed for: High School, Lower School, Middle School

Estimated Time Necessary: Several class sessions
[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

- **Formulate an argument -**
 - **Learn how to anticipate and respond to objections -**
-

Tool Text

Introduction

What is an argument?

An argument consists of a set of reasons that are given with the intention of persuading someone else that a particular action or idea is right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, etc. It is a method of trying to convince another person (or persons) that your position on an issue is correct, by using relevant support and evidence.

Consider the following examples:

Premise 1 (P1). Having the shared responsibility of a class pet would help cultivate more responsible, caring students.

Premise 2 (P2). Responsibility is a character trait that teachers and parents think is important, and is something they would like to see more of.

Premise 3 (P3). Having a class pet would give students a living being to care for, thereby teaching students the true meaning of responsibility.

Conclusion: Therefore, our class should be allowed to get a class pet.

Arguments are combinations of statements that are put forth in a particular structure, that are intended to change or convince the minds of a particular audience. Notice in this argument that the conclusion—our class should be allowed to get a class pet—is supported by specific and relevant reasons (premises) and is a culminating statement meant to convince an audience.

There are three basic elements of an argument: premises, inference, and conclusion.

Stage One: Premises

The basis of persuasive communication are made up of premises, or statements that are necessary for the argument. Premises are the evidence, or reasons that are put forth in a particular structure, aimed at convincing another to accept the conclusion. You will see in the above example that premises are listed as P1, P2, P3, and so on.

Stage Two: Inference

The premises of the argument can be used to obtain further ideas. This process is known as inference. In inference, we start with one or more accepted premises. We then derive a new premise from those preceding it. For instance, in the example above, P3 is an inference based upon the information presented in P1 and P2. It takes the information that has been accepted in P1 and P2, and formulates a new idea that plays a central part in leading us to the conclusion.

Stage Three: Conclusion

The conclusion is the claim that you want the other person or party to agree with. It is drawn from and supported by the premises of the argument. The conclusion is often the final stage of inference. Conclusions are often, but not always, indicated by phrases such as “therefore,” “it follows that,” “we conclude,” “thus,” “hence,” and so on. In the following exercise, the conclusion will be something that you want to persuade either your teacher or principal of.

Activity

Step 1: Formulate a conclusion

Although the conclusion is the final stage of an argument, it is often helpful to work backwards when formulating an argument. First think about something that you think would really benefit you and your classmates. Make it something reasonable, and something for which you can provide strong support.

Think of one thing that you really want to convince your teacher or principal to grant you and your classmates, something that is both reasonable and defensible. Possible ideas might include: longer recess, longer lunch, an extra break, a class pet, a new elective that isn't offered, new playground equipment, etc.

Formulate whatever it is that you want to convince your teacher or principal of as a conclusion. For example:

- In light of these reasons, our class should adopt a pet iguana.
- Therefore, we should have an hour-long recess every other day.
- In conclusion, lunch period should last an hour instead of a mere half-hour.
- In sum, our school should offer Philosophy as an elective.
- Hence, the extra-curricular budget should include funding for a climbing-wall in the school gym.

Share these conclusions with the class before moving on to the next step.

Step 2: Formulate the body of the argument

What supporting evidence would help convince your teacher or principal to accept your conclusion? Begin by listing all the relevant evidence. Next, arrange the premises so that they flow in a “natural order” from one to the next. That is, the premises should support and lead the audience to the conclusion. Inferences should follow from the premises preceding it, as in the example above.

For example,

P1. Numerous studies show that students that get more exercise perform better academically and are better behaved in class.

P2. At present, students are not getting adequate exercise during the school day, because recess is only 15 minutes long.

P3. Having a longer recess period would provide students the opportunity they need to get enough exercise.

P4. By increasing exercise, students will likely perform better both academically and behaviorally.

Conclusion: Therefore, our class should be allowed to have an hour-long recess.

Step 3: Objections/response to objections

After you have formed your argument, consider possible objections. You might think that acknowledging the objections that the principal or teacher could make will weaken your argument. This is not necessarily the case. In anticipating possible objections, you are able to preemptively respond to these objections, thereby strengthening your argument. Also, in considering objections to your argument, you might realize that you need to revise your argument by rewording one or more premises (or your conclusion). Some arguments are not defensible, or are less defensible than others. If the objections cause you to realize that there are significant weaknesses in your argument, you have two options:

Option (1) Rewrite your argument and form a different, stronger argument.

Option (2) Realize that your argument is not defensible and will rightly be dismissed based upon strong and compelling objections.

One way to formulate objections to a given argument is by challenging the truth of the premises or the plausibility of particular inferences being drawn. The more complex the premise, the more opportunity there is to challenge it, so you might want to go back to your original argument and reframe your premises so that they are more defensible. Keep your premises short, non-controversial, and based in fact.

Here are some examples of possible objections, and responses to objections that could be made from the above example.

Objection 1: A pet is too much of a burden to care for—it will be too much of a responsibility.

Response to objection: A guinea pig, for example, wouldn't be too much work because we can take turns cleaning the cage and feeding it. They don't need walks like a dog

Objection 2: Pets are distracting and will make it difficult for students to focus during class.

Response to objection: A guinea pig can be kept in a cage and can be taken out to hold and play with only during recess and certain agreed-upon times.

Objection 3: Pets can be dangerous.

Response to objection: Although snakes and hermit crabs can be dangerous, guinea pigs don't bite or scratch. They are friendly, meek creatures.

Objection 4: There isn't enough support to prove that having a pet will cultivate a sense of responsibility.

Response to objection: I know of several cases where students became more responsible by caring for a pet. For example, consider the transformation we see in many of the students in Mrs. Bloom, Ms. Wright, and Mr. Chase's classes.

Step 4: Role play

Have students form pairs. Each student will present his or her argument to the other student who will pretend to be the teacher/principal. The student playing the teacher/principal will then formulate an objection to the student's argument. Allow the student to respond to the objection, and go back and forth until all relevant objections have been discussed. At this point, the student presenting his/her argument should take a moment to revise his/her work, if additional objections have been raised. Switch roles, and repeat the role play exercise.

After students have had the opportunity to revise their drafts in light of newly raised objections, they may submit their final draft to the teacher/principal.

Supplemental Materials

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments* (4th ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009.

Hurley, Patrick. *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 2011.

This lesson plan, created by Ayesha Bhavsar, is part of a series of lesson plans in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools*, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

How Do We Decide Who Should Decide?

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/how-do-we-decide-who-should-decide



Tool Text

Medical Ethics and the State

The role of the state (government) in Medical Ethics can be quite complex. In these two articles, two perspectives are explored. The famous Baby Theresa case involves a situation where the state prevents parents from acting to share their dying daughter's organs. The second case concerns a decision by Michigan to compel a surgical procedure. There are a large number of dilemmas that arise in this case, such as who should decide, who is a person, when someone is dead, how parents, religion and the state should interact. The first article articulates a classic deontological (Kantian-style) argument as to why Theresa is a person, and therefore should be kept alive. The second article approaches the issue from the standpoint of the common good.

These articles are not aiming to resolve these basic moral arguments. They are a good starting point for getting students to see how arguments for both sides could be laid out, both the Killing People is Wrong Argument and the Greatest Benefits Argument. In doing

so, the question of resolving personhood comes to the fore.

Who should decide who decides?

Possible Discussion Questions

1. What is the medical dilemma in each case (keeping in mind that it's only a dilemma if it has reasonable arguments on both sides)?
 2. Who is involved here? What role does every stakeholder play?
 3. What is the Killing People is Wrong Argument?
 4. What is the Greatest Benefits Argument?
 5. What should one do in a situation where two arguments with reasonable and nearly universally-held premises come to mutually exclusive conclusions?
 6. Why should parents not have Absolute Rights to decide medical decisions about their children?
 7. What role should the state play here?
 8. How does the question of personhood fit in here?
-



ENQUIRY IN ROLE

WHAT IS IT?

Seeing a problem from more than one perspective is crucial to critical thinking, but it's not always easy to achieve. Drama naturally encourages learners to see in new ways.

Philosophical thinking in role involves bringing to life a dilemma, puzzle or problem within an imagined scenario. The role-play can be loosely structured around an enquiry framework allowing learners to engage with big ideas critically and creatively.

RECIPE

- **No. of participants:** 4 - 30
- **Age of participants:** Suitable for any age
- **Preparation time:** 30 minutes for a basic scenario. Several hours or even days for a large scale scenario with script props, costume and production elements such as music lighting or set.
- **Delivery time:** 30 minutes – 2 hours
- **Materials:** You can run an enquiry in role with no materials at all, but a loose script, props, costume and production elements enrich the activity.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The facilitator identifies an issue, dilemma, puzzle or scenario they'd like their students to explore. You might find philosophical thought experiments particularly useful starting points (see 'Thought Experiments' Tool).

An enquiry in role is then structured as follows

- 1. Taking On Roles:** The learners are invited to take on roles. You might go about this by giving them some element of costume or prop, engaging them in conversation or asking them to take an oath or to keep a promise.
- 2. Imparting Key Information:** A character or characters introduce key information; presenting the participants with the central dilemma. If possible introduce information via a performer (which could be you, a colleague or a recording of an actor).
- 3. Taking Stock:** Ask the students: 'What do we know?' 'What do we need to know?'
- 4. Dealing With Questions:** The students hot seat the character who imparted the information. They respond by answering the empirical questions, leaving the philosophical questions for the learners to explore.

HOW DOES IT WORK? (cont.)

5. Exploring The Issue: The learners can then use dramatic devices such as tableaux, thought tracking, flash back, or forum theatre, to explore their central philosophical question. (See 'Dramatic devices' Tool.)

6. Subversion / Challenge: Move the drama forward by introducing a twist via a new character. The actor/facilitator may bring fresh information or they could present a different side of the argument.

7. Decision Time: The need to make a decision brings the enquiry to a head; maybe there is an impending natural disaster or the press are waiting for comments etc. These decisions can then form the basis of out-of role discussion.

8. Reflection: What did your character decide and why? What would you have done? How does your view compare with the view of your character?

If you'd like to use one of our scripted 'off the shelf' enquires please get in touch at the address below.

TIPS

- This can be a time consuming activity to plan but once you devise a good scenario it can be used and improved year on year. A good enquiry in role can be used to introduce key issues in History, Science and RS. It's also useful for English Speaking and Listening assessments or role plays in Modern Foreign Languages.
- If you want to run an enquiry in role on your own, use costume and prop to allow you to play different parts.
- A voice recording, mock newspaper article, answer phone message or video performance can all work as dramatic stimuli if you don't feel confident performing yourself.

FIND OUT MORE

- See work by Gordon Poad who developed the Dramatic Enquiry Approach at Cap-A-Pie Associates <http://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/>
- 'The Pig that Wants to be Eaten' by Julian Baggini.
- 'Can a Robot be Human?' by Peter Cave
- See 'Concept Building' Tool
- See 'Dramatic Devices' Tool



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Ethics Video Links

The Philosophy Man

Jason Buckley & Tom Bigglestone

Spot and Stripe

Discussion question: Is it okay for the government to look at everyone's use of technology?

<https://www.thephilosophyman.com/free-p4c-resources/ks2#ss>

video available at the link above, third video down

The following descriptions, discussion questions, and activities were created and written by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

The Young Turks

Talk show hosts: Grace Baldridge, Hasan Piker, and Jason L. Carter

Alister Brownlee & Johnny Brownlee

Description: This is a video clip of two brothers racing in the ITU world Triathlon in 2016.

Johnny was two kilometers away from the finish line and in first place. His brother, Alister, was in second. Alister sees that suddenly Johnny cannot walk, so he puts his arm over his shoulder and helps him finish the race. Meanwhile, another racer passes them and finishes first. Johnny gently pushed his brother in front of him as they approach the finish line so that Johnny finishes second and Alister finishes third.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmRC_Abj9so&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=4

note: You only need to watch the first 40 seconds of the clip

Discussion questions:

If Alister didn't help his brother what place would he have finished in? Is what Alister did cheating or sportsmanship? Why or why not? Is it sometimes okay to cheat? Was it right that Henri Schoeman (first place winner) passed them even though he was in third? What would you have done?

Connect to Text:

We see in many books, for example in Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows, where the protagonist sees that the antagonist is in trouble and they go back to save them even though the antagonist has been mean to the hero the entire time. (Harry saves Draco from a fire in the Room of Requirement).

Can you think of any other examples of this from your own reading or experiences? Why do you think people and characters in stories help those who were cruel to them? Is it justified not to save someone when you have the opportunity if they were unkind to you?

BBC Radio & The Open University (2015)

Scripted by Nigel Warburton

Narrated by Stephen Fry.

Ayn Rand on Selfishness

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbfy6_fMBiw&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=26&t=0s)

[v=Kbfy6_fMBiw&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=26&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbfy6_fMBiw&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=26&t=0s)

Activity: Watch the clip above as a whole group and practice “stop and jots.” When interesting points come up pause the video and let students think and write their thoughts. Then watch the video from the beginning without stopping and allow students to continue to record thoughts. Give small groups different discussion questions from below. Come together and have a whole class discussion.

Discussion questions:

Ayn Rand believed that behaving rationally means to put your own interests first. What does acting rationally mean? Do we always make decisions based off of what is best for us? Do you think our purpose in life is to pursue our own happiness? If you are solely looking out for yourself, are there costs? Ayn Rand claimed that self-sacrifice, altruism (doing something nice without getting anything in return), and asking for help is immoral? Why might Rand think that way (reflect on her theory as a whole)? Is asking for help wrong? Do you think the rich should be taxed more, less, or the same as the poor? Do we have an obligation to help those less fortunate? What do you believe is the relationship between morality and selfishness? Do you perceive the world through reason or emotion? How does that effect the decisions you make?

For more videos on ethics and other philosophy topics, visit Grace Lockrobin’s youtube channel “Thinking Space: Stimuli for Philosophical Enquiry” at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL95970EFE70300C93>

Epistemology

What is it: Epistemology is the study of knowledge. It is the process of determining fact from belief. It has been agreed among philosophers that knowledge = justified truth belief. Some philosophers believe that a fourth condition - reliability - is needed (the same result every time). Even though philosophers have agreed that these components are what constitutes knowledge, disciplines disagree on what determines justification, truth, and belief. There are many schools of thought concerning this that fall under either **Rationalism or Empiricism**. Rationalists believe that you are born with innate ideas and knowledge and are able to understand things by using logical deduction. Empiricists believe that you have to experience things in order to know them.

The Big questions: What makes justified beliefs justified? Is justification internal or external to one's own mind? What are the limits of knowledge? (Steup, 2018). What is knowledge? What is truth? What is justification? What is belief? How do we determine knowledge from belief? Can we ever really know something? Does perception cloud our ability to obtain knowledge? Can two people believe two different things and both be right? Do animals have knowledge? What are the ways we can obtain knowledge? Do you have to experience something to know it is true? Do you have to experience things and get the same result to know it is true? What do we know?

Stimuli:

Children's literature

Discussion questions

Warm up activities

A teachers guide to [You Are Stardust](#)

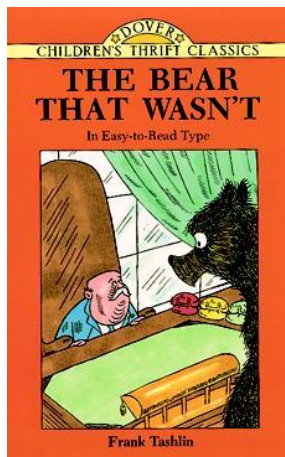
Activities

Lesson plans

Videos

*Before implementing “The allegory of the Cave” lesson by the University of Washington, watch the video and ask the discussion questions located on the *Epistemology Videos* page at the end of this section.

***Additional activity** (not attached): Gather “fake News” magazines and articles as well as “real news” from various sources. Have the students read and compare. How do you know when news is fake? How do you know when a piece of writing is truly non-fiction?



Author: Frank Tashlin

Plot Summary: A bear sees the signs of winter and realizes that it is time to hibernate. While he sleeps, a factory is built right over the top of his cave. Spring arrives, and he wakes up to find himself right in the middle of the factory. He immediately gets mistaken by the foreman for a worker and is told to get to work. To this he responds, "But I'm not a man, I'm a bear". He is then taken to each of his successive bosses, who try to convince him that he is just a "silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat", reaching all the way up to an elderly president of the factory who concludes he cannot be a bear because "all bears live in the zoo".

The bear is then taken to the zoo, hoping to gain support from his own species, but even the zoo bears claim he is not a bear, because if he was "he'd be behind bars like us". A similar conclusion is reached when he is taken to see circus bears. Eventually he concludes that he must be a "silly man", and goes to work at the factory. Eventually, the factory shuts down and he is left out in the cold--literally. He wishes he knew what a "silly man" would do to get warm. But, after a time, he finds a cave and enters, feeling comfortable and bear-like once more.

Questions:

How does a bear know it's time to hibernate?

How does a bear know anything?

How do you know when it's time for bed?

How do you know anything?

What is something you know you know?

What is something you believe but aren't sure of?

How do you know that something is a bear?

How do you know that something is a silly man who needs a shave?

How can you convince something to believe what you do?

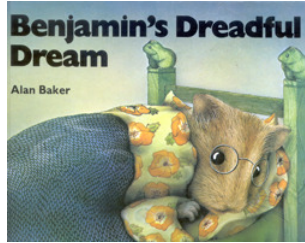
What do you do when everyone else believes something you don't?

Could other people make you believe that you are a bear? Why or why not?

What is something that you know about yourself?

What is something that you wonder about yourself?

If everyone believes something does that make it true? Why or why not?



Author: Alan Baker

Plot Summary: One night Benjamin, a hamster, decides to get up and have a snack when he can't sleep. Quickly, all kinds of weird adventures begin to happen to him. Then he finds himself back in his own bed. "Was it all a dreadful dream?" he wonders.

Questions: (modified by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz)

Were Benjamin's adventures a dream?

How do you know if you are dreaming?

Have you ever felt like your dream was real?

What is a dream? Why do we dream?

What is the difference between dreaming and being awake?

Are dreams real?

Has there ever been something in your dreams that could not happen in real life?

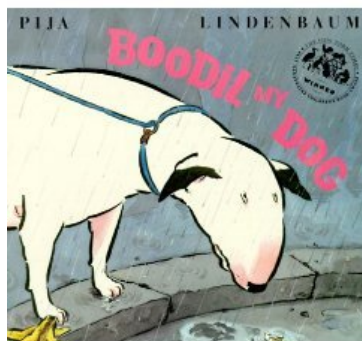
If so, when it happened did you believe it at the time? (In other words, did you realize you were dreaming,)

Why do you think that sometimes when we are dreaming, we believe that is really happening?

Why do we think this even if impossible things happen, like you are flying?

What is it about dreams that make you feel like they are real?

How can we know what is true and what is imagination?



Author: Pija Lindenbaum

Plot Summary: A child describes Boodil, her family dog, a bull terrier, as "brilliant," "fierce, strong and brave," with "nerves of steel." The drawings in the story, however, paint a different picture, as Boodil is shown, among other things, moving very slowly, avoiding puddles, quivering under the couch, and crashing into the narrator's baby brother.

Questions:

How do we know what we know?

Do our perceptions lead to knowledge?

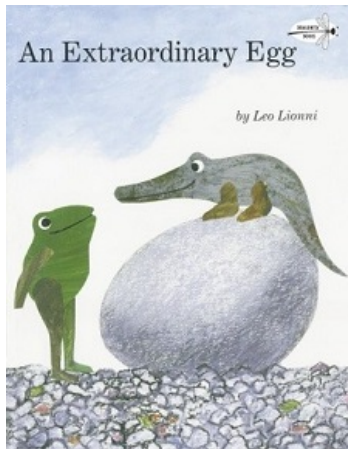
Should we believe what other people tell us? If we do, does this mean we know those things?

When should we believe what other people tell us?

Do animals have minds?

Do animals have thoughts?

Can you be friends with an animal?



Author: Leo Lionni

Plot Summary: Jessica, a frog, lives with two other frogs. Jessica is "full of wonder," and frequently ventures out on long walks and returns shouting with excitement about what she's found, even if it's "nothing but an ordinary little pebble." One day, she finds what she thinks is a perfect white stone, almost as big as she is. She brings it home, and the other frogs point out that it is not a pebble, but a chicken egg. "How do you know that?" Jessica asks. "There are some things you just know," one of the frogs replies. Pretty soon, the egg cracks open and a "long, scaly creature that walked on four legs" emerges. The three frogs all shout, "A chicken!" They spend

days playing with the "chicken," and the chicken and Jessica become great friends. One day a bird tells the chicken that her mother has been searching for her, and Jessica and the chicken follow the bird to find the enormous alligator that is the chicken's mother. When Jessica returns home, she tells the other frogs that the mother chicken called her baby, "My sweet little alligator." "What a silly thing to say," one of the frogs comments, and they all can't stop laughing.

Questions:

How do the words and drawings together tell the story?

What feelings do the drawings create? How do drawings create feelings?

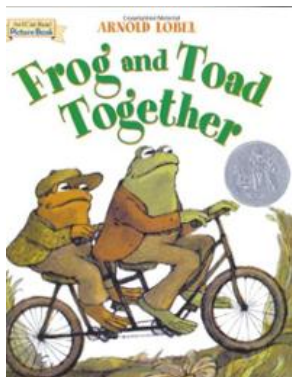
Would the story be the same without the drawings? The words?

Why does Jessica believe her fellow frog when told the alligator is a chicken? Why does she continue to believe it even when she meets the mother alligator?

Often we believe we have knowledge because of testimony from other people – can such information be knowledge? Do the words of other people give us a basis for believing something?

How do we determine which testimony to trust? Does it depend on how the people speaking to us know what they think they know?

How often do we hold onto our beliefs even in the face of evidence that they are not true?



Author: Arnold Lobel

Plot Summary: Toad dreams that he is on stage, doing amazing performances, while Frog sits in the audience. With each new feat, Toad asks Frog if he can do that, and Frog seems to get a little smaller, until he disappears altogether. Then Toad realizes how lonely he will be without Frog, and wakes up, only to discover the real Frog right next to him.

Questions:

Do dreams sometimes seem very realistic?

When you are in the middle of such a dream, can you tell that it is only a dream?

Can you be sure that you are not dreaming right now?

Where do you think your dreams come from?

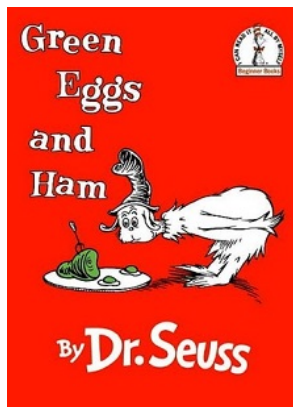
When you remember your dreams, do they sometimes affect what you do when you're awake?

Can you make a person feel smaller just by bragging about what you can do? Why would the person feel smaller?

Is it good to tell your friends about all the good things that happen to you, or that you can do, or is that bragging?

Is bragging bad? If so, why?

What's the difference between sharing good news and bragging?



Author: Dr. Seuss

Plot Summary: Sam-I-Am is trying to persuade the narrator to eat green eggs and ham by offering it to him in different scenarios. But he repeatedly denies Sam's offers, saying he doesn't like it. Eventually, Sam's persistence wins him over and he tries and enjoys green eggs and ham.

Questions: Modified by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Give an example of a food that you don't like. Why don't you like it?

Can you dislike a food you've never eaten?

How do you know you won't like it?

If you've eaten something once, can you dislike it years later without ever trying it again?

How many times do we have to experience something to be sure about our opinion about that thing?

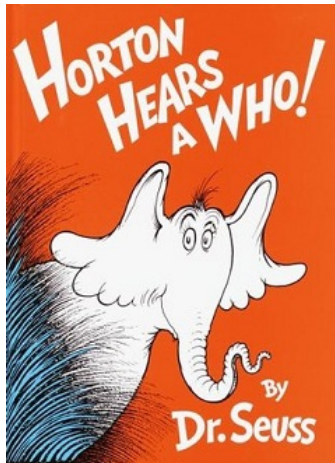
Can we have an opinion on something we have never experienced?

How do you know if you like or dislike something you have never tried?

Do you have to see or experience things to know they are true?

Can we base an opinion on what someone else tells us?

Do we sometimes change our minds about what we like? What leads us to do so?



Author: Dr. Seuss

Plot Summary: Horton the Elephant, while splashing “in the cool of the pool,” hears a small noise, like a very small yelp, but sees nothing but a “small speck of dust blowing past through the air.” Horton speculates that a very small creature must be on top of the dust speck and be feeling afraid that the dust will blow into the pool. Concerned, “because a person’s a person, no matter how small,” Horton gently lifts the speck with his trunk, places it on a clover, and tries to protect it. The other animals in the jungle make fun of Horton, conjecturing that he is “out of his head.” Horton then hears the small voice on the clover confide that he is the Mayor of a town

called Who-ville, and that Horton has saved all the Whos and their buildings. As the other animals chase him and ultimately threaten to imprison Horton and boil the dust speck, all the small Whos make enough noise to finally be heard by the other animals, who then recognize that there are indeed very small persons in the clover.

Questions:

Did Horton know there was a person on the dust speck when he heard the sound?

How did he know it?

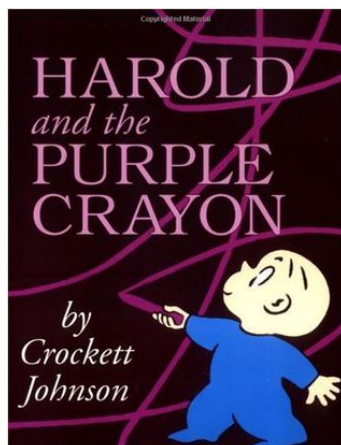
Why do you think the other animals didn’t believe him?

Would you have believed Horton?

When should we believe what we see or hear?

Do you have to see, hear, or touch something yourself in order to believe it’s there?

Can you think of something you know exists even though you can’t see, hear or touch it?



Author: Crockett Johnson

Plot Summary: Harold decides, “after thinking it over for some time,” to take a walk in the moonlight. No moon is out, so Harold takes his purple crayon and draws one, and then he draws something to walk on. Harold goes on to draw a forest in which he wanders, a dragon that ends up frightening him, an ocean in which he almost drowns and a boat which saves him, a beach, a lunch to eat, and so on.

Questions:

Is Harold pretending?

Is what Harold draws real?

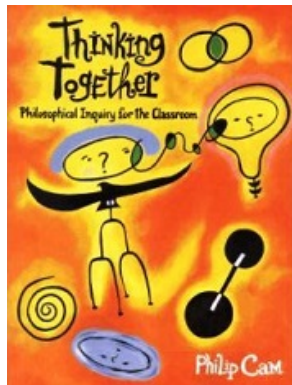
How can what Harold draws scare him?

Is the moon we see more real than Harold's moon—if so, why?

Is Harold dreaming?

Can we create our own reality, or do we do so without even know it?

Would we want to create our own realities?



Author: Philip Cam

Anthology chapter: Magic

Plot Summary: A family goes to the local fair, where they see a parade, visit a fortune-teller, and watch a magic show. The children wonder whether it is possible to tell the future, and how the magic works.

Questions:

What does a fortune teller claim to know? How could she know that? Do you think we could know what the future holds? If so, how? If not,

why not?

Would it be easier to predict the immediate future, or the distant future? Why?

Is human behavior more difficult to predict than other behavior (maybe dogs?) or easier?

Are people free? What does that mean?

If people are free, would it be possible to predict their behavior?

If people aren't free, could we still feel free, because we don't know exactly what the future holds for us?

When we call something magic, what do we mean?

Could the magician really do impossible things?

Are there different ways for something to be impossible? What might they be?



Title: The Man Who Kept His Heart in a Bucket

Author: Sonia Levitin

Plot Summary: Jack, who once had his heart broken, keeps his heart in a bucket so that he can focus on his work. This protects him from being hurt again, but it also means that he feels no joy or deep emotion.

Questions:

Jack has real experiences, but doesn't feel anything – does this make his experiences inauthentic in some way?

What makes an experience an authentic one?

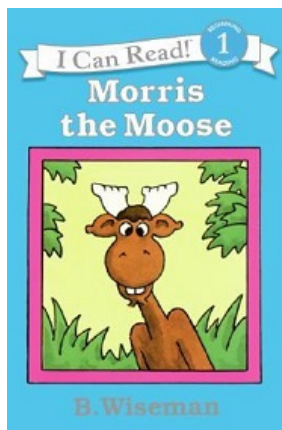
What does it mean to be authentic?

Jack is breathing and working and eating and sleeping, but is he really living in any meaningful sense? Why does his situation seem so sad to us?

What is the relationship between knowledge and authenticity?

Do we have to have knowledge about what we're experiencing in order for our experiences to be authentic?

Can we have knowledge of our own thoughts and emotions, or do thinking and feeling distort what we experience, or both?



Author: B. Wiseman

Plot Summary: Morris meets a cow and declares that the cow is a funny looking moose, insisting, despite the cow's protests, that the cow must be a moose because she "has four legs and things on her head." When Morris and the cow approach a deer for help, the deer insists that they are all deer, and when the three of them ask a horse to assist, the horse claims they are all horses. It is not until the animals see their joint reflections in the water that they conclude that they are not all the same.

Epistemological Questions:

Why does Morris believe that the cow is a moose?

Does Morris have good reasons for believing this?

Does the cow have good reasons for insisting she is not a moose? What are these reasons?

When the animals see their reflections in the stream, what makes them conclude that they are not the same after all? Is this a good reason for believing that they are not the same?

Does seeing something provide us with knowledge?

If you have good reasons for believing something, do you know it?

Metaphysical Questions:

What makes a moose a moose?

A cow a cow?

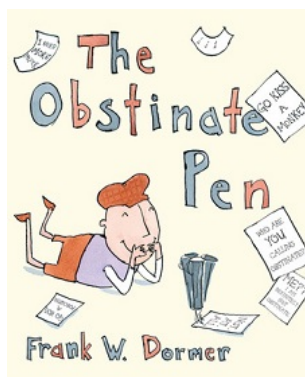
Is there something essential that makes us what we are?

If so, what is it?

Would we stop being what we are if we lost part of ourselves?

What part?

Does what we are change over time? If so, how?



Author: Frank Dormer

Plot Summary: The “obstinate pen” is a pen with a mind of its own. Each adult who ends up with the pen finds that it won't write what the adult intends, but instead writes what seem to be the pen's own thoughts and observations, which are often insulting and consistently hilarious. For example, Uncle Flood wants to write his first sentence with his new pen: The following story is all true. The pen instead writes: You have a big nose! However, when Horace finds and admires the pen, it lets him draw what he wants.

Questions:

Where do thoughts come from?

Do we always do what we intend?

What is the relationship between what we intend and our actions?

Do we have control over our thoughts? Over our actions?

What is the mind?

What kinds of things have minds?

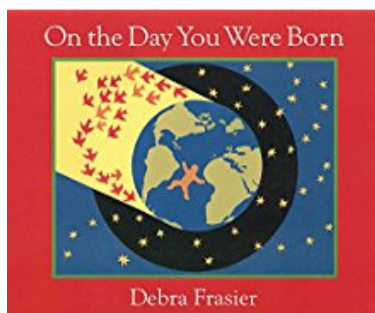
Can a pen have a mind? A table? A plant? An ant? An infant?

Do we express ourselves differently in drawing than in words? If yes, how?

Why do you think the pen let Horace draw what he wanted to draw?

Summary, lesson structure, and questions for, On The Day You Were Born, are contributed by, Christina Zaccagnino

Author: Debra Frasier



Plot Summary: The book takes the reader on an artistic and visual journey of what was happening in the natural world when the reader was born. The scientific phenomena/processes are introduced within a poetic narrative and are presented as being in personal relationship to the reader's birth. The author sometimes verges on personifying the scientific events. For example, "... far out at sea clouds swelled with water drops, sailed to shore on a wind, and rained you a welcome across the Earth's green lands."

At the end of the story, there is an index with 1-2 paragraph scientific descriptions of the phenomena within the story. Note about the genre: This book feels like it borders between fiction and non-fiction: it presents accurate scientific phenomena, yet relates those phenomena to each other and to the reader's experience in a creative way that verges on personification and thus “feels” like fiction. Since some students may find this genre unfamiliar, it may be worthwhile to read the book twice. Some students may feel very familiar with this genre.

Lesson Structure:

Option 1: Read the story only and then have a discussion. If questions come up about science background, you can refer to the index or other info sources. This option is the most open-ended and may lead to a discussion that is more generally philosophical and less scientific in nature.

Option 2: Read the story. Then read 1-2 science phenomena from the index (the teacher can choose them ahead of time, possibly in accordance with what students are learning in science, or the students can vote). Then have a discussion. This option is more narrow and may lead to a philosophical discussion around specific scientific phenomena, their relation to humans, what makes something alive, objectivity/subjectivity, and relational ways of knowing.

Option 3: Read the story and the entire index. Then have a discussion. This option is a less scaffolded version of option 2 and may be suited for an upper elementary classroom. It may lead to a broader discussion about several different scientific phenomena and their relation to humans, what makes something alive, objectivity/subjectivity, and relational ways of knowing science. Discussion questions are roughly organized below to demonstrate potential intersections between scientific and philosophical questions. Of course, all the questions are deeply related and the questions and direction of the discussion are not limited to these categories.

Questions:Gravity

Does it matter to gravity that I was born? Does my existence affect gravity? Why does gravity want to keep me from floating away?

Did gravity's pull really make me a promise? Does gravity know I am here?

How do we know if gravity intends to keep me from floating away?

People

Why are so many people happy that I am here?

Why do the animals, wind, or Sun care that I am here?

What is the difference between how the people welcomed me and how the wind, rain, or Sun welcomed me? How are they the same?

How did the people know I was coming?

What is the difference between how the people welcomed me and how animals welcomed me?

How are they the same?

Trees making oxygen

Did the trees make oxygen just for me, or for everyone? Is oxygen made just for people, or for other animals, too?

Do the trees intend to make oxygen for us?

Would the trees keep making oxygen even if people and animals didn't breathe it in?

Sky

Is the sky mine? Is it ours? Who does the sky belong to? What does it mean for something to be mine?

Does the sky choose to be mine? Does it have to be alive to choose?

Rain

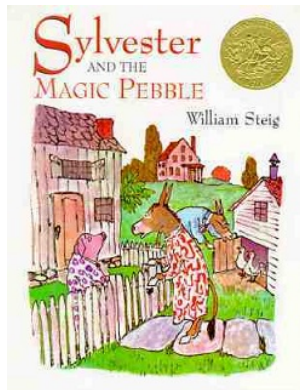
Is rain always welcoming someone?

Did the rain mean to welcome me?

What is welcoming about rain?

Other

Was I welcomed one by one, or did it all happen at the same time? How long was the world preparing for my birth?



Title: Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

Author: William Steig

Plot Summary: Plot Summary: Sylvester, a donkey, finds a pebble that grants wishes. After having several wishes granted, Sylvester is frightened by a dragon, and, panicking, he says, "I wish I were a rock." He becomes a rock and is no longer able to pick up the pebble to make any wishes. Thinking about his life, he feels helpless. Over the next year, as his parents and community eventually stop searching for him, Sylvester tries to get used to the idea that he will always be a rock. In the end, his parents find the magic pebble, wish him back to himself,

and he turns back into a donkey.

Questions:

WHAT IS MAGIC?

Is magic real?

What kinds of things are magic?

Imagination and Existence

Can anything you imagine really exist?

If you had a magic pebble like the one Sylvester found what would you do with it?

What would you wish for? What other ways could you get your wish?

Do you think the magic pebble could be dangerous in any way?

What are the dangers of having a power like this? Would you be tempted to commit evil acts?

Could you change into a different thing by wishing?

If you could change into anything else, what would it be? Why?

What would be a good reason to change into something else?

Making things happen (cause and effect)

Can you make these things happen:

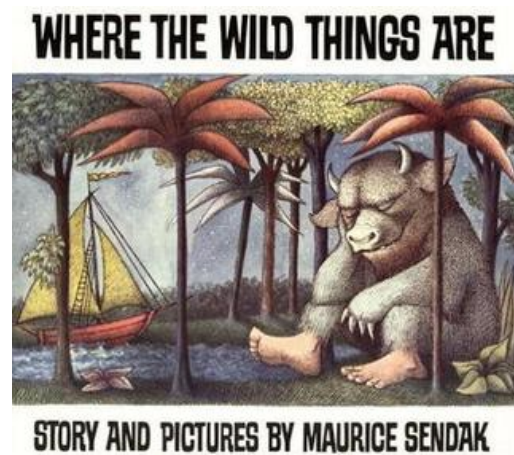
The sun come out, rain fall, a plant grow. someone laugh, someone cry, someone read you a story, the stars shine, a rock move, think?

When Sylvester is a rock, is he thinking?

Can rocks think?

Does the fact that Sylvester is thinking show that he is still really a donkey?

Do donkeys think?



Author: Maurice Sendak

Plot Summary: Max misbehaves and gets sent to his room without supper. Suddenly, a magnificent forest grows in Max's room, and Max finds a private boat that enables him to sail forward in time. Max meets some huge monsters who live there, and he and the monsters spend time playing and doing fantastical things. Max decides that it is time to return to his home where his mother loves him best of all. Max quickly travels back in time in his boat—over a year—and returns to his room where he finds the supper that his mother left him. It's still hot.

Questions:

Max experiences the fantastical forest and monsters as if they are real. Does that mean that the forest and monsters are real?

How do you know whether something is real or imagined?

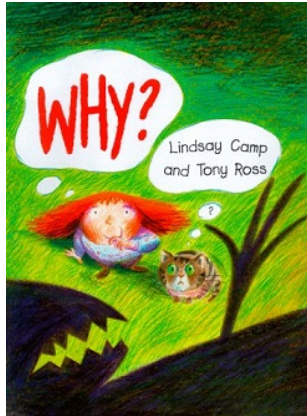
How do you know whether or not you are dreaming right now?

Is it possible for time to go by without anything changing?

Why does time appear to move more slowly when we are doing boring things, but more rapidly when we are doing fun things? What might this suggest about the nature of time?

Try to draw a picture that represents time, and share it with the group. What are your reasons for representing time this way.

Despite the fact that Max is having fun with the monsters in the forest, he chooses to go home to be with his mother. What does this say about why Max values in life?



Author: Lindsay Camp and Tony Ross

Plot Summary: Lily, in response to virtually anything that happens, asks the question, "Why?" Her dad tries to respond to her questioning, but sometimes, "when he was a bit tired or too busy," he'd say only, "It just does, Lily. It just does." One day a giant spaceship lands and the aliens that emerge from the ship announce that their mission is to destroy the planet. Terrified, no one responds, except Lily, who asks, of course, "Why?" After a series of "why" questions, the aliens realize that they don't know why, and they leave.

Questions:

Why ask why?

What is the purpose of a question?

Why do we ask questions? What makes a question a good one?

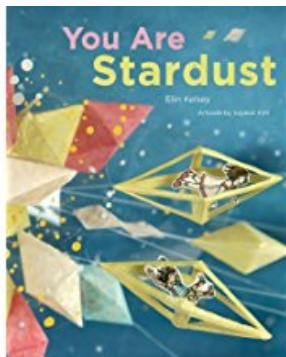
Is curiosity a good thing?

Why do you think Lily's father sometimes became annoyed with Lily when she asked "Why?"

Could a question really save the world? Could it destroy it?

Can asking "why?" be dangerous? Can not asking it be dangerous?

Summary and questions, for You Are Stardust are contributed by Christina Zaccagnino



Author: Elin Kelsey

Plot Summary: This book takes the reader on a journey to discover how humans are connected to nature. The author compares common human experiences to other experiences in the cosmos, both living and nonliving. For example, the way we learn to speak is similar to how birds learn to chirp. The electric pulses in our brain are similar to the electricity in lightning. The author also tells a narrative about how humans are connected chronologically and physically to the rest of the cosmos. For

example, the elements that make up our bodies originated inside of stars. The water we drink is the same water that dinosaurs drank. This story is based on scientific research but is told in a way that may feel fictional or informal to students. It is sure to draw out a sense of wonder and connection to the natural world.

Questions:

What is nature? Are we a part of nature or are we outside of it? What is our relationship to the rest of the natural world? Are we connected or disconnected?

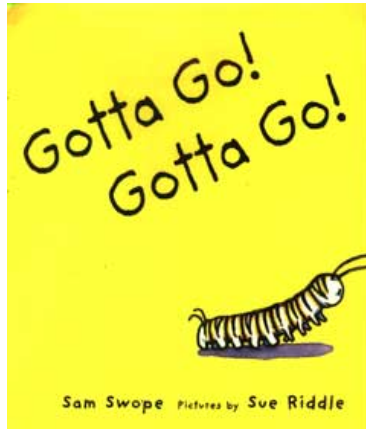
If we are connected, or a part of, the natural world, what implications does this have on the way we treat it? Do we have a moral responsibility to take care of the natural world?

Books on Epistemology: Resources from University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children

What makes us similar to the rest of the cosmos? What makes us different? How do we know?

Supplemental materials for this book are available at

<https://www.owlkidsbooks.com/portals/0/docs/stardust/stardust-teachers-guide.pdf>

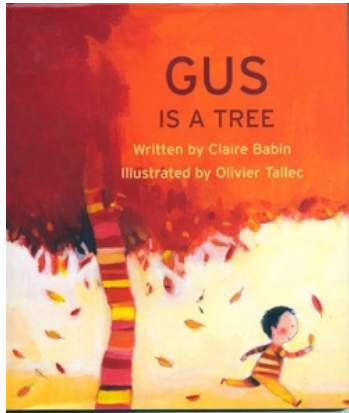
Summary and questions for, Gotta Go! Gotta Go are Contributed by Katherine Krueger

Authors: Sam Swope, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Summary: This is the tale of a "creepy-crawly bug" (Monarch caterpillar), who says "I don't know much, but I know what I know. I gotta go! I gotta go! I gotta go to Mexico!" On her long trek, she meets a grasshopper and an ant, takes a "nice long rest" (metamorphosis), and finally reaches the hibernation grove in Mexico. She awakens in spring to "dance" with another creepy-crawly bug before heading north again to lay her eggs--the reason for everything."

Questions:

1. Does anyone know what kind of butterfly the creepy-crawly bug is? (She's a Monarch butterfly, btw.)
2. How do you think the creepy-crawly bug knew she had to go to Mexico? (Why?)
3. How did she know how to get there?
4. Do you think babies are born knowing certain things or do we have to teach them everything?
5. Do you think there is anything you knew since the day you were born?
6. Are there different types of knowledge? That is, is it different to know something instinctively, versus knowing something because you learned it?
7. In order to say you know something, do you have to know that you know it?
8. What do you think the creepy-crawly bug meant when she said "sometimes it's hard to know what you know."
9. Do you think we are also born to do something like the creepy-crawly bug was? (What is our "Mexico?")
10. (if yes to 9) Do we all have a different purpose, or could some people have the same one?
11. (if no to 9) So are some things (animals, plants, certain people) born with a purpose and some not?
12. (if yes to 9) The creepy-crawly bug says "If Mexico is where I'm going, and it is, then however I go, I'll get there." Do you think that's true for us? Do our decisions matter?
13. (if yes to 11) The creepy-crawly bug knew what she had to do. If we don't know, or can't tell, how do we know it we're making the right decisions?
14. (if yes to 12) If our decisions don't affect where we end up in life, does it matter if we do bad things?
15. Do you think things are different for people because we can make decisions for ourselves? (Keyword: Free will.)
16. Are we always free to make our own decisions? (What can stop us from doing something we want to do? What if it's a bad thing?)

Summary and questions for, Gus is a Tree contributed by Andrea Abudayeh**Author:** Claire Babin

Summary: Gus is a Tree tells the story of a boy who falls asleep underneath a tree in his school, and dreams he is a tree. His dream seems so incredibly real that, while he is asleep, he believes he is a tree. When he wakes up, he realizes he is a boy.

Questions:

Gus dreams that he is a tree, surrounded by many other trees.

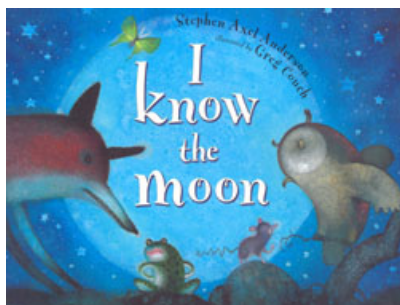
1. Have you ever had a dream that seemed so real you didn't know you were dreaming?
2. Can you remember if you could feel things in your dreams?
3. Did you know you were dreaming?
4. How did you come to know it was just a dream?
5. Is there any way to know you are dreaming before you wake up?

Gus remembers the walks he has with his father in the forest.

1. Is there a difference between imagining and dreaming?
2. Can the things you imagine seem real?
3. Does your imagination affect what is going on around you?

Addressing questions of reality

1. How do you know what is real?
2. Can you trust that what other people tell you is real actually is?
3. Has there ever been a time in which you thought you saw something, but you really didn't? How about an example of a deception?
4. Can you trust your senses?

Summary and questions for, I Know the Moon are contributed by Paula A. Carpentier**Author:** Stephen Axel Anderson

Summary: All of the animals have their own concept of the moon. They have an argument as to whose concept is the correct one. The owl interrupts them and says, "There is but one moon, we shall have but one answer." They go to a man of science to find out the truth about the moon. When he tells them it can be only known through words, the animals are dissatisfied with his answer.

Questions:

All the animals had a different idea of what the moon is. Each of the animals was convinced that he knew the moon, and they all begin to bicker. The owl broke up the fight and said, "There is but one moon, we shall have but one answer."

1. When you look at the moon what do you see?
2. How did you get that idea?
3. Do you think there is only one right answer to what the moon is? Have you ever been in an argument?
4. When you had an argument, how did you settle the argument?
5. Did you change the other person's mind or did that person change your mind?
6. Can you think of cases in which all of the people in an argument are right, and cases in which there is only one true answer?
7. When there is only one answer, how do you know which is right?

The animals go to the Man of Science to find out the truth about the moon.

1. Who would you go to to find out the truth?
2. How do you think that person knows the truth?
3. If something is written in a science book, does that make it true?
4. Can science give us the answers for everything?

The Man of Science believed the moon can only be known through words. He said, "Facts and figures all in orbit! Read the moon then absorb it." The fox however, said "The Man says it's made of letters. I know it's more the spaces in between."

1. Let's make a list of ways we can communicate without words. For example: a smile.
2. Have you ever tried to say something, but couldn't think of the words to say it?
3. Can you always use words to explain things?
4. Is using words always the strongest way to communicate or can some of the things on our list better express our thoughts or feelings?

The Man of Science said that you must look to words to know the moon. The fox doesn't agree and says that the moon must be chased and felt and seen. All of the animals still feel strongly that their moon is the real one.

1. Have you ever strongly felt that you know you are right about something, even though everyone tells you that you are wrong?
2. When you feel that you are right, how do you know you are right?
3. Are you born knowing these ideas or do you know what you know because someone told you?
4. How do you think you acquire knowledge?
5. Have you ever tried to express something, but couldn't think of the words to express it?
6. Can words explain everything that exists in the world?
7. Can you learn about everything in the world by reading?
8. Can we express our feelings or ideas without using words?

Summary and questions for Knuffle Bunny Too are contributed by Sadia Khatri



Title: Knuffle Bunny Too

Author: Mo Willems

Summary: A sequel to Knuffle Bunny, in this episode Trixie is now older and can now talk. She is particularly excited about taking her beloved Knuffle Bunny to class and showing it off to her friends. All such plans are foiled when

Trixie sees Sonja in the morning— holding an identical bunny in her arms. Their teacher, Ms. Greengrove, takes away the bunnies to prevent an argument between Trixie and Sonja, and returns them at the end of the day. Unfortunately, during this process, the bunnies get mixed up and the girls go home unaware. What will happen when Trixie and Sonja realize they have each other's bunnies?

Questions:

Property Ownership

1. How do you think Trixie got her bunny?
2. If her parents gave it to her, can we say it belonged to her parents?
3. Do you think it was important for Trixie to get her bunny back? Why or why not?
4. Think of something you own. What makes you its owner? Does it have to be earned? Given to you? With you, in your house?
5. If we find something, how can we figure out who it belongs to? Is it important to?
6. How can something stop belonging to someone?
7. Why is it important to own things? What it does it do?
8. Is it possible to not own anything?
9. Can non-physical things like thoughts and ideas also be owned? How would we know?

Consent and ownership

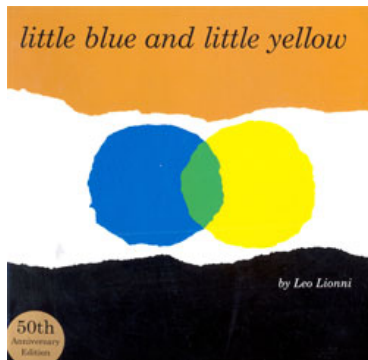
1. Could Trixie and Sonja both have owned the same bunny? Why or why not?
2. Can you own something if no one else agrees that you own it? Why or why not?
3. Can something be owned by everyone?
4. Who owns the sky? The earth? Can you own them? Why or why not?
5. What about something you find lying on the ground? Who does that belong to?

Knowledge and Experience

1. How does Trixie *know* it is not her bunny?
2. If you were Trixie's dad, would you know the bunny wasn't hers? What would Trixie say that might prove it to you?
3. How do you know something is not yours if it doesn't look any different?
4. How might Trixie feel about the bunny if she was older? Would she want it back?

5. Aside from looking, is there a way of knowing what something is or isn't? Can you think of some examples?

The Summary for Little Blue and Little Yellow is contributed by Hina Jawaid. The questions for this text are contributed by Hina Jawaid and Thomas Wartenberg



Author: Leo Lionni

Summary: 'Little blue' instead of staying at home went out looking for his friend 'little yellow'. They played together, had a lot of fun and ended by looking like little green. When this happened their parents couldn't recognize them. The story is a journey in which the parents of 'little blue' and 'little yellow' and the readers realize what actually happened.

Questions:

Friendship

Little blue has many friends but his best friend is little yellow.

1. Do you think that you need to become exactly like your best friend?
2. Do friends have to have things in common? What things?
3. Is it better for friends to be like each other or different from one another?
4. Is having friends important to your being happy?

Knowledge

When "little blue" found 'little yellow' they hugged each other happily.

1. What happened when 'little blue' hugged 'little yellow'?
2. Why didn't papa and mama blue recognize 'little blue'?
3. When mama and papa blue think that green is not "little blue" were they right?

When mama and papa blue hugged "little yellow" they became green and then they realized what had happened.

1. How did the parents realize what had happened?
2. Can you think of a situation where things are not the way they look?
3. There is a saying "seeing is believing" What do you think this means? Do you agree?
4. Can you think of a situation when you thought a certain way but when you found out more about the thing you changed the way you thought about it?

Material Constitution

"Little blue" and "little yellow" were sad when their parents didn't recognize them and they cried big blue and yellow tears. Now think of things like vegetable soup and paint

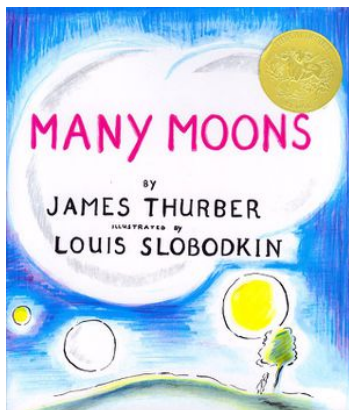
1. Can you think of something that is made up of more than one thing?
2. Can you separate the vegetables from the broth?
3. Does something happen to the vegetables and the broth when you mix them to make soup?
4. Can you separate yellow paint from blue paint when you mix the two to make green?
5. Does something happen to the blue and yellow paint that you mix?
6. What happened to 'little blue' and 'little yellow' when they became green?
7. Do 'little blue' and 'little green' still exist when they become green or do they just change?
8. 'Little blue' and 'little yellow' cried blue and yellow tears and become themselves again. What would happen if they were like paint and couldn't separate themselves once they were mixed?
9. What makes "green" what it is?
10. Is "green" something totally new or is green a changed version of 'little blue' and 'little yellow'?

Identity

They cried and cried until they were all tears and when they finally pulled themselves together they were 'little blue' and 'little yellow' again.

1. Imagine that I paint a paper orange, is it still the same paper?
2. Now imagine I burn that paper is it still the same paper?
3. Can you think of something that changes its shape or form but is the same thing?
4. Does the thing remain the same once it changes?
5. Do you think people change as they get older?
6. Do they become something new when they change?
7. Now that 'little blue' had become green is 'little blue' different?

Summary and questions for, Many Moons are contributed by Reisa Alexander



Author: James Thurber

Summary:

Princess Lenore has fallen ill and there is only one thing that can make her feel better, the moon. Can the King figure out a way to satisfy his daughters demands? Only with the help of an unassuming assistant... his court jester!

Questions:

Feelings

When the little princess got sick, her father the King promised to get her anything her heart desired.

1. What did the King think to do to help his daughter feel better?
2. Do you think that a gift would make the Princess feel better?
3. Why do you think the Princess wanted the moon?
4. What else could have the King done to make the Princess well?
5. What is the difference between feeling bad and being sick?
6. How do you make yourself feel better?
7. What are feelings?
8. What are all of the things we have pretty much agreed on about feelings?

Wisdom

The King had many wise men who always got for him anything he wanted.

The King summons his royal counselors and asks them to produce the moon to restore Princess Lenore's health.

1. What kinds of things did the Lord High Chamberlain and the Royal Wizard have on their lists that they had previously gotten for the King?
2. What kinds of things did the Royal Mathematician figure out for the King?
3. Do you think the King's wise men were very wise? Why or why not?
4. How do you know if someone is wise?
5. Who was the wisest of all the King's men? Why?
6. What is wisdom?
7. What are all of the things we have decided about being wise and wisdom?

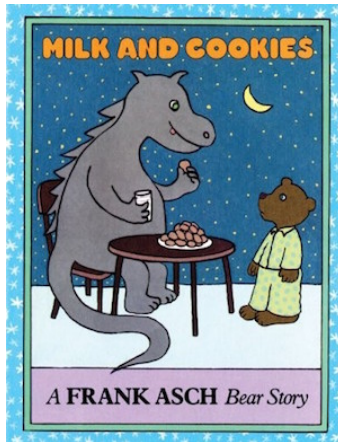
Perception

The King's wise men each seemed to know just how far away the moon was, and also what it was made of.

1. What did the wise men think the moon was made of?
2. Why did the Jester think it was important to ask the Princess what she thought about the moon?
3. Was the Princess right about the size and makeup of the moon?
4. How far away do you think the moon is, and what is it made of?
5. Is it possible that the moon is just a little smaller than your thumbnail?
6. Can the moon be large and far away, and also small and just outside the window at the same time?
7. Can your opinion be different from someone else's and you both be right?
8. What does perception mean?

9. What are all of the things we have decided about people's different ideas (opinions and perceptions) about something?

Summary and questions for Milk and Cookies are contributed by Alexandra Chang



Author: Frank Asch

Summary: When Baby Bear thinks he sees his grandfather feeding a dragon during a visit one winter's day, he can't seem to get the idea out of his head! After falling asleep, Baby Bear dreams the dragon emerges and asks for food. Baby Bear feeds the dragon milk and cookies and wakes up crying. Puzzled, his parents ask why Baby Bear thinks there is a dragon. Through Baby Bear's experiences, the reader comes to question if we can always believe what we see, the difference between reality and dreaming, and what it means to be afraid of something, even if we know it isn't real.

Questions:

Perception and Belief

1. Have you ever been tricked by your eyes? Ears? Other senses?
2. Why does Baby Bear think he sees a dragon?
3. Would you have believed there was a dragon?
4. Is Baby Bear right to think there is a dragon?
5. Can we always trust what we see?
6. When should we trust what we see?

Reality and Dreaming

1. Does Baby Bear believe the dragon is real?
2. Is the dragon "real" in Baby Bear's dream?
3. What makes something real?
4. What is the difference between dreams and reality?
5. How do you know when you are dreaming?
6. Can dreams be real?
7. Where do dreams come from?

Fiction and Emotions

1. Have you ever been scared by a dream?
2. Can we be afraid of a dream?
3. Have you ever been afraid of something you know isn't real?
4. Why do you think we are often afraid of things we know aren't real?
5. Is it right to be afraid of something you know isn't real?

Summary and questions for Miss Nelson is Missing! are contributed by Taryn Hargrove

Author: Harry Allard and James Marshall

Summary: A classroom of unruly students treat their caring and lovely teacher with complete disrespect. They throw spitballs during story-time and refuse to sit in their seats during math. They take advantage of their teacher's good nature until she disappears and they are faced with a vile substitute. Near her wits' end, Miss Nelson doesn't come to school one day. Instead, the kids have a vile substitute--the nasty Viola Swamp--who loads the boys and girls with homework and never gives them a story hour. By the time Miss Nelson finally returns, the children are so grateful they behave well. But now Viola Swamp is missing...

Questions:

Respect

The students in Miss Nelson's class did not respect her.

1. How did the students act towards Ms. Swamp?
2. What is it to have respect for someone?
3. How do you know someone deserves respect?
4. Can you respect yourself?
5. Does obedience for an elder show respect?
6. What types of people are usually disrespected?
7. What actions display respect?
8. Why did the students respect Ms. Swamp and not Ms. Nelson?

Fear

The children in Miss Nelson's class feared Ms. Swamp.

1. Did the children respect Ms. Swamp because they were afraid of her?
2. Why did Ms. Nelson's class fear Ms. Swamp?
3. Would you be afraid of Ms. Swamp?
4. Is fear different from respect?
5. Are you more obedient to someone you fear?
6. What are we afraid of?
7. How do you know someone is afraid?
8. Can someone be afraid and not show any signs of being afraid?
9. Is it better to show that you are afraid or not to show that you are afraid?

Power

Ms. Nelson has very little power over her students.

1. Did Miss Nelson lose power over the class because the children did not fear her?
2. What is it to have power?
3. Do people need power?
4. If someone has power, do you need to respect them?
5. If you have power, does that mean you are respected?
6. Do we need people to have power?
7. How do you gain power?
8. How do you lose power?
9. How does it feel to be powerless?
10. How does it feel to be powerful?

Identity

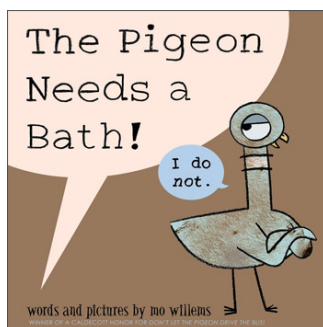
Ms. Nelson changes her identity and comes in as Ms. Swamp.

1. Would you change who you are to gain more acceptance or respect?
2. Is Ms. Nelson still the same person after she changes her identity?
3. Does someone's identity define who they are?
4. What defines a person?
5. What is your identity?
6. Is someone the same person if they alter/change their identity?

Deception

1. Does Ms. Nelson deceive her class by changing her identity?
2. Is it okay to lie?
3. Is it okay to lie if it is for a good cause?
4. Is tricking someone into believing something the same as lying?
5. How would you feel if your best friend lied to you but it was for your own good?

Summary and questions for, The Pigeon Needs a Bath are contributed by Caroline von Klemperer and Andy Rodgers



Author: Mo Willems

Summary: At the beginning of the book, a man claims that a pigeon is filthy and needs a bath. The pigeon, however, thinks differently and spends most of the book trying to justify why he shouldn't have to take a bath. Finally, the pigeon takes a bath and realizes that he loves taking baths.

Questions:

Confirmation Bias

"What smell? I don't smell anything ... all of these flies buzzing around me are purely coincidental."

1. Have you ever ignored that someone else wanted to play with a toy you had because you didn't want to share the toy?
2. Why do you think that the pigeon doesn't realize that he smells bad?
3. Is it bad that he tells himself that he doesn't smell? Why or why not?
4. If the pigeon loved baths, do you think he would have noticed that he smells?
5. Can you think of reasons why it might be okay for the pigeon to not take a bath and keep smelling?
6. Should you pay attention to ideas that are different from your own? Why?
7. If you think you don't like something, but you've never tried it, should you try it? Why?

Absolutism and Relativism

The man says that the Pigeon needs a bath, but does he really need one? The pigeon says: "Y'know, in some places it is impolite to bathe."

1. In your house, what are the rules for how often you have to take a bath? If one family has rules that you bathe every day, and another family has rules that you bathe every other day or every two days which of these rules is more right? Are they both right?
2. Is it always true that you should take a bath when you are really dirty? Why or why not?
3. Are some rules so important that everyone has to follow them what are some examples?
4. Who decides that people need to take baths? Who decides the things that you should and shouldn't do?

Meaning

"'Clean', 'Dirty', they're just words right?"

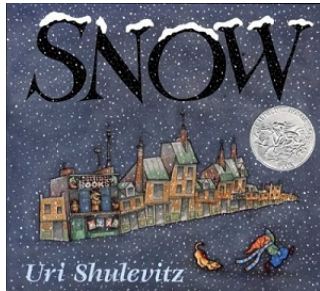
1. If the pigeon feels like he is clean, does that mean that he is clean? Why or why not?
2. Do the words 'clean' and 'dirty' each have only one meaning?
3. Imagine you clean your room, and think it is 'clean', but your Dad doesn't think it is 'clean.' Is one of you more right?

Priorities

"Life is so short. Why waste it on unimportant things? Like taking a bath!"

1. Is taking a bath an unimportant thing? What about other little everyday activities like brushing your teeth?
2. What are some of the more important things in your life?
3. Why don't we only do the very important things in life? Why do we do the less
4. important little things?
5. What makes something important in life?

Summary, questions, and activities for, **Snow** are contributed by Felicity Carroll and Samuel McHugh



Author: Uri Shulevitz

Summary: Snow. First, one snowflake falls. Then two snowflakes. Nobody thinks the snowflakes will amount to anything. Nobody, that is, except one little boy. “It’s snowing!” A boy and his dog celebrate the first snowfall and their city is transformed.

Questions:

Heaps Paradox

1. In the beginning of the story when there are one, two, and three snowflakes, would you say it’s snowing hard? On which page do you think it started snowing really hard?
2. Do you think adding just one snowflake can ever make the difference between snowing softly and snowing hard? If yes, how do we decide that number? Is it between 1,000 and 1,001 or 1,000,000 and 1,000,001? Why?
3. Do we think there is a problem here? If yes, can you explain the problem? If no, why not?
4. How can we maybe fix the problem? Is it a problem with our language? Is it a problem with how we think?
5. Why fix the problem at all? Does it matter? Is the problem with the world or with us?

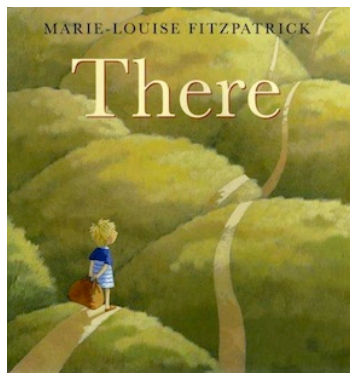
Testimony

1. Why doesn’t the boy believe everyone when they tell him it’s not snowing?
2. Do you think he’s right to believe what he sees instead of believing the others? Why?
3. Is something wrong with believing something just because someone tells you it’s true? Why or why not?
4. If we know the person really well should we always believe what they tell us? Why or why not?
5. Most of what we learn about we only know because someone told us. If we can’t believe what people tell us, what can we believe?
6. Do you think it would make more sense to believe some of the speakers in the story than others? Which ones? What makes them more believable?
7. If you asked someone what time it was, would you believe them more if they were a certain person/kind of person? Why?
8. What if you were asking them how to build a rocket? Would you believe some people more than others? Why?
9. Can you give an example of something that you know is true even though you haven’t experienced it yourself?

Possible Activities

- Draw some clouds and a landscape. Start drawing dots one at a time and ask the students to raise their hand and keep it up when they think there are enough snowflakes to form a snowstorm. You can point out to the students that they raised their hands at different times to get across the idea of vagueness.
- Show pictures or clips of different people making statements. Some of the statements could be basic information, like what the weather is, some could be specialized knowledge or theories, some could be aesthetic judgments. Ask the children which people or which kinds of statements they believe more and what makes them more believable.

Summary, questions, and activity for, There are contributed by Emily Fuller



Author: Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick

Summary: *There* is a story about a little girl who wonders about the future and what it will be like. She pictures the future as a different place—a place called “There”—and has a lot of questions about how different life will be in this place. The questions she asks include how long it will take her to get “there”, what she will know “there”, and what things will be like “there”, and they echo worries that many children might have about how the world will be as they get older and how they will be in that world. In the end, she

unpacks her bag and decides to put off going there until tomorrow, since she has lots to do.

Questions:

The Future

The girl wonders whether she will be as tall as a house or the trees, whether she will wear sensible shoes and say sensible things, and whether there will be rainbows There.

1. Do you think some of her beliefs about the future are possible, and some of them are impossible? (Here it might be helpful to go through the pictures of some of the things she wonders about)
2. What is an example of something that seems impossible? What makes you think it is impossible?
3. Could it be possible? What would have to change to make it possible?
4. Do you think any of the things she imagines definitely will happen?
5. Is there anything you know for sure about your future? How do you know it?

Personal Identity

The girl is unsure of many things, but knows she will still build snowmen and sandcastles.

1. Do you think the girl will really keep building snowmen and sandcastles in the future?
2. Do you know any older people who don't like to do the same things they used to like to do?
3. What is something you like to do, that you think you'll still like to do when you get older?
4. What is something about you that you think will be different when you get older? What do you think will definitely not change?
5. The girl asks whether she can bring her teddy with her. What is something you'd like to carry with you to the future? Why is it important to you?
6. Do you think you'll still feel the same about this thing in the future?

Language

The girl wonders when she will get "there" and whether there will be a sign that says "Here is There."

1. What are some different ways you might use the word "there"? Does the word have one meaning?
2. What do you think the girl means by "there"?
3. What do you think the sign "here is there" would mean? Can you call one place here and also there at the same time?
4. Does the word "I" mean the same thing for everyone, or something different for every person?
5. Is it ever tomorrow?

Activity:

To begin your discussion, you can fill out the following chart with the kids to get them thinking about the philosophical issues.

Idea about the future	Is it possible?	Why or why not?
She will be as tall as the trees		
She will wear sensible shoes		
There will be rainbows		
There will be dragons		

Summary and questions for, There's a Nightmare in My Closet are contributed by Rachel Bailey

**THERE'S A NIGHTMARE
IN MY CLOSET**



written and illustrated by MERCER MAYER

Author: Mercer Mayer

Summary:

The young boy in this picture book knows that there is a big, scary nightmare living in his bedroom closet. Each night, before he goes to bed, the boy makes sure that the closet door is shut tight, because if he left it open, the nightmare will emerge to torment him as soon as he turns off the lights. However, one night the boy decides he's tired of cowering under his sheets, and so he sets out to rid his closet of the nightmare once and for all.

Questions:

Reality

This story tells about one little boy and his nightmare.

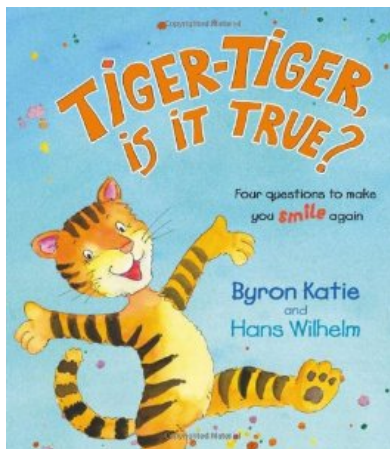
1. Have you ever had a nightmare? What did your nightmare look like?
2. What if you couldn't see your nightmare. Would it still be there?
3. Do you think you have to see something for it to be real?
4. Can you think of things you've never seen, but that you believe are real (like maybe the continent Australia)?
5. What about ideas or memories? What about your thoughts? Can you see them? Are they real?
6. Can something be real to one person, but not real to another? How can that be?
7. Try to remember a time when you told someone a true story, but they didn't believe you. Was your story still true? Were the events still real?
8. Is the little boy's nightmare in the book a real nightmare?
9. Was your nightmare real? How do you know?
10. Imagine a situation where what seemed to be a dream was actually real. Is this situation possible?
11. Can you ever be sure which is the dream and which is real?

Ownership and Control

In the story, the little boy calls the nightmare his.

1. Did he create the nightmare?
2. Do you think he can control the nightmare?

3. Think about something you own, like a shirt, or a toy, or a lunch sandwich. What does it mean for something to belong to someone?
4. What does it mean for something to be yours?
5. What about your finger? Do you own your finger? Why or why not?
6. Try to remember the last time you drew a picture in class. Did you want other people to draw on your picture? Why or why not?
7. Can you think of things that might have affected how you drew your picture (for example: what colors you had, what assignment your teacher gave you, maybe whether you were happy or sad that day)?
8. How much control did you have over the picture?



Author: Byron Katie and Hans Wilhelm

Summary: When Tiger-Tiger has a bad day, he starts thinking that nobody likes him or cares about him. But when wise Turtle shows-up and asks him how he knows these things to be true, Tiger-Tiger discovers that it is only his own thoughts that are making him unhappy.

Questions:

Truth

Tiger-Tiger realized it wasn't true that nobody liked him or cared about him.

1. How did Tiger-Tiger figure out that it wasn't true that nobody liked him or cared about him?
2. How can you figure out that something is not true?
3. Is it okay to believe something even if you can prove that it is untrue?
4. Say I believed that you were all dolphins. How would you prove to me that this was untrue?

Thoughts

Tiger-Tiger thought that no one liked him or cared about him.

1. Do you think it's true that no one likes or cares about Tiger-Tiger? Why or why not?
2. If it's not true, why did Tiger-Tiger think so?
3. Are our thoughts always true?
4. If our thoughts aren't always true, how can we know which ones are and which ones aren't?
5. Where do thoughts come from?
6. How come we all have different thoughts? Why don't we all have the same thoughts, all the time?

7. Can a thought hurt you?
8. How can you tell what you are thinking?

Feelings

Tiger-Tiger felt upset when he thought that no one liked him or cared about him.

1. How did Tiger-Tiger feel when he thought nobody liked him or cared about him? Have you ever felt like that?
2. Do our feelings change what we think/believe?
3. In the past, when you have felt sad/upset/scared/angry, how did you act?
4. What about a time you felt really, really happy? How did you act?
5. What are feelings? Where do they come from?
6. How is feeling different from thinking?
7. Why do we have feelings?
8. What is the difference between a good feeling and a bad feeling?
9. What if we were just happy all the time? Would that be good?

Summary and questions for, The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs are contributed by Sarah Rowley

Author: Jon Scieszka



Summary

Alexander T. Wolf was framed! All he wanted to do was borrow a cup of sugar to make a cake for his granny. Unfortunately, a bad cold and some unfriendly neighbors land Al in a heap of trouble. Now in jail, Al recounts what really happened to the Three Little Pigs.

Questions

Truth

The story Al presents is very different from the traditional version of The Three Little Pigs.

1. How are the two versions of the story alike? How are they different? (Consider creating a Venn diagram to illustrate this)
2. Which version of the story do you like better? Why?
3. Which version of the story do you think is true? Why?
4. How can you figure out which version is the correct one?
5. Is it possible to determine if one is the truth? Why or why not?
6. Have you ever disagreed with somebody about something that happened? Did you figure out what really happened?
7. What can we do when we have two versions of an event? How can we figure out which one, if either, is true?

Intent

Al claims to have knocked down the pigs' houses by accident.

1. Should Al be in trouble for something that was an accident? Why or why not?
2. Does the fact that it was an accident change what happened? Explain.
3. Have you ever been punished for something that happened by accident? Was it fair that you got punished?
4. Can an act be a crime if the person didn't mean for it to happen? Explain.

Jail

Al is sent to jail for his crimes.

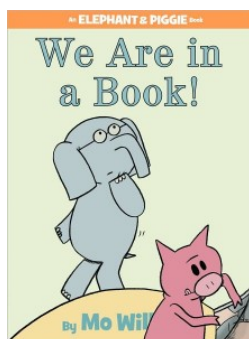
1. Why is Al in jail?
2. Does it make sense to punish Al by putting him in jail?
3. How would you punish Al?
4. Is jail the only way to punish somebody?
5. What are some things we can do instead of sending people to jail?

Prejudice

Al is the only wolf in a society of pigs. All of the reporters and police are pigs.

1. Is Al treated differently because he's a wolf? How so?
2. Do you think that the police and reporters were fair to Al? Do they have a reason to be unfair? Explain.
3. If Al were a pig, do you think anybody would have believed his story? Why or why not? What do you think would have happened?
4. Imagine that you are a pig in this society. How would you feel when you heard about what happened to the Three Little Pigs?
5. Do you think Al would have received a fair trial? Why or why not? How could we make Al's trial fair?
6. Is it important that a trial be fair? Why or why not? What makes a trial fair?

Summary and questions for *Elephant and Piggy: We Are in a Book!* are contributed by Rinya Kamber and Jack Noble



Author: Mo Willems

Summary: What if you realized one day you were in the pages of a story book? What would you do if you knew when the book was going to end? In *We Are in a Book!* by Mo Willems, Gerald and Piggie address the anxiety-inducing topic of death and endings with characteristic zaniness.

Questions:**Death**

1. Why are the two characters scared?
2. When they realize the book is ending, do Gerald and Piggie act differently?
3. What happens to Gerald and Piggie at the end of the book?
4. Imagine you are at recess or having playtime, but it's about to end. Do you do anything differently? Are the last five minutes of recess less fun?
5. Should the fact that you're going to die influence how you live?
6. What could happen when people die? Why do you think that?
7. A famous philosopher named Epicurus once said: "When we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not. It is nothing, then, either to the living or to the dead, for with the living it is not and the dead exist no longer." What did he mean? Do you agree?
8. Would it be good to be immortal and live forever? Why or why not?

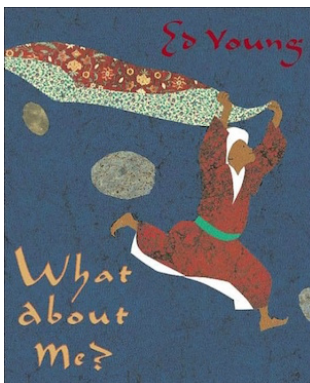
Dualism

1. Do you feel like you are in your body or you simply your body?
2. Are you your brain or something else? Where are you, specifically, in your body?
3. How do you tell your body what to do?
4. Does your body do things without you telling it to?
5. How do things that happen to your body affect the way you feel (hunger, tiredness, etc.)? Does this change the way you think?
6. Once you die, what happens to you? What happens what to your body?

Epistemology

1. Why do the characters think that they're in a book?
2. If your friend told you that you were in a book, how would you tell them they're wrong?
3. How do you know you're not in a book? Are you sure?
4. If you thought you were in a book, would you act differently?
5. If you can't be sure that you're not in a book, should that uncertainty affect how you live your life?

Summary and questions for, What About Me? are contributed by Hannah Esrick



Author: Ed Young

Summary: A young boy determinedly follows the instructions of the Grand Master in hope of gaining knowledge, only to be surprised as how he acquires it. Based on a Sufi tale.

Questions

In the story, the boy wants knowledge but he does not know how to gain it.

1. Why does the boy want knowledge?
2. Why does he not know how to gain knowledge?
3. Do you know how you would gain knowledge?

The boy says he will see a Grand Master.

1. Can the Grand Master give the boy knowledge?
2. How does one person give another person knowledge?
3. What is knowledge?
4. How do you know when someone has knowledge?

The Grand Master is wise.

1. How do you know when someone is wise?
2. Is all people with knowledge wise?
3. Is there a difference between being wise and knowledge?

Each person that the boy meets needs something.

1. What do you need?
2. Is needing something different from wanting something?
3. What does the boy need? What does the boy want?
4. What does the Grand Master need? What does the Grand Master want?
5. What does each character in the book need? What does each character of the book want?
6. Is wanting similar to desire?

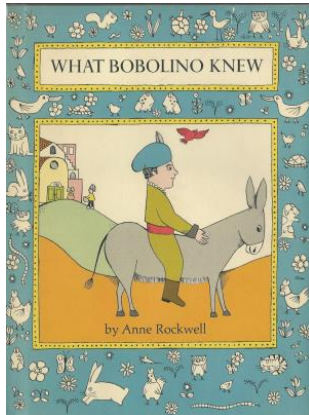
At the end, the boy finds out that the knowledge is inside of him all along.

1. What does the ending quote mean?
2. How can the boy already be wise?
3. Did the Grand Master help the boy become wiser?
4. Can children be wiser than adults?
5. What would an adult know that a child would not know?

The Grand Master is older than the boy and has more experience.

1. Does experience make a person wiser?
2. What kinds of experiences have you had that have made you more or less wise?
3. Has school and education been an experience that has given you knowledge?
4. Have you gained knowledge from the people in school and out of school?
5. Who do you learn from?
6. Who are your teachers?
7. Who do you teach?
8. Is the Grand Master a kind of teacher?

Summary and questions for, What Bobolino Knew are contributed by Alyk Kenlan and Maya Ben-Shahar



Author: Anne Rockwell

Summary: Bobolino is the son of a rich nobleman. Thinking his son is a bit slow, Bobolino's father sends him off to learn various languages so that Bobolino would at least "seem wise." Bobolino comes back not having learned how to speak Chinese, French, or Arabic etc. but he has learned how to speak to animals. His father is displeased and locks him in the dungeon. Bobolino then escapes and comes across some frogs who let him know some robbers are planning on stealing the nearby shepherd's sheep. Bobolino warns the shepherd and they scare off the robbers. Bobolino continues on his path and

goes for a swim where some fish warn him to stay off the coast as a big storm is coming in. Bobolino heeds this warning and goes to deter the fisherman from setting out to sea. He then goes into the nearby town when the storm breaks. Simultaneously the king of the area passes away and the town is in mourning. By the time the storm ends the whole town has heard of Bobolino's good deeds and elects him as the new king.

Questions:

Wisdom

The townspeople want Bobolino to be king because he is wise.

1. Many of the townspeople see Bobolino as wise. Who do you see as wise, and what makes them that way?
2. What makes Bobolino wise? Is it because he knows how to talk to animals? Or because he uses his knowledge to be helpful to others? Or something else?
3. Would Bobolino still be wise if the townspeople didn't say he was wise? Why?
4. Would we still care if Bobolino was wise if he never became king? Why?
5. Was Bobolino wise from the beginning, or did he become wise? (Is wisdom something you have from the time you're born, or do you get it with time?)
6. What are some times you feel wise, and not wise?
7. How are the times you feel wise different from the times you feel smart?
8. Why should we care about being wise? Is wisdom more important than intelligence?
9. What if Bobolino didn't help the townspeople? Or even did bad things like help steal the sheep? Would he still be wise? Or does one have to be nice to be wise?

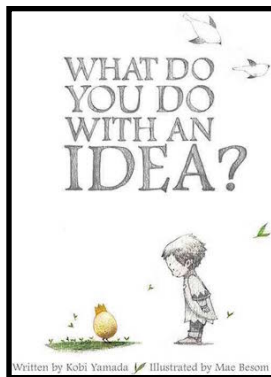
The Value of Communication

Bobolino communicates with animals to help people.

1. What good things happen because Bobolino is able to talk to animals?
2. Why does Bobolino talk to the animals?

3. Would it still be valuable for Bobolino to talk to the fish if the fish didn't have helpful information?
4. Pretend Bobolino had decided not to learn any languages, but learned other useful skills—predicting storms, etc—and managed to save the townspeople without the help of animals. What would he have lost or gained by doing it on his own?
5. If you could learn to talk to animals, would you? Why?
6. Is there someone you don't talk to much you think might have something helpful to say?
7. Why do people care about communication? Should they?

Summary and questions for, What do You do with an Idea? are contributed by Carol Chandler and Meghan Murphy



Author: Kobi Yamada

Summary: This is a story about a child who one day discovers he has an idea. The boy wonders where this idea came from. He feels afraid to tell others about his idea because they might think it is silly. Almost ready to give up on his idea he decides to nurture and feed it, and then something magical happens, the idea bursts out into the world bringing with it a miraculous change.

Questions:

One day the boy finds himself with an idea

1. What is an idea?
2. Can you think of an example of something that came from a person's idea?
3. Do you know of any people that have made their ideas famous?
4. Have you ever found yourself with an idea?
5. How did it make you feel? Happy? Excited?
6. What did you do with your idea?
7. Do you think that it is possible to all of a sudden have an idea?
8. Where do you think that ideas come from?

The boy walks away from the idea and it follows him

1. Can ideas follow you if you try to ignore them?

The boy tries to ignore his idea, but he finds he can't stop thinking about it.

1. Were you ever afraid to tell someone about an idea that you had? Why?
2. Do you think that other people are right to tell you if your idea is wrong?
3. Are there some ideas that seem too big or too difficult?
4. What makes an idea important?
5. Is there such a thing as a bad idea? And can bad ideas become great ones?

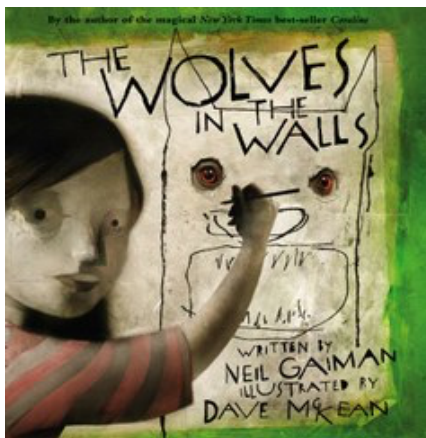
The boy finds something magical about his idea and is happier when it is around

1. What is magical about ideas?
2. What does it mean to feed an idea and make it grow?
3. How can having an idea make you feel more alive?

The Idea bursts out into the world

1. If an idea spreads is it no longer yours? Does it matter?
2. If you have an idea how do you make it real?
3. What does it mean when an idea takes on a life of its own?
4. Can you think of ways in which ideas have helped change the world?

Summary and questions for, The Wolves in the Walls are contributed by Ariel Sykes



Author: Neil Gaiman

Summary: Lucy is sure there are wolves living in the walls of their house—and, as everybody says, if the wolves come out of the walls, it's all over. Her family doesn't believe her. Then one day, the wolves come out. But it's not all over. Instead, Lucy's battle with the wolves is only just beginning.

Questions:

When Lucy's mother reminds her of the saying, "If the wolves come out of the walls, then it's all over," Lucy

questions what this means.

1. Have adults ever told you a saying like Lucy's parents told her? If so, can you give some examples?
2. Do you always understand what a saying like, "a stitch in time saves nine" means or what it is trying to tell you?
3. Where do you think sayings like this come from?
4. Why do we have such sayings?

In the book, neither Lucy's mother nor father can answer Lucy's question of "whats all over?" and "who says?"

1. How can you say something that you really do not understand?
2. Has this ever happened to you? Can you give some examples?
3. Does the saying, "if the wolves come out of the wall, then it's all over" help Lucy and her family?
4. Can such sayings be wrong? If so, how can we tell when they are wrong?
5. Has there ever been a situation where you said something you did not know was true or false?

Title: The Tears of the Dragon

Genre: Action adventure and Japanese folktale

Author: Hirosuke Jwasaki

Translator: Alvin Tresselt

Illustrator: Chihiro Iwaski

Year of Publication: 1967

Publisher: Parents' Magazine Press

Approximate reading level: 6-9 years-old

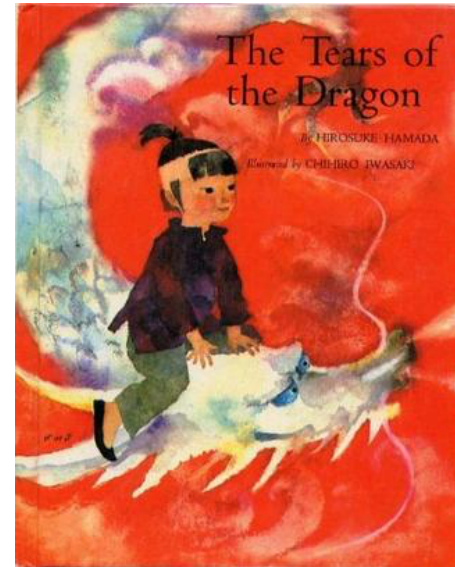
Page Count: 32

Main Character: Akito

Plot: From generation to generation, adults told a tale to children in a Japanese village, about a dragon who would come and snatch them away and eat them if they did not behave. Akito questioned this folktale, "Has [the dragon] really ever carried off a naughty child?" The townspeople shook their head at Akito, and said that no good will come from questioning this and, "He will undoubtedly be the first one that the dragon will take."

Akito cried in bed that night because he felt bad for the dragon. How did anyone know that he was a bad dragon if no one had met him? Akito wanted to invite the dragon to his birthday party and his mother became angry and told him to stop speaking such nonsense, and if he kept acting that way the dragon would snatch him away.

Despite what the adults told Akito, he went looking for the dragon. He embarked on a long journey through the forests, fields, and mountains and finally came to the "Craggy Mountain." The dragon was angry that the boy had come and awoke him. The dragon asked Akito why he had come to visit him when everyone knows that he is a monster?



Akito told the dragon that he did not believe that he was a monster and that he should come to his birthday party to prove to everyone how kind he was. The dragon was apprehensive, yet flattered and happy, for people had always hated, feared, and spoken about him unkindly. So in return, the dragon had always hated people back.

After Akito showed the dragon kindness, trust, and love, hatred began to drain from the dragon in the form of tears. The tears became a river. Akito got on the dragon's back and sailed on him back to his village. Right before they got to the village, the dragon began to slowly change into a dragon shaped boat. Akito approached land and waved to the children of his town on the dragon boat. He told them that they didn't need to fear the dragon anymore, because instead of snatching Akito away, the dragon brought him back, and now everyone can love and enjoy the dragon.

Main Idea: Judge a person (or creature) for yourself, don't just take everyone else's opinion's as truths. Don't judge a book by its cover; just because someone or something looks mean doesn't mean they are.

Vocabulary: Craggy, fierce, warbler, and cypress.

Discussion questions: Who can summarize this story? What is the message the author is trying to tell us? What were some parts in the story that helped us understand that? How did Akito feel when the villagers told him the story about the dragon? What motivated him to go looking for the dragon? Has anyone ever told you that a person was mean, so you didn't want to be their friend? Have you ever judged someone by the way they looked or something you saw them do? Can you ever know someone without talking to them? Can you ever know if something is dangerous without experiencing it?

CCSS:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C

Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D

Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2

Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.3

Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

Epistemology warm up activities

Contributed by: University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children

Warm-up #1:

Think a big thought (about something small)
 Think a small thought (about something big)
 Think a really hard thought (about something soft)
 Think softly. Can you?
 Think a funny thought
 Think a serious thought
 Think of a part of your body: think of your foot
 Think of your hand
 Think of your head
 Think of your mind: What is your mind?
 Think of something that's true: What is true?
 Think of something that's false: what is false?
 How do you know the difference between true and false?

Warm-up #2

Think the biggest thought you can.
 Think the tiniest thought you can.
 Think the oldest thought you can.
 Think the newest thought you can. Can you think of an even newer one?
 Think of something really good.
 Think of something really bad.
 What makes something good or bad?

Warm-up #3:

Let's start by all thinking together.
 What's a thought we can share?
 Can we all think about the same thing?
 Let's all think about the sky. Are we all thinking the same thing?
 Let's all think about a dog. Are we all thinking the same thing?
 Can we all have different thoughts? Is it possible that every one could

<https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/range-warm-activities-philosophy-sessions/>

think of something different?

What are you thinking about right now? What about now?

How long is now?

Warm-up #4:

Let's all think really really hard...about something really soft. Let's all have really big thoughts...about something small. Let's all think of the same thing

Let's all think of something different

What's your favorite thought?

What's your least favorite thought?

Let's all think about something we know.

What is something we wonder about?

Do you ever wonder what it means to be a friend? What can you be friends with?

Warm-up #5:

Think of something in the past

Think of something in the future

Think to yourself

Think to someone else

Think something you know

Think something you don't know

What makes something what it is?

What makes a duck a duck?

What makes a chair a chair?

What makes your teacher your teacher?

Warm-up #6:

Think the biggest thought you can.

Think the tiniest thought you can.

Think the oldest thought you can.

Think the newest thought you can. Can you think of an even newer one?

Think of something about yourself.

Think of something about someone else.

What's the difference between you and someone else?

What makes you you?

Warm-up #7:

Let's start by wondering. What are you wondering about?

Can you wonder about what you're wondering about?

What are you thinking about? Can you think about what you're thinking about?

How many of you are thinking about tomorrow? What's it like to think a thought about the future?

Can you think a thought about the past?

What are thoughts like? What are they made of? Can you build thoughts?

Think of an elephant. Now put a hat on it. Now, on top of the hat, put a bird. Now change the color of it.

What color are thoughts? Can you think a green thought? A red thought?

What about a super-bright thought?

Can thoughts make you feel things? Can a thought make you happy?

Can it make you laugh? What about scared? Can a thought make you scared?

Here's a story...

When it's dark out, I....

Warm-up #8:

Let's all think. What are you thinking about?

Can you think about what you're thinking about?

Let's try wondering. What are you wondering about?

Can you wonder about what you're wondering about?

Do you ever wonder about what is real?

What's something that's real?

What's something that isn't real?

Can you think of something that isn't real, but seems real? Can you think of something that is real but doesn't seem real? How can you tell if

something is real?
 Are dreams real?
 Are thoughts real?
 Are you real?
 Something I wish that was real is...

Warm-up #9:

Is anyone NOT thinking?
 What are you NOT thinking about?
 Do you ever think about yourself?
 When you think about yourself, what do you think about?
 Can you think about your foot? Your hand? Your head?
 Can you think about your mind?
 When you think about your mind, what is doing the thinking?
 Can you imagine you were something else? What?
 Can you imagine you were nothing? If you were nothing, what would you be? Do you ever wonder who you are?
 How do you know who you are?
 Could someone convince you that you weren't you? How?
 When I think of myself, I know...

Warm-up #10:

Write down something you believe and something you know.

Warm-up #11:

Write down something you know about yourself.
 Write down something you don't know about yourself.
 Write down something pretty much everyone who knows you knows about you. Write down something hardly anyone who knows you knows about you.

Warm-up #12:

Think of someone you think of as a really good friend. What makes this person a good friend?

Activity: Keep the Question Going

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/activity-keep-question-going



Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization

info@plato-philosophy.org

Posted by: This lesson plan, created by David Shapiro, is part of a series of lesson plans in Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Designed for: Kindergarten, Lower School, Middle School

Topics Covered: Logic and reasoning; questioning; epistemology

Estimated Time Necessary: 30 minutes to an hour, depending on ages of the students
[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

- **To start to learn how to ask good questions -**
 - **To listen and respond to what other students say -**
 - **To consider the importance of questioning in philosophy -**
-

Tool Text

This game involves students generating questions collaboratively. The exercise runs easily for about ten minutes and can go for a half hour or more with discussion. It is often a good exercise to use early in the year, as it helps students listen to each other and gets them thinking about what makes a question a good one.

The activity begins as a simple 'energizer' type exercise meant to get students listening to

each other while keeping in mind the importance of questions in philosophical inquiry. It requires students to listen to each other and respond in a manner that constructs a coherent sentence – in this case a question.

- Make sure that students are arranged in such a way that they can more or less all see each other. A circle is ideal but, even if students are sitting in rows, it's helpful if they can all turn so that they can keep an eye on their classmates as the exercise proceeds.
- The first student offers a word that will serve as the start of a question, and each student around the room then offers a word to continue the formation of a question. The goal of the exercise is for students to see how long they can keep a question going, one word after another, each word added by a subsequent student.
- You can stipulate certain kinds of questions for each round: "factual questions," "historical questions," "philosophical questions," "scientific questions," or any categories agreed beforehand with students.
- When a student thinks that the question has ended, he or she claps his or her hands, indicating that a new question is to begin. So, for instance, suppose the first student begins with the word, *How*, the next says *does*, the next *life*, the next *begin*. At this point, that last student might clap hands to indicate the question is finished. Or, if not, the following student could clap his or her hands to indicate the question is finished, or can choose to keep the question going, perhaps by adding the word *on*, to which a subsequent student might say *Earth*, and then clap.
- One guideline to communicate to students is that it's not permitted to just add the word *and* to the end of what the previous student has said. Students should be discouraged from creating never-ending chains such as 'How did life begin on Earth and Mars and Pluto and ...?'
- It's also important to emphasize that students should listen to each other and refrain from shouting out suggestions to their fellow students.

For kindergarten students, this activity can work well in smaller groups. Over time, a kindergarten class of 20 or 25 students will be able to formulate questions as a bigger group. With first or second grade students, after a few rounds of the activity, as the students become more adept at formulating clear questions, you might suggest that the next round aim at formulating some interesting and provocative questions that the class might like to explore together. At this point, the exercise becomes less about the length of the question than the quality of it.

At the conclusion of the activity, lead a reflective discussion about what has just happened. Ask the students what questions the game raises for them, and have them choose which of their questions to discuss.

You might ask the students what they think makes a given question more interesting or more 'philosophical' than another question. You might also say, for example: "Can we make any of these questions better by adding words, taking them away or changing

them?"

This lesson plan, created by David Shapiro, is part of a series of lesson plans in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools*, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/big-questions-answer



Big Questions and How We Answer Them

Topics: Logic and reasoning; questioning; epistemology

Time: 45 minutes to an hour

Objectives

- Learning how to articulate reasons for believing something to be true
- Learning how to evaluate whether reasons given for a belief are good ones

Description

This activity begins by grouping students into groups of three or four. Each student is handed a blank index card and each group is handed an index card on which is written one of the following questions:

- Do you have to see, hear, or touch something in order to believe it exists?
- Are you responsible for the environment?
- Are mistakes good or bad?
- Should you always agree with your friends?
- What is more important, to be happy or to do the right thing?
- Are numbers real?
- Is life fair?

Each group is given a different question.

Next, the students are asked to answer the question given to their group by writing their individual answers on their blank index cards, without talking to anyone else. At this point they do not need to give reasons for their answers.

Then, tell the students to listen to all of the instructions before they do anything.

- If you think that the answer you wrote down is completely true, put your head down on the desk.
- If you think that your answer is mostly true, stay seated.
- If you think that your answer is only slightly true, raise your hand.
- If you no longer think that your answer is true, stand up.*

After they've done this, ask the students who are standing why they decided that their answers were no longer true. Facilitate a brief discussion about this.

Then ask all the students to sit back down with their groups. Give each group another blank index card. Each student will then share with his or her group their answers to the question the group was given, and the group should decide on an answer with which they all agree. Then they should choose one student to be the group's scribe, and that student will write the group's answer on the group's index card, along with 2-3 reasons the group comes up with to support their answer.

The next part of the activity works best if the students can come together in one circle, with each group sitting together.

Start by asking one of the groups to read their question and answer, along with the reasons for their answer.

Then instruct the other students:

- If you are completely convinced by the group's reasoning, put your head down.
- If they are mostly convinced by the group's reasoning, stay seated and do nothing.
- If they are only slightly convinced by the group's reasoning, raise your hand.
- If they are not at all convinced by the group's reasoning, stand up.

Ask the students who are not at all convinced why this is so. Then facilitate a brief discussion with the whole group about the question and the reasons for answering it in various ways.

Repeat this process with each group, spending time having a discussion about each of the questions. If there's time and the students are engaged in these discussions, this can take two philosophy sessions.

Time permitting, it's nice to end with a reflection question to which the students can respond in writing, in philosophy journals or just on paper, such as: Did your view or your reasons change as you discussed the question with your group and then the whole class? Why or why not?

Conclusion

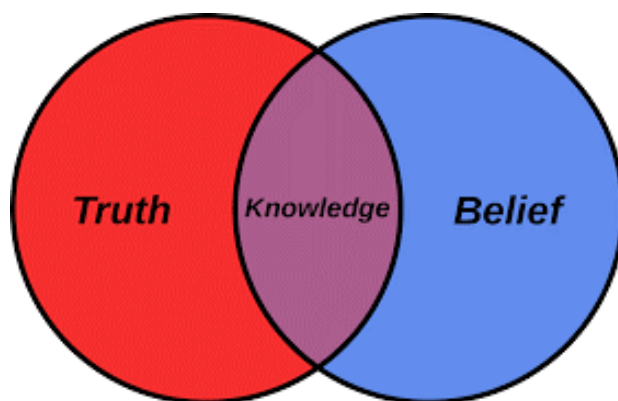
Students often struggle to come up with good reasons for their views, and working with a group to explain to the class why they think a given answer is a good one helps them think more deeply about what they believe and why. The whole class discussions about

each question are deepened by having the group of students who have already thought about the question lead off the conversation. This activity is reliably engaging for students and allows every student to be involved.

* This part of the activity is based on an activity created by Matthew Lipman and Ann Gazzard for *Getting Our Thoughts Together: Instructional Manual to Accompany Elfie*, 2003.

Center for Philosophy for Children

depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/beliefs-and-evidence



Beliefs and Evidence

Topics: Beliefs, evidence, reasoning, justification

Grade level: 6-8

Time: 50 minutes

Objectives: To raise questions about how we justify our beliefs and how to sort good evidence from bad evidence.

Materials needed: Paper and pen/pencil

Description: Begin by having a loose discussion about the difference between “opinion” and “knowledge.” This should bring up claims about reasons, evidence, and proof. After a brief discussion about this difference, have the students write down three things they know. For each statement, have the students write down their best reason for thinking its true. Encourage their three beliefs to be pretty different from one another. Have the students put a star next to the belief they are most confident about. Have the students turn and talk to a neighbor about what they wrote and why.

Bring the class back to a general discussion and ask for a few volunteers to write their starred beliefs on the board. Ask the class about what are some good reasons for thinking these beliefs are true. As examples of each come up, write on the board these categories of evidence: memory, testimony, experience, logical. (“Logical” is a flawed word for what philosophers usually call *a priori* justification. Since that can be a difficult concept, “logical” seems to be an imperfect, but workable stand-in.) Ask the students which of these kinds of evidence is most trustworthy and why. Ask which is least trustworthy and why.

On the board, write down three false beliefs. For example, “There is a purple elephant in the room;” “The moon is made out of cheese;” or “[Teacher name] is a robot.”

For each statement, ask the students how they know the claim isn’t true. This should connect up with the different kinds of evidence mentioned earlier. Ask the students if they know that these aren’t true, or if just have an opinion that they aren’t true.

Finally, ask the students to return to their starred belief and to explain why they think they know it to be true, as opposed to just having an opinion that it’s true. After a few minutes, ask for volunteers to share their reasoning.

If you have any extra time, ask the students, as a class, to try to come up with the belief that they are most sure of. Put contenders on the board and have the class vote. End with a discussion about why that belief earns so much confidence.

This lesson plan was contributed by Dustyn Addington.



Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for KS1, KS2 and KS3

Baby Me

*When you look at baby photos, what do you see?
I see a stranger, and not baby me.*

Philosophical Potential	Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of Memory, Self, Mind and Brain Epistemology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge, Belief, Trust, Reliability, Memory and Reality Metaphysics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Identity, Memory and Reality, True and False Memories
Session Objective(s)	Identify your own community and enquiry-focussed objectives e.g. Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should look and listen to the person speaking Some children should build on what the person has said Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should recognise distinctions made by others Some children should make distinctions of their own
Facilitation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's your earliest memory? Do you remember being a baby? What is a memory? Where do memories come from? Why do you think we have memories? Can you have a false memory? Can you have a true memory? How come we remember some things and not others? In what ways can memories be important to us? Why are memories important? How important are they? Can you / should you trust your memories? Can you / should you trust other people's memories? How do you know you were a baby? Can you know something about yourself if you don't remember it?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle of chairs, paper, pens, Pom-pom, flash cards Photographs of facilitator as a baby

1. PREPARATION		10 minutes
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Ethos: If necessary, briefly establish or reiterate your class expectations. E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We decide what we really think, the teachers can't tell us the answers ○ We're always asking questions ○ We share what we really think ○ We care what other people think too ○ We give reasons for our opinions ○ We're not scared to disagree ○ We often change our mind ○ We speak one at a time ○ We encourage speakers by listening and looking at them 	
Warm Up	Task: 'What's your earliest memory, tell a partner all about it.'	
2. STIMULUS		15 minutes
Presentation of Stimulus	<p>Present a photo of yourself as a baby and describe a story about their memory of that picture.</p> <p><i>'I don't remember being that little, I don't remember that old bath, or that house or what my mum was like when she was that young. I don't know what I liked to eat or what I had done for my birthday. I don't remember anything about being one at all.'</i></p>	
Thinking Time	A minute in silence to reflect on the stimulus.	
Sharing Time	Paired discussion about their thoughts during thinking time.	
3. QUESTIONS		10 minutes
Composing Questions	In threes, develop just one question.	
Sharing Questions	<p>Each group shares their question.</p> <p>Questions written up on white board by co-facilitator, with names of group members</p>	
Sharpening Questions	Identify themes, duplication and ambiguity. Redraft if necessary.	
Selecting Questions	<p>Votes with justifications. "I vote X because ..."</p> <p>Co facilitators model giving a justification first</p>	
4. DIALOGUE		25 minutes
First Thoughts	The participants who proposed the question share what they think.	
Collecting Ideas	Facilitated discussion gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth.	

Digging Deeper	<p>Paired break-out discussion on particularly challenging aspects of emerging ideas(s)</p> <p>Possible sub questions that may be useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember being a baby? • What is a memory? • Where do memories come from? • Why do you think we have memories? • Can you have a false memory? • Can you have a true memory? • How come we remember some things and not others? • In what ways can memories be important to us? • Why are memories important? • How important are they? • Can you / should you trust your memories? • Can you / should you trust other people's memories? • How do you know you were a baby? • Can you know something about yourself if you don't remember it? 	
Final Push	Return to the original question or to an appropriate reformulation of the original question, pressing for revised answer(s).	
Last thoughts	<p>As a final round, a chance to hear from everyone on their final thoughts from the discussion. Depending on time, go around the circle once, hearing from everyone. Co-facilitators model first.</p> <p>Alternatively, if pressed for time, hear from a few volunteers.</p>	
5. REFLECTION		15 minutes
Reflection on the Enquiry	Ask: 'What new questions do we need to ask now?'	
Reflection on the Community	Ask: 'What could we do to make our enquiry work better next time?'	

Animal Minds: puzzling over Puppies and Parrots

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/animal-minds-puzzling-puppies-parrots



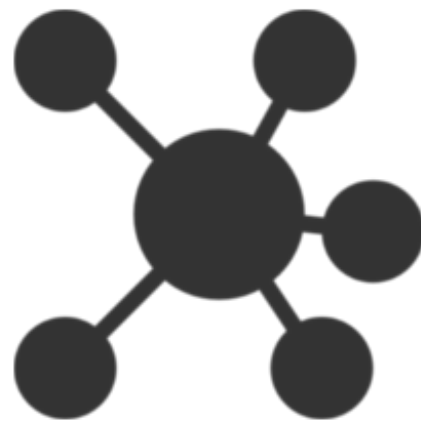
Posted by: Wendy C. Turgeon - St. Joseph's

College

Designed for: College/University, High School, Middle School

Topics Covered: Mind, animals, knowledge

Estimated Time Necessary: two hours to a week
[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

- **Critical reading** - To read an article and/or watch a video to ascertain what claims are being made.
- **Evaluate** - Evaluate the strength of the claims made.
- **Reflect** - Reflect on the concept of mind as used for animals and humans.

Tool Text

For much of modern science, since the Enlightenment, animals were generally thought to be automatons: materialist robots programmed to behave in certain ways. Rene Descartes drew a sharp distinction between thinking beings, humans, and everything else, matter. 20th Century behaviorism continued to think of animals in this way but added humans to the mix.

“Mind” was a myth, a “ghost in the machine”, and did not really exist. All that counted was behavior and we did not think to complicate science by positing a “mind” behind the actions.



But in recent decades the question of the animal mind has come to the fore again. The question of an animal mind is a difficult one:

1. You want to avoid anthropomorphizing species by claiming similarities to our experiences simply on the basis that they look similar.
2. You want also to avoid denying similarities just because they are, well, animals and not humans.

Connected to this are a set of wonderful questions about consciousness, the marks of mind, intentionality, self-awareness, and the basic challenge for us of understanding a being which is not completely analogous to a human and may be quite alien. Think: snakes, mosquitos, fish.

This lesson will introduce students to a reading from National Geographic online on animal minds and a TED video on animal awareness by Franz DeWaal. Use these two sources to get students discussing the criteria for a mind, the scientific process of testing hypotheses, and the important questions about how we can know.

A. Read this short [online article from National Geographic](#) which details some experiments to prove that animals have minds. As you are reading it, note the criteria or signs used to point to a “mind.” Discuss your answers to the questions below.

B. Watch the Franz DeWaal video (see below) about animals showing compassion and a sense of justice. Discuss the questions below.

C. What *difference* would it make if animals had minds? Create a class chart on the differences it would make, or not make.

Have Your Class Watch This Video



<https://youtu.be/GcJxRqTs5nk>

Possible Discussion Questions

1. With regard to the National Geographic article: what skills or behaviors have generally been used to claim the presence of mind and thought?
2. Evaluate the claims made by Irene Pepperberg about her parrot. Do you agree with her claims or could you offer an alternative explanation?
3. What evidence is offered for animal creativity? Which appears most persuasive to you?
4. What is the significance of being able to discern that a picture of a frisbee can designate both itself and an actual frisbee?
5. What makes deception a particularly complex thought process? Offer your own example.
6. After watching the Franz DeWaal video of his work with animals and moral judgement and feeling, in what ways does this suggest animals have minds?
7. As a group, offer your own definition of the criteria for something to be considered a mind. What would this include or exclude?

Resources for Further Study

Center for Philosophy for Children

depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/epistemic-adventure-are-you-sure-that-you-know

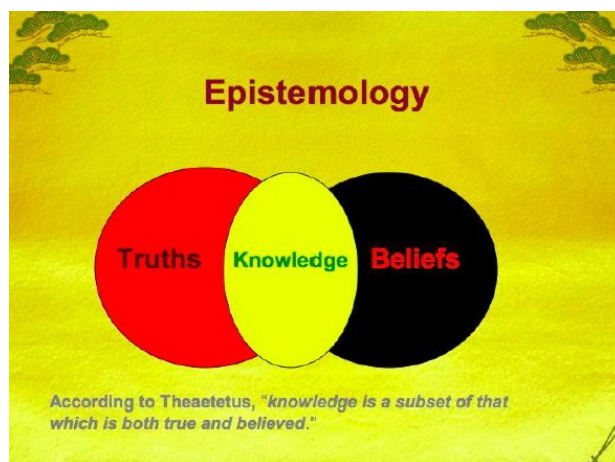
Topic: knowledge, doubt, certainty, evidence

Grade level: High School

Time: 50-60 minutes

Objectives:

To raise questions about the nature of knowledge and foster a discussion around the nature and impact of certainty and doubt in both historical and everyday contexts.



Materials needed:

- Epistemic scavenger hunt document (at least 2 per group, one for before the discussion and the other for after)
- Orienting quotes
- Visual prompts

Description:

1. Before presenting participants with one or more of the prompts outlined above, have them gather into pairs or small groups to think about, discuss, and fill out a copy of the “epistemic scavenger hunt” document. Allot 5-10 minutes for this task and ask participants not to edit their documents once this period has ended.
2. Bring the group back together and distribute one or more visual prompts and orienting quotes. Give participants a few minutes for them to think about the prompts and quotes in silence before opening up space for group discussion. Encourage them to write down their thoughts during this silent period. You can also have participants turn and talk with a partner for a few minutes and then share out aspects of their conversation. Alternatively, you could collect their scavenger hunt documents and use their answers as a bridge into the conversation. Allot about 25 minutes for this part of the activity.
3. As the conversation closes, ask participants to independently complete the epistemic scavenger hunt on a new unmarked sheet. Allot 5-10 minutes for this.
4. Once they have filled out a new epistemic scavenger hunt, spend the last 10-15 minutes engaging in a discussion around how their answers have changed since the first time they did the scavenger hunt. If their answers did change, inquire into their thought processes. If their answers did not change, ask them to consider what evidence might sway their beliefs.

The activity might raise some of the following questions:

- Do we only make decisions once we are certain of something?
- What is the nature of the balance between action and contemplation?
- Is it wise to contemplate at the expense of action? How might contextual differences impact this?
- What are potential impacts of “fools and fanatics” taking quick action while other “wiser people” are still contemplating which decision to make?

Materials

Epistemic Scavenger Hunt

Write down at least 1 thing that fits into each category as well as a short explanation of the evidence that justified this decision.

- What is something that you know for certain? How do you know about it?
- What is something you are sure no one could never know? Why can't we know about it?
- What is something that you were certain about in the past that you now have doubts about? Why are you no longer certain?
- What historical knowledge is no longer considered knowledge? Why was this once believed and why is it no longer accepted?

Orienting Quotes

Quote 1:

“The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are so sure of themselves while wiser people so full of doubts.” – Bertrand Russell

This quote is intended to provoke a discussion around the roles of doubt and certainty that might stimulate thinking around what the impact of brash certainty is within the problems we face as a society. This quote also brings forth a Socratic view of wisdom, defined by awareness of one's own ignorance, potentially facilitating dialogue around the balance between wondering, humility and doubt, and decisive action in the world

Quote 2:

“Most of the greatest evils that man has inflicted upon man have come through people feeling quite certain about something which, in fact, was false.” – Bertrand Russell

This quote invites an historical look at knowledge production and contemplation of the ills that have been produced (or reproduced) through knowledge claims that were later revised or discarded completely (e.g. craniometry, polygenism, drapetomania, miscegenation, racial typologies, etc.).

Visual Prompts

Visual 1:

This visual, from a popular and endearing comic strip, addresses a common theme in popular culture around the relationship of knowledge, doubt, certainty, and decision making. A core theme harkens back to Socratic views of wisdom where one becomes increasingly aware of what they do not know and a kind of “analysis paralysis” that might lead one to consider the possibility that “ignorance is bliss.”

Visual 2:

This visual brings recent psychological findings to bear on the issues introduced above. Consider introducing student to this image with use of the following description.

Dunning and Kruger’s overarching hypotheses is “that people, at all performance levels, are equally poor at estimating their relative performance.”

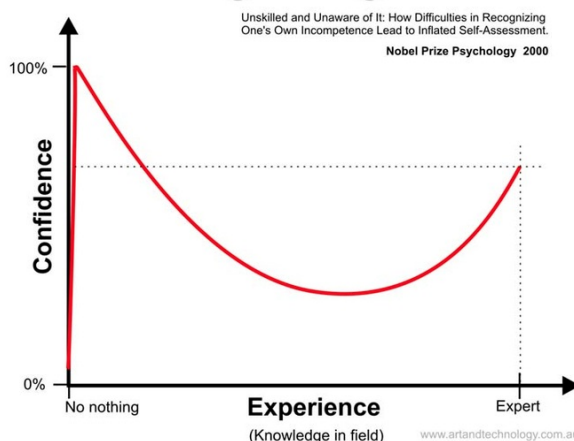
The Dunning-Kruger effect is a cognitive bias wherein people of low ability suffer from illusory superiority, mistakenly assessing their cognitive ability as greater than it is. This illusory superiority derives from the inability of low-ability persons to recognize their own ineptitude. Without this metacognitive self-awareness, low-ability people cannot objectively evaluate their actual competence or incompetence.

This cognitive bias applies inversely to those of expert experience, thus persons of high ability tend to underestimate their relative competence and mistakenly presume that tasks that are easy for them to perform are also easy for other people to perform. As Dunning and Kruger articulate: “the miscalibration of the incompetent stems from an error about the self, whereas the miscalibration of the highly competent stems from an error about others.”

Contributed by Jordan Sherry-Wagner



Dunning-Kruger Effect



Activity: What's Your Reason?

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/activity-whats-reason



Posted by: This lesson plan, created by David Shapiro, is part of a series of lesson plans in Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Designed for: Kindergarten, Lower School, Middle School

Topics Covered: Logic and reasoning; epistemology

Estimated Time Necessary: 40 minutes to an hour, depending on ages of the students
[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

- **To learn how to articulate the reasons students have for their views -**
 - **To evaluate what constitutes good reasons for believing something -**
-

Tool Text

This game involves students writing down claims supported by reasons and then guessing each others' claims after listening only to the reasons.

Hand out four note cards (or note-card sized pieces of paper) to each student. Ask them to write down, on each of the four cards, one claim they believe in, for a total of four. At least one of these should be a normative claim (involving something people should or should not do), and at least one of them should be a false claim. Asking students to include a claim that's false reinforces the idea that we also have reasons for believing things that are not true.

Once they've written down the claims, give them 10-15 minutes to write down, on the other side of the paper, three reasons they have for believing the claims to be

true — or false as the case may be. (Writing down reasons for the false claim can be quite challenging for some students, who say things like, “How can I have reasons for it if it’s not true? This can lead to some interesting discussions about how we can — or if we can — have knowledge that something is false.) They can appeal to whatever outside sources of information they want to during this time.

Now divide the students into two teams.

After the teams have formed, collect their index cards, making sure to keep the cards from both teams separate.

The exercise now proceeds sort of like a game of charades. The goal is for students to be able to guess what the claim is from the reason(s) cited for believing it.

Starting with Team One, pick the first student in line or ask the entire team to collaborate. Start by reading one of the three reasons from one of the cards written by the other team.

If the team or student can guess the claim from the first reason, that team gets 3 points. From the first and second reasons, 2 points, from all three reasons, 1 point.

Sometimes disagreements arise about whether a reason offered for a claim is a good one. This is great – do encourage discussion about this!

This lesson plan, created by David Shapiro, is part of a series of lesson plans in *Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools*, by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/what-do-you-know



What Do You Know?

Topic: Beliefs, knowledge, evidence, reality

Grade level: Middle School

Time: 50 minutes

Objectives: To raise questions about the nature of belief vs. knowledge, evidence, errors, and to provide some doubt for beliefs strongly held.

Materials needed: Piece of paper and writing utensil

Description:

Note: this session operates as a good follow-up to a lesson plan on beliefs and evidence more generally. Ask the students for some things that they know. Put a few examples on the board.

Tell the students the following story. It's important that, for most of the story, the narrative seems to be about how Calvin will do on the test, not about whether he is dreaming or not.

“It’s evening time and Calvin is studying for his big test tomorrow. He’s pretty anxious, knowing that he if he doesn’t do well he’s going to be in big trouble. When he brought home his last test grade, his parents were really unhappy with him and told him he’d be grounded if he didn’t improve his score. Plus, he probably wouldn’t do very well in the class if he didn’t start making better grades. So he studied and studied until he fell asleep. The next day, he got up and went to school, worrying over his test the whole time. He sits down in his desk and thinks about all the things he knows, half-knows, and only sort-of knows. His teacher starts passing out the test and Calvin receives his copy. He looks it over and, what luck! He knows the answers to each question. He fills out quickly, turns it in, and his teacher looks over his responses and gives him a little nod of congratulations. Calvin has a great day, feeling proud of himself. School finally ends and he goes home. Opening his front door, he yells to his parents, “I did it! I passed the test!” He father comes in the living room, smiling, and holds out his hand for a high five. As their hands connect, though, Calvin wakes up. He’s in his bed. It’s still the night before. He hasn’t gone to school yet. He hasn’t taken his test.”

The students should be surprised, given this big turn of events. Ask them what did Calvin think he knew that he actually didn’t know. Follow up by asking whether or not it’s possible that we are dreaming right now, just like Calvin.

Have the students turn and talk to the person next to them about the differences between dreams and waking life.


Come back as a group and ask for volunteers to share their ways of telling dreams from waking life. Allow the students to bounce ideas off of each other. Start a list on the board of possible ways to detect when you are dreaming. Items will likely include pinching yourself, the difficulty of using technology, the difficulty of performing physical acts, general weirdness concerning space and time, and the illogical narratives of dreams.

After you have a good list, go through each detection method one-by-one asking for possible objections, crossing them off as they become untenable. Likely, you will cross out each item on the list. Ask the students if this means that we cannot be sure we are not dreaming. Return to the list of beliefs put on the board at the beginning of class. Going through each item, ask the students if we know the belief in question, allowing them to explain why. Ask the students whether this lack of a conclusive test means we cannot know anything, since, at any given time, we could be dreaming.

End with the following quote by Zhuangzi: “Once upon a time, I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was myself. Soon I awoke, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man.”

This lesson plan was contributed by Dustyn Addington.

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/platos-allegory-of-the-cave



University of Washington

[Home](#) / The Allegory of the Cave (in Plato's Republic)



Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*

What is an allegory?

Explain to the students that an allegory is a kind of story in which what happens is being compared to something else that is similar and unstated.

Ask: What do you think the Allegory of the Cave is being compared with?

Break students up into small groups for a discussion of the following questions. (Each group should choose a reporter to write down the group's responses and report back to class when class comes back together.)

Small Group Discussion Questions

Would you want to be released from the cave? Why or why not?

What is like the cave in our world?

How is the way you understand the world, your ideas and beliefs, shaped by the actions of others?

Who has the power to shape your ideas and beliefs? In what ways is this good and in what ways is it not so good?

Are there things you know to be true? What are they, and how do you know them?

You can start the whole group discussion with the reports from small groups

Ask:

What is Plato trying to tell us in the allegory?

How can we know things about the world? Through perception? Through reason?

The Butterfly Dream

By: Peter Worley

The Philosophy

There is a view in philosophy known as epistemological scepticism in which it is held that we cannot know anything for certain. There are a number of arguments for why this is the case that have issued from sceptical voices over the thousands of years this has been debated. One of these arguments is known as the 'dreaming argument' and was most famously formulated by Rene Descartes in his Meditations. The idea is that if I believe that my dreams are real while I am experiencing them then how can I tell that what I am now experiencing is really real and not just a dream? This is an idea that some children think of themselves, independently of doing philosophy, and so that makes the question an interesting and relevant one for children to do in a philosophy session. However, one needs to be very careful about how it is approached and for this reason I have put this session together to make the introduction of this idea gentle and unthreatening. I have used, not Descartes, but instead an ancient Chinese Toaist philosopher called Chuang Tzu for my example of the dreaming argument. Strictly speaking it is not a formal argument but it presents the idea clearly and in an appropriate way. I continue to keep this story, and the ensuing discussion, in the third person, i.e. about Chuang Tzu rather than about the children so as to maintain an unthreatening atmosphere. So, when I anchor them back to the Task Question I always say: "so how can Chuang Tzu know which is dreaming: him or the butterfly?" They of course may make the connection to themselves, and that's fine, but I do not pursue the discussion framed in this way.

The Stimulus

Chuang Tzu was a philosopher in ancient China, who, one night went to sleep and dreamed that he was a butterfly. He dreamt that he was flying around from flower to flower and while he was dreaming he felt free, blown about by the breeze hither and thither. He was quite sure that he was a butterfly. But when he awoke he realised that he had just been dreaming, and that he was really Chuang Tzu dreaming he was a butterfly. But then Chuang Tzu asked himself the following question: "was I Chuang Tzu dreaming I was a butterfly or am I now really a butterfly dreaming that I am Chuang Tzu?"

Follow the story with some Comprehension Time: get the children to explain the story and the question to each other. You could draw a diagram to help them understand. Then set the question as a Task Question.

In answer to the second Task Question Descartes thought that there was only one thing of this sort: that we exist. Even if we are wrong about everything else we cannot be wrong about the fact that we exist. He argued for this with the most famous argument in history: cogito ergo sum ('I think therefore I am'). I find that children sometimes argue similarly: One Year 5 girl said that we cannot be wrong about the fact that we exist; some other children said to her that we may be dead and now in the afterlife, to which she replied: "yes, but if we are then we still exist in the afterlife." A Year 6 boy in another class said: "If we can think, we are definitely conscious." Fittingly Cartesian (this is the adjective version of Descartes' name).

Tasks Questions:

- Was he Chuang Tzu dreaming he was a butterfly or is he now really a butterfly dreaming that he is Chuang Tzu?
- Is there something that we can know 100% for certain?

Nested Questions:

- How would he be able to tell?
- How do we know that we know something?

Bikes and Certainty

By Steve Hoggins

Key ideas: Knowledge, Certainty, Proof

Resources

- A4 white board or similar surface to draw on

Starter

- On a white board draw and upside down 'V' (hidden from the children's eyes to add suspense) then reveal it. See Fig 1

Questions

- What is it?
- Why is it [a mountain]?
- Who thinks it is something else?
- Ask children for a number of ideas and write them down or keep them in your head.

Main activity

- Pick up the white board and (hiding it from their prying eyes) add a couple of lines to the picture. See fig 2.

Questions

- What is it?
- Is it a (insert one of their ideas from the previous picture like 'mountain')?
- Are you sure?
- 'Show me if it's definitely a mountain – thumbs up.
- Definitely not a mountain – thumbs down. Or,
- Might be a mountain – half-way, uncertain thumb.'
- Children often say that it is a mountain because "it's got a pointy bit"
- Make sure you follow up with, questions like 'So is it definitely a mountain?'

Continue to add bits to the picture (see pics attached) and reveal to the class, asking the questions above.

- Can it be a bike if it doesn't have wheels?
- If it looks like a bike does that mean it is?
- Can it be 2 different things?

Extension activity/game:

Teacher or children to draw a simple line or shape on the whiteboard. Then ask who can make it into something by adding a line or continuing the drawing in some way e.g. I draw a line on the board and ask 'who can finish the picture?' A child comes up and draws another line across it 'It's the letter 't'' For example

Fig 1.



Fig 2.

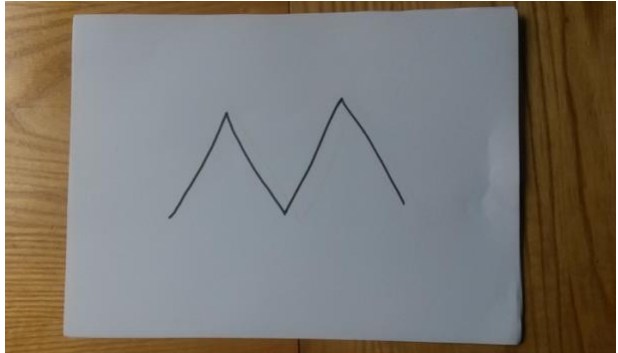
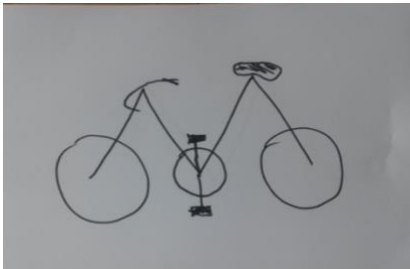
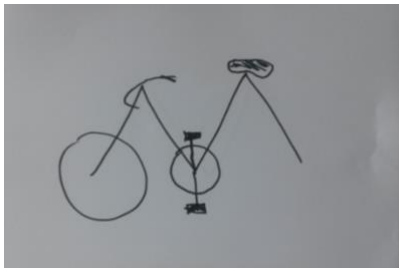
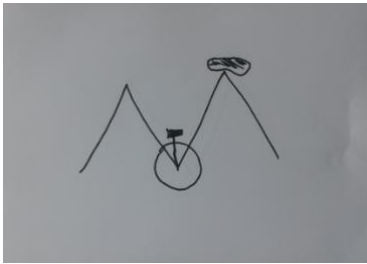


Fig 3.



Epistemology Videos

The following descriptions, discussion questions, and activities were created and written by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1)

Publisher: Ted Ed

Lesson by: Alex Gendler (link to lesson at the end of the video clip)

Director: John R. Dilworth

Animator: Pilar Newton

Sound Designer: William Hohausen

Script Editor: Addison Anderson

Narrator: Addison Anderson

Video Title: Plato's Allegory of the Cave - Alex Gendler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RWOpQXTltA&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=28>

Discussion questions:

Why was the man blinded when he was free? Have you ever been confused when you learned you have had the wrong perception about something? Have you ever had an epiphany or an a-ha moment? Once you know something, can you un-know it? How Does the allegory of the cave relate to culture shock?

Note *It is suggested to watch the video, explain further, and have a discussion before implementing the lesson in this section by the University of Washington. You may use the lesson by Alex Gendler as well if you choose*

2)

Video Creators: BBC Radio 4

Scripted by Nigel Warburton

Narrated by Aidan Turner

Video Title: Karl Popper's Falsification

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfsGqBsWv4&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&t=0s&index=10>

Questions: Why is it important to mention counter arguments persuasive writing? How does giving evidence lead us closer to knowledge? How does Karl Popper's thought process relate to the scientific method? What is stronger: finding evidence that backs up your claim, or not being

able to prove yourself wrong? If you cannot find evidence to disprove your theory, does that automatically mean you are right? Does something need to be measurable to be tested? Is everything measurable? What can't we measure? How can we discover if something is knowledge if it contains unmeasurable components? Does society cloud our judgements?

3)

Video Creators: BBC Radio 4 & Open University

Narrated by Stephen Fry

Scripted by Nigel Warburton

Animation by Cognitive

Video Title: Know Thyself

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zccoaL0stbM&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=18>

Questions: What did Plato mean by “I know nothing?” Do you sometimes feel like the more you learn the more you realize how little you know? How do we know ourselves? How do we know anything? Do we have to know ourselves before we learn anything else? How does introspection (looking at ourselves and understanding ourselves) have to do with understanding others? What does it have to do with empathy? How does understanding yourself help you understand the world and your experiences? Bruce Hood as well as other philosophical schools of thought like Buddhism, believe that there is no “I.” Why might someone (or a brain) think that? What do you think?

For more videos on epistemology and other philosophy topics, visit Grace Lockrobin's youtube channel “Thinking Space: Stimuli for Philosophical Enquiry” at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL95970EFE70300C93>

For more videos on epistemology specifically visit Joshua Rasmussen's Youtube channel “The Nature of Truth: Epistemology “ at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y5cftds7-8&list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWo1oasZmNPOzZaQdHw3T1e)

[v=8Y5cftds7-8&list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWo1oasZmNPOzZaQdHw3T1e](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y5cftds7-8&list=PLtKNX4SfKpzWo1oasZmNPOzZaQdHw3T1e)

Metaphysics

What is it: Metaphysics asks the question: What is there? It deals with concepts of reality, existence, numbers, time, and defining objects.

Big questions: How was the universe created? Do we exist? Do you have to experience something to know it exists? What is real? If two people witness or experience the same situation at the same time, is reality the same for both of them? What is the relationship between perception and reality? Do beliefs and thoughts alter our experiences? Do things exist if no one perceives them? Can unobservable things exist? Is there such thing as “I”? Is change possible? What are numbers? what is time? Is space real?

Stimuli

Children’s Literature

Discussion questions

Enquiry Plans

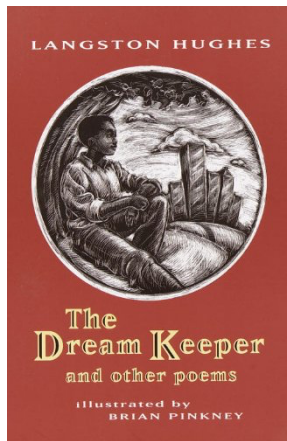
Lessons

Activities

Videos

Some of the lesson plans and activities are geared towards older students. Don’t let that scare you! Read over the lesson, they are flexible and easy to modify.

Summary and questions for, The Dream Keeper and other Poems, are contributed by Ruby Dawn Lyman



Author: Langston Hughes

Summary: In the poem "Dreams," Langston Hughes metaphorically writes about what happens if a dream dies or goes. The poem can open up philosophical discussions about the importance of dreams and the different types of dreams students have.

Questions:

What are dreams?

What are some different kinds of dreams?

Is it important to have dreams?

What are ways that people can hold fast to dreams?

How could a dream die?

How could a dream go?

What are your dreams?

How do you hold fast to them?

Have you ever had a dream die?

Here is the poem:

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

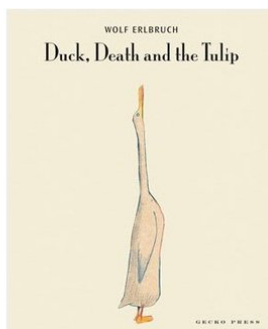
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.



Title: Duck, Death, and the Tulip

Author: Wolf Erlbruch

Plot Summary: Duck meets Death, who informs Duck that "I've been close by all your life." The two spend some time together, and they talk about death. In many of the frames, Death is carrying a tulip. At the end of the story, Duck dies and Death carries her to a river and lays her in

the water, placing the tulip on her body. "When she was lost to sight, he was almost a little moved. But that's life, thought Death."

Questions:

What does it mean to die?

Where do we go when we die?

What happens to our minds when we die? Our souls?

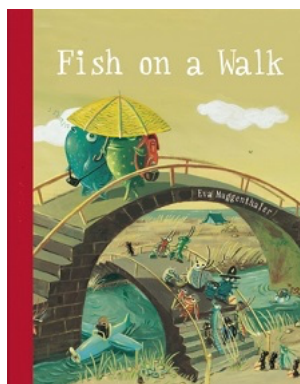
Why do you think people are so scared of death? Do you think that people are scared of death or of the pain of dying?

Would life be life without death?

Would you want to know when you are going to die? Why or why not?

Why do you think that Duck and Death became friends?

What was the significance of the tulip? What do you think it meant to Death? To Duck?



Author: Eva Muggenthaler

Plot Summary: This picture book illustrates each picture with only two adjectives — "Happy-Sad," "Jealous-Accepting," "Wild-Polite," etc. — and each picture contains a wealth of activities and behaviors that invite exploration of what these words mean.

Questions:

You can read the book to children two pages at a time (for example, the first two pages are "Scared – Brave." Ask the children to articulate

what images illustrate what feeling. Can some of the images represent both of the feelings listed?

Are the feelings supposed to be opposites? Are they?

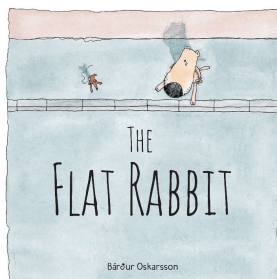
Can you be scared and brave at the same time? Alone and together, happy and sad, cranky and kind, usual and unusual, jealous and accepting, etc., at the same time?

What does it mean to be alone? Are we ever completely alone? Are we ever not alone?

What is the difference between usual and unusual?

Can you be the same and different at the same time?

Summary and questions for, The Flat Rabbit are contributed by Debi Talukdar



Author: Bardur Oskarsson

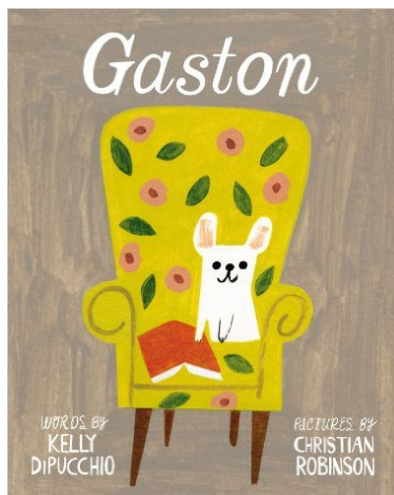
Plot Summary: A dog and a rat come across a rabbit. A flat rabbit, lying silently on the road. It all seems rather sad, and so they decide to move her. But where to? They can't just return her to her apartment, completely flattened. What would the neighbors think? The dog and the rat try to figure out what to do. Then the dog gets a brilliant idea. They decide to give the flat rabbit the send-off she

deserves. This is a story about encountering death and dealing with it. It touches on themes of sadness, uncertainty, and rituals surrounding someone's passing.

Questions:

Just because you find something does that make it yours?
 Is there such a thing as an appropriate way to deal with death?
 Are the dog and rat certain that the rabbit is dead? How do they understand 'death'?
 Why did dog and rat tie the rabbit to a kite if they weren't sure it would be fun for her?
 What does the dog mean when he asks "want a turn" at the end of the story?
 What authority or right do we have to decide what is best for a person that doesn't have the means or capabilities to express through language what they want? (E.g. someone in a coma)
 Why do the dog and rat think the rabbit needs to be moved?
 Why did they think the sky was a good place for her to be?
 Is a rational decision necessarily better than an emotional one?

Summary and questions for, Gaston are contributed by Alex Bruell



Author: Kelly DiPucchio

Plot Summary: A bulldog named Gaston is raised by a family of poodles. Although it does not come easily to him, Gaston learns to be prim and proper like the rest of the poodles. One day, Gaston and his family meet a family of bulldogs, and Gaston looks just like all of them except for Antoinette, a poodle, who looks just like Gaston's family. The parents of each family surmise that the puppies must have been accidentally switched, so Gaston goes to live with the bulldogs and Antoinette with the poodles. Both Gaston and Antoinette soon learn, however, that they don't feel at home with their "blood" families; Gaston is too gentle for the bulldogs, and Antoinette is

too rough for the poodles. The puppies switch back and are happy to be with their original families once more. The story ends with an epilogue where Gaston and Antoinette raise a family of their own, teaching their puppies to be "whatever they wanted to be."

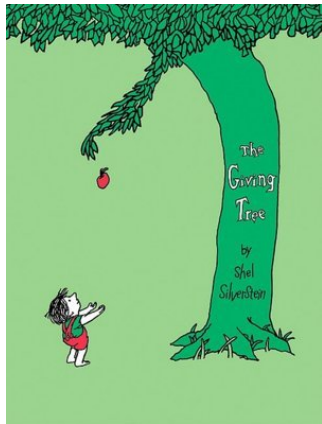
Questions:

What parts of us are important to who we are? What parts aren't as important?
 What kinds of things can we gain and learn from making friends with different kinds of people?
 Are we necessarily more like the people we look like?
 What kind of person do you want to be? What kind of person does your family or friends want you to be?

To foster these discussions and get the kids thinking about them, give each student a small index card before reading the story. Ask each student to write down the three most important words or phrases that describe who they are. They could be anything, from something about their bodies, their families, their interests, or whatever else they find important. You can also frame it as the three things they would say first about themselves when first meeting someone.

When everyone is done writing down their responses, ask the students to share what they wrote. Students will likely give a wide range of answers. Often these answers are different than the kinds of answers adults give. Whereas adults might respond with their jobs, their genders, and their ethnicities, children might list their pets or favorite school subjects as the things most important to defining them.

After the initial exercise and reading the story, the discussion should be able to use Gaston's journey to understanding himself as a way to explore how the students understand themselves and their identities.



Author: Shel Silverstein

Plot Summary: A young boy plays with a tree and both are happy. As he grows up, he asks the tree for a variety of things he needs; the tree gives to him generously and without any expectation of return. The boy becomes a man, and then an old man. In the end, all he needs is a place to sit, which the tree, now reduced to a mere stump by all it has given, is happy to provide.

Questions:

Why does the tree give so much to the boy?

Is the boy right to keep asking for me?

What should the tree give to the boy?

What should the boy ask of the tree?

What is love?

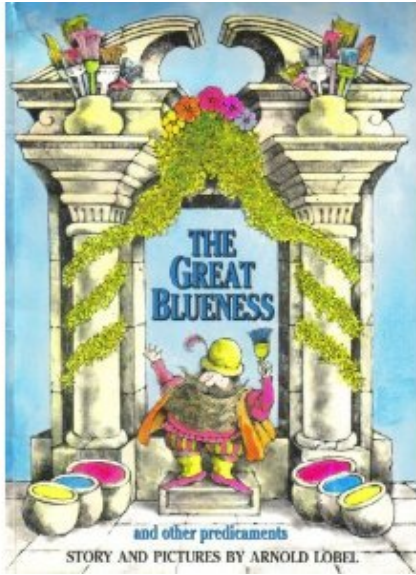
Can a tree love a boy?

Can a boy love a tree?

Why do we change as we grow?

What is happiness?

What does some one need to be happy?



Author: Arnold Lobel

Plot Summary: A wizard introduces color into the world, with varying effect on his neighbors.

Questions:

Do you think that there was a time when there was no color in the world?

How did color come to be?

Is color real?

Do we see the same colors? Does the color red look the same to everyone? How would we know?

If something is red, can it also be blue? Can it be pink? Maroon?

Is the color green made up of blue and yellow? If so, is all green is blue and yellow? Or is it something in

itself?

Are things different colors at night? Think about what colors the following things are during the day and at night:

	Daytime	Night
Grass		
The sky		
A tulip		
The rug in your room		
Your hair		
The blanket on your bed		
A tree		
Snow		

If you get out a flashlight and shine it on the grass, and it looks green, does that mean that the grass stayed green in the dark?

Would the world be different if it were made up of different colors? Draw a world with colors unlike the ones in our world.

Does color make you feel a certain way? How?



Author: Mies Van Hout

Plot Summary: The book explores feelings by illustrating one word - brave, surprised, proud, angry - with lively pastels of unusual-looking fish. Using colors and images, the books raises questions about the nature of particular feelings and emotions.

Questions:

What is an emotion? Are emotions and feelings the same?

Do the illustrations represent the feelings corresponding to them on the page?

Do our expressions always indicate our feelings?

Can we have more than one of these feelings simultaneously? If we're brave, can we also be shocked? If we're angry, can we also be delighted?

How do we know the fish are feeling the emotions represented?

Do the colors make us believe the fish are experiencing certain emotions? Do certain colors make us feel certain ways? Why is red used to express anger, blue to express sadness, etc.?

*** Note from the author (Rebecca-Jo Schwetz) of this guide: Hello, Red Fox is also listed in the aesthetic section because you can approach this book in two different ways. You can focus on color and beauty or the experience and reality of color. It might also be a nice segue from aesthetics to metaphysics.***



Author: Eric Carle

Plot Summary: A little frog is having a birthday party and he wants to invite his friends, Red Fox, Purple Butterfly, Orange Cat, Green Snake, Yellow Bird, Blue Fish, and White Dog with Black Spots. However, when the guests arrive, for Mama Frog, Red Fox looks green, Purple Butterfly looks yellow, and so on. What is going on? Little Frog helps Mama Frog to see the guests differently.

Questions:

Why do we perceive colors the way we do?

Why is red red? Green? Yellow? Black? White?

Who do you think is seeing the party guests correctly, Mama Frog or Little Frog? Why?

How can we be sure that the colors that we are seeing are the correct ones?

How can we be sure that anything we perceive is the way the world actually looks without us looking at it

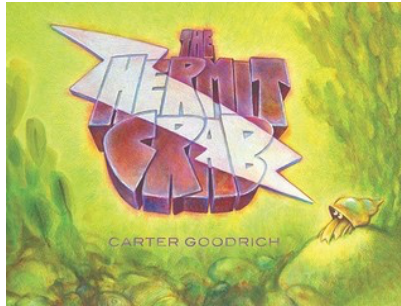
If something is red, can it also be blue? Can it be pink? Maroon?

What would it be like to change colors? Would you feel different each time you turned a new color?

Is color real?

Are there things that have no color? If yes, give an example.

Are there things that have many colors? If yes, give an example.



Author: Carter Goodrich

Plot Summary: A shy hermit crab discovers a beautiful new shell – actually the upper half a super hero toy – for his home. Wearing it, he inadvertently saves a flounder from beneath a lobster trap. The lobster and all the local fish sing the praises of the mysterious new hero, while he cowers quietly inside. When they finally fall asleep, he slips out, happy to return to his old home.

Questions:

Is the hermit crab a hero?

Is he responsible for saving the flounder, even if he didn't mean to?

Do we sometimes get credit for doing things that are really more lucky than intended?

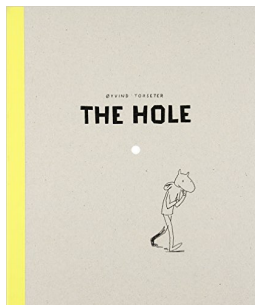
Should we?

Are we only responsible for the things that we control, or can we be responsible for other things as well?

Do heroes always want to be recognized for their brave acts, or do some heroes prefer to remain unknown? Why would they prefer that?

Can you be a hero without knowing that you are one? How?

The hermit crab was shy and quiet inside even though he appeared to be a strong brave hero to others. Do our outer appearances sometimes not match our inner feelings? Why/why not?



Author: Oyvind Torseter

Plot Summary: In this story, a man is moving into a new home, and he notices a hole in the apartment. The hole seems to move around, appearing in a wall, on the floor, in a door, etc. The man makes a phone call, saying, "I've found a hole . . . in my apartment . . . it keeps moving . . . take it with me . . . to you?" Attempting to capture the hole in a box, he heads out the door with the box and takes it to a lab for tests. The book has a die-cut

hole that runs through the entire book, and in every page the hole is part of the story. This story is one that can be effectively discussed through a "silent discussion" activity.

Questions: (Modified by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz)

Are holes part of the world?

Are holes physical objects? What are they made of?

If holes are made of nothing, how do we perceive them?

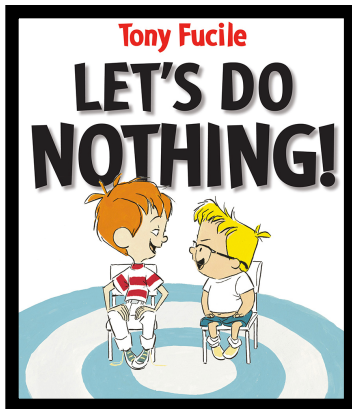
What makes something a hole? Does it have a shape?

Do holes really exist?

If you fill a hole, is it no longer a hole?

If you cut a hole out of something and then put it back together is it ever truly whole again?

Summary and questions for, Let's Do Nothing! are contributed by Gobe Hirata



Author: Tony Fucile

Summary: Frankie and Sal, who decide that they have "done it all," try to think of what's left to do. Then a brilliant idea emerges. Frankie exclaims, "Let's do nothing!" All throughout the day, Frankie and Sal try to do nothing, but actually, doing nothing appears to be a lot harder than they had imagined. Can they really ever do nothing?

Questions:

What do we mean when we say we are doing nothing?

Is there a difference between doing nothing and not doing something?

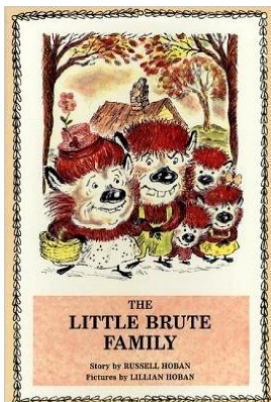
What would it mean to do nothing?

Is it impossible to do nothing if you're alive?

What exactly is nothing?

Can "nothing" exist?

Summary, questions and activity for, The Little Brute Family is contributed by Ruby Dawn Lyman



Author: Russel Hoban

Summary: The little brute family is an unhappy group. They eat stick and stone porridge and fight with each other every day. One day, the baby finds a good feeling while playing in a field of daisies. He decides to bring the good feeling home in his pocket. Once the family feels the good feeling, everything changes in how they interact with one another and in how they feel about life.

Questions

What is happiness?

What is joy?

What is sadness?

What is a good feeling?

Is a good feeling the same as happiness?

Is a bad feeling the same as sadness?

What makes you happy?

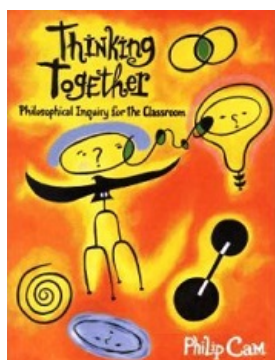
What makes you feel good?

What makes you sad?

What makes you feel bad?

Activity:

After the discussion, you can bring in a small gift for each child (like a little bag with tangerine, pencil, or Hershey's kisses). After passing out the gifts, ask, "How did you feel when you received the gift?" Then pose the question: What is something you can do to make someone else feel good? Students could write about these questions in their philosophy journals.



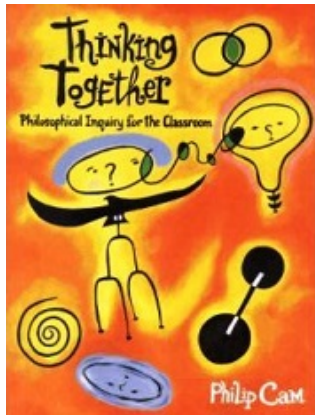
Author: Philip Cam

Anthology chapter: Double Trouble

Summary: Algernon, a robot servant, is replaced piece by piece over time by the robot company. Eventually, Algernon's owner goes to the company to complain about unnecessary repairs. While there, he discovers that the company has put together all the old parts of Algernon, who is now employed as a cleaning robot for the company. The cleaning robot recognizes his previous owner, and begs to be taken home. The company releases him, but when he arrives home to discover the "new" Algernon, they each claim to be the rightful Algernon, faithful robot servant.

Questions:

- Which robot is the "real" Algernon (the one at the house, or the one who returns from the company)? Why?
- Is there a particular part of the robot that is central to his identity (without it he wouldn't be himself)?
- Would you think differently about which one is the "real" Algernon if the changes were made all at once (e.g., in a single "repair" rather than spread out over time)? Why/why not?
- Can there be two real Algernons? If not, why not?
- Imagine something that can change in many ways while remaining the same, maybe a ball of play-dough that over time changes shape, thickness, texture, and perhaps even color. How do we know the difference between changes that happen to the ball, and changes that make the ball a different thing altogether?



Author: Philip Cam

Anthology chapter: On the Verandah

Plot Summary: A little girl notices that her mind can seem to be in a different place even while her body stays in the same place. This happens when she is deep in thought and when she is reading. She explores what it means for our minds to wander.

Questions:

When you are reading a really good book, do you sometimes feel like your mind is transported to the land of the story?

If your body remains in the same time and place, where are you really?

Is a mind the same thing as a brain, or are they different? What kinds of things are they?

If they are the same, how does one seem to come apart from the other one?

If they're different, how do they connect? How does the mind control the body?

Have you had experiences where your mind seems to go somewhere other than in your head?

When your mind wanders is it like when you dream at night? Is it something you can control?

If so, how? Can you make your mind wander?

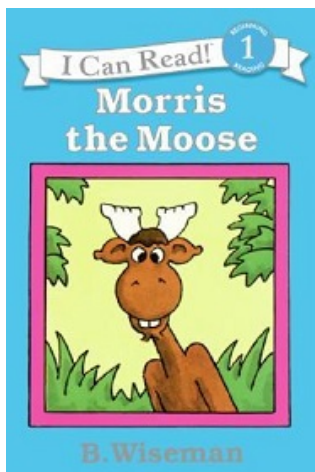
Why did the little girl call to ask her friend if she'd been in the same place?

Could there be a way for minds to meet somewhere without the two people seeing each other?

Can you imagine what it is like to be a bat? When you try to do that, do you imagine you in a bat's body, or do you actually think of yourself as a bat? Is there a difference?

Can we ever know someone else's mind? How?

What are the limits to being able to know another person's mind?



Author: B. Wiseman

Summary: Morris meets a cow and declares that the cow is a funny looking moose, insisting, despite the cow's protests, that the cow must be a moose because she "has four legs and things on her head." When Morris and the cow approach a deer for help, the deer insists that they are all deer, and when the three of them ask a horse to assist, the horse claims they are all horses. It is not until the animals see their joint reflections in the water that they conclude that they are not all the same.

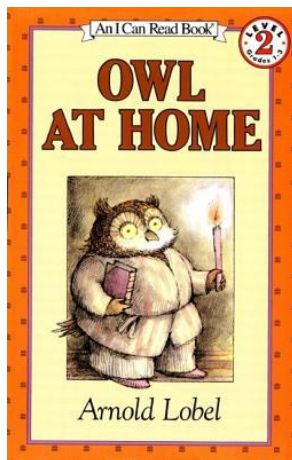
Questions:

What makes a moose a moose? A cow a cow?

Is there something essential that makes us what we are? If so, what is it?

Would we stop being what we are if we lost part of ourselves? What part?

Does what we are change over time? If so, how?



Author: Arnold Lobel

Plot Summary: Owl decides to make tear-water tea, and to do so he has to think of things that make him cry so that he can have tears for the tea. Once he fills the kettle with tears, he puts it on the stove to boil. "Owl felt happy as he filled his cup. 'It tastes a little bit salty,' he said, 'but tear-water tea is always good.'"

Questions:

What is sadness?

What can make you feel sad?

A song? A word? A sunset? A picture? An animal? The moon? Food? A trip somewhere? A story?

When can you cry?

When you're happy? When you're angry? When you love someone a lot? When you lose a game? When you break a toy? When you spill a drink? When you fight with your brother or sister? When you are proud of someone?

When can you laugh?

When you see a movie? When you read a book? When it snows? When you hear a funny story? When you're happy? When you're nervous? When you see your friends?

What can laugh or cry?

Birds? The sky? The ocean? Dogs? Worms? The wind? The sun? A baby?

Discussion:

What is the difference between happy and sad?

Can you be both happy and sad at once?

Can you be neither happy nor sad?

Can fish be happy or sad?

Can trees be happy or sad?

Can the sky be happy or sad?

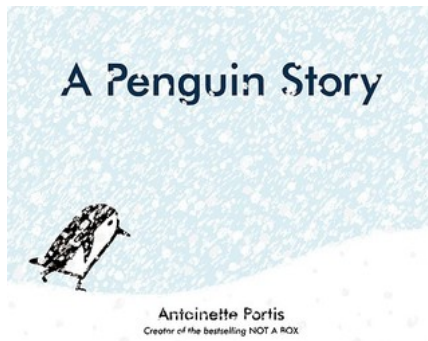
Can you be happy or sad and not know it?

Is everyone happy or sad in the same way?

What makes you happy or sad?

Can you make yourself.....

start crying	stop crying	keep crying	not wake up
laugh	stop laughing	talk	think
stop talking	walk	sit	not think
eat	not eat	fly	
dream	not dream	wake up	

**Author:** Antoinette Portis

Plot Summary: Edna the penguin leads a fun-filled life with her penguin friends, but she is concerned that the only colors she is able to see in her environment are white (“like yesterday”), black (“like tomorrow”), and blue (“like forever”). In hopes of finding new colors, Edna leaves her community to explore new terrain. Shortly thereafter, Edna finds a scientists’ camp that contains new colors and people. She immediately returns home to her friends, and takes them

to the camp so that they, too, can see the different colors. Edna’s friends are thrilled with the experience as they return home, though Edna herself is left wondering: “what else could there be?”

Questions:

Why is Edna unsatisfied that she can only see three colors (white, black and blue)?

Are there unknown things that you wish to see and learn about, just like Edna? What are they?

What are the most important things to know?

If Edna had only ever seen three colors, then how could she know that other colors exist?

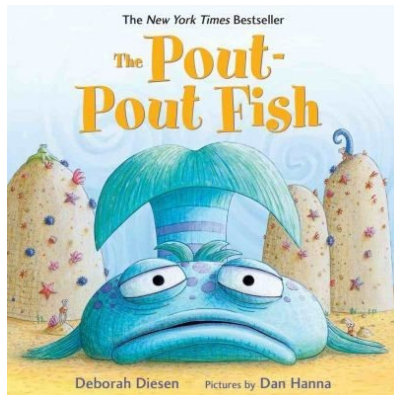
Are there things that we can know about without ever having seen them with our eyes?

What are they?

If Edna already knew (somehow) that other colors exist in the world, then did she learn something new when she saw the new colors with her eyes? If so, then what, exactly, did she learn?

At first, Edna’s friends weren’t interested in finding new colors. So why does Edna immediately share the new colors with them?

What is the difference between: (1) knowing that $1+1=2$; (2) knowing your best friend; (3) knowing what chocolate tastes like; and (4) knowing that a song is beautiful?

Summary and questions for, The Pout-Pout Fish are contributed by Lan Nguyen**Author:** Deborah Diesen

Plot Summary: Pout-Pout Fish with his ever-present pout believes that it is his destiny to “spread the dreary-wearies all over the place.” He encounters a myriad of ocean friends who tell him in different ways to cheer up. He is not convinced, until he meets a shining purple fish who, instead of words, gives him a kiss. The changed fish now believes his duty is to spread “cheery-cheeries” to the world.

Questions:

1. How is one destined to be glum or happy? Is there destiny?
2. Why do people feel so uncomfortable around an unhappy person?
3. Is it wrong to be gloomy? Does one have the right to be unhappy?
4. How does the kiss help Pout-Pout Fish to become cheerful?
5. Is it okay to kiss someone you don't know?

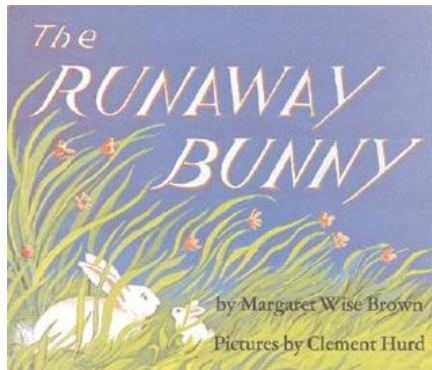
Summary and questions for, Press Here are contributed by Gobe Hirata**Author:** Herve Tullet

Summary: The book starts with one simple instruction - Press here - and takes the reader through an interactive experience by showing the effects of following the directions on one page on the page immediately following, using various dots to do so. It's a fun and imaginative book that raises a wide range of issues from the cause and effect relationship between our actions to the aesthetics of the various dots. One way to read the book is to have the class stand in a circle and you stand in the middle with the book. Move around the

circle to each student, reading aloud the directions on the page and then letting him or her follow those directions. For example, one student would be asked to press on all the yellow dots, and once he or she does this you turn the page to show the class what happened. This gives everyone a chance to participate.

Questions:

- Did what we did affect the book?
 How do we know what's going to happen?
 How do we know when one event causes another event?
 Was the book magic?



Author: Margaret Wise Brown

Plot Summary: A young rabbit tells his mother he wants to run away. His mother, however, responds, "If you run away, I will run after you". They continue to play an imaginary game of hide-and-seek throughout the book.

Questions:

IS SOMETHING STILL ITSELF IF IT CHANGES?

Is a chair still a chair if its legs are broken?

Is a song still a song if everyone forgets the words?

Is a spoon still a spoon if it falls behind the stove and is never seen again?

Is a book still a book if some pages are torn out? All of its pages?

Is a morning still a morning if no one is awake to see it?

Is a clock still a clock if it stops and there is no one to wind it?

Are pencils still pencils if they are too short to use?

Is the sun still the sun if it doesn't shine?

HOW MUCH CAN A THING CHANGE BEFORE IT IS SOMETHING ELSE?

A dress? A car? A face? A feeling? An idea? A friendship?

STAYING THE SAME AND BECOMING DIFFERENT

Are there some things that always stay the same no matter what?

Your size? Your friends? Your family? Your house? Your yard? Your feelings? Your friendships? What you like to eat? Your mind? Your day?

GROWNUPS AND CHILDREN

How are grownups different from or the same as children?

Grownups are not children.

Grownups are still children.

Grownups are larger than children.

Grownups can do more things than children can.

Grownups know more than children.

Grownups know less than children.

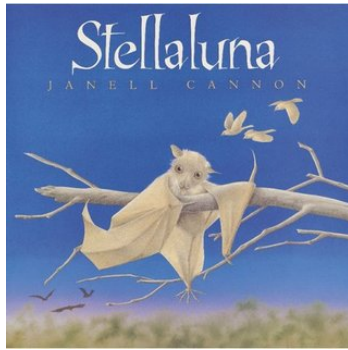
Will you still be you when you grow up?

Which of the following will still be the same when you grow up

Your: hair, head, mouth, eyes, feet, feelings, thoughts, dreams?

WHAT MAKES YOU YOU?

Where you live? Your: family, age, clothes, body, mind, dreams, toys, or thoughts.



Author: Janell Cannon

Summary: This is the story of a young fruit bat who becomes separated from her mother and lands in a nest of baby birds, becoming an adoptive member of the bird family. The baby bat learns to act like a baby bird and struggles to accommodate to the family, but she never completely fits in. Eventually she is able to regain her identity as a bat, and she and her bird friends wonder together about friendship and being alike and different at the same time.

Questions:

WHAT MAKES A . . .

Duck a duck? A Cat a cat? A Man a man? A Woman a woman? A Parent a parent? A Car a car? A Bird a bird? A Smile a smile? A Feeling a feeling? A Thought a thought?

WHAT DOES A THING NEED TO . . .

What does a kite need to fly?

What does a tree need to grow?

What does a car need to drive?

What does a bat need to fly?

What does a person need to live?

What does a person need to be happy?

What does a person need to dream at night?

COULD A . . . AND HOW DO YOU KNOW?

duck catch mice?

A bat write a letter?

A television eat grass?

A person fly?

A dog purr?

A teddy bear talk?

A person turn into a lion?

A painter plant a garden?

A child drive a car?

A doctor play the piano?

A book talk to you?

WHAT DOES FRIENDSHIP MEAN?

WHAT CAN YOU BE FRIENDS WITH?

Can you be friends with any of the following:

The moon, a car, a stone, a pair of shoes, a book, a movie, a cat, a plant, a bird, a house, a piece of land, an idea, a dream, a song, a painting, a tree, a parent?

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

If someone is a friend, is the following true:

I play with him or her a lot.

I talk to him or her a lot.

We share thoughts with each other.

We share feelings with each other.

I share my toys with him or her.

I like him or her.

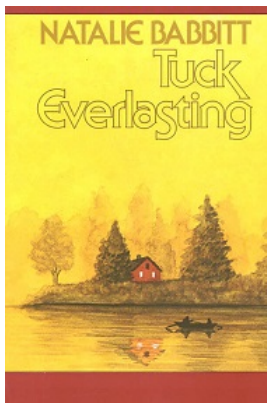
We help each other.

She or he thinks that I am their friend.

Questions about Stellaluna from Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

I like to focus on two important themes in this book. One, be yourself. Two, just because you are different than someone doesn't mean that you can't be friends.

Did Stellaluna like eating worms? Did she like sleeping right-side up? Did she enjoy sleeping at night? How come? When she did "bat" things how did she feel? Why? Did the birds enjoy flying at night? Why? Why is it important to be yourself? Think about your friends. Do you have things in common? Do you have everything in common? Do you have things that are different about you? Can you still be friends with someone if you are different than them? Why is friendship important?



Author: Natalie Babbitt

Summary: Tuck Everlasting is the story of the Tuck family, a family of 4 who, years ago, discovered a spring of water which, they realized after they all drank from it, makes you immortal. Winnie Foster, a 10-year-old girl who has stumbled upon the well, has made friends with Jesse Tuck (who appears to be about 17, but who is actually 104 years old) and is then kidnapped by the Tuck family in an effort to explain to her why she must never tell anyone about the spring. In Chapter 12, Winnie has a conversation with Tuck, the father of the family,

about time, the meaning of life, death, and what it means never to grow old. Winnie is tempted to drink from the spring herself, but Tuck tries to describe to her what it would mean to be immortal and how living outside of the wheel of life presents its own challenges. Tuck reveals that he would like to grow again and change and tries to make Winnie understand that dying is an essential part of life, even if the prospect of it is frightening: "[D]ying's part of the wheel, right there next to being born. You can't pick out the pieces you like and leave the rest. Being part of the whole thing,

that's the blessing. But it's passing us by, us Tucks. Living's heavy work, but off to one side, the way we are, it's useless, too. It don't make sense."

Questions:

Would you drink from the spring of immortality? Why or why not?

What would life be like if we didn't die?

What is time?

What is the meaning of life?

What does it mean to grow up?

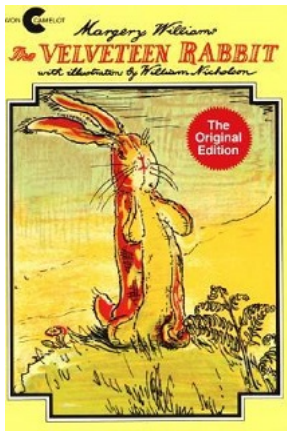
Why is death frightening?

What would happen if no one ever died?

How do we make other people understand our point of view?

How are things connected?

If you could be one age forever, what age would it be?



Author: Margery Williams

Plot Summary: In this story of a stuffed rabbit and his relationship with the young boy who owns him, the little Rabbit ponders the question of what he is and whether he is real. His friend the Skin Horse tells him: "Real isn't how you are made. It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real." The little Rabbit eventually becomes Real in this way, but then discovers other rabbits (ones with hind legs, that move on their own) who deride the little Rabbit as not being a real rabbit. The levels of reality in the story—toys that are not real, toys that become real as a result of

being loved, and real things in the world that can move and act on their own—resemble in many ways the tiers of reality Plato discusses in *The Republic*.

Discussion Questions:

What does it mean to be real?

List some things you know are real? How do you know they are real?

How do you know something is real?

Is real how you are made, or is it something that happens to you?

Can loving something make it real?

If you can touch something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can see something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can smell something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can hear something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can taste something, is it real? Give an example.

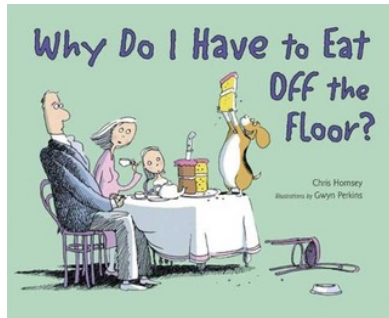
If you dream about something, is it real? Give an example.

If you read about something, is it real? Give an example.

Are colors real?

Is there anything in the world that isn't real in some way?

Are some things more real than others?



Author: Chris Hornsey

Summary: A dog asks a child a series of “why” questions, like “Why can’t I sleep in your bed?” and “Why can’t I drive the car?” The child finally responds, “Because you’re a dog!”

Questions:

Rules and Reasoning

Do rules require reasons?

Can you have a good rule based on bad reasons? A bad rule based on good reasons?

Are there any rules that don’t need reasons?

What makes certain reasons good ones?

How do we determine if a reason is a good one?

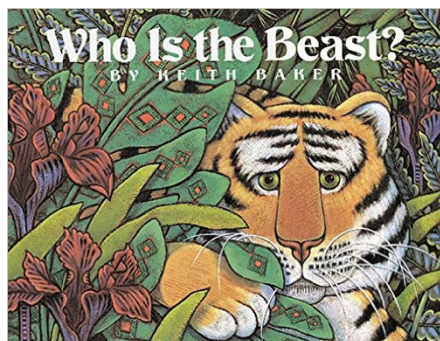
Being and Doing

Are there things we can’t do because of who we are?

What makes a certain thing that thing – a dog a dog, a tree a tree, a person a person?

Can we change who we are?

Summary, questions, and activity for, Who Is the Beast? are contributed by Maia Bernstein.



Author: Keith Baker

Plot Summary: A tiger makes its way through the jungle, as all the other animals are scared of “the beast.” The tiger sees its reflection in the water, and asks, “Am I the beast, could the beast be me?” The tiger then retraces its steps through the jungle, realizing that it shares similar characteristics with all of the other jungle animals who were scared of it. At the end, the tiger reflects, “Who is the beast? Now I see. We all are beasts--you and me.”

Questions:

Are all animals beasts?

What makes something a beast?

Are the people in this room beasts?

Can we have beasts inside of us? (In our mind, actions, thoughts, fears, etc.)

Why do we think things that scare us are bad?

Have you ever thought you were really different from someone else, and then realized that you aren't? When?

What's the difference between an animal and a beast?

What makes something "wild"?

Does eating meat make one a beast?

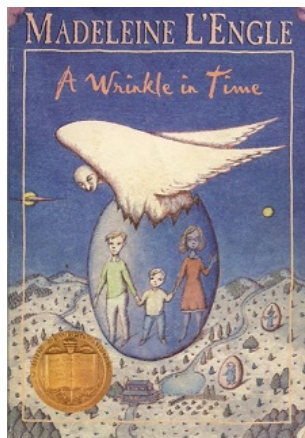
Can we eat meat and still love animals?

How do animal lifestyles, habitats, forms of communication, and needs reflect and contrast with our own? What does this tell us about them and ourselves?

Why is the human species so fascinated with nonhuman species?

Activity:

1. Before showing students the book, first have students draw a picture of a beast on a blank piece of paper. Allow students to draw whatever a "beast" might mean to them.
2. Read *Who Is the Beast?* by Keith Baker. Students generate questions, and vote on a question to jumpstart the discussion.
3. After engaging in philosophical discussion, students go back to their desks to draw another picture, on the flip side of their piece of paper, of their conceptualization of a beast. Students then write a description of why they think their picture is a beast, and why their picture is different or the same from their first drawing.
4. Students have the opportunity to share their drawings and written responses with the whole class.



Author: Madeleine L'Engle

Summary: Meg Murry, her youngest brother Charles Wallace, and their new friend Calvin join forces with three intergalactic beings – Mrs. Which, Mrs. Whatsit, and Mrs. Who -- to rescue Mr. Murry, Meg's and Charles' father, from IT, a source of evil and total mental control that devours individuality and self-perception.

Questions:

What is a tesseract? How can we understand the concept of the fifth dimension?

Is time what you see when you look at a clock?

Do we need time?

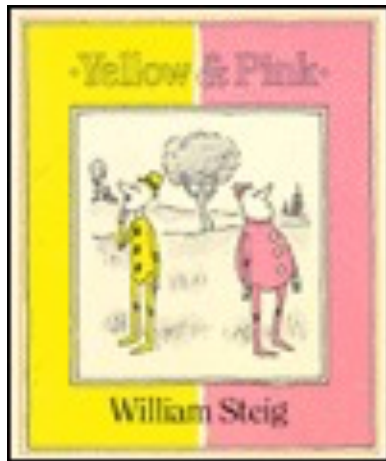
What does it mean to waste time?

What is infinity? Is it an eternal present? What does that mean?

What is the past? Does it exist? What about the future?

How do you know you are in the present?

What does it feel like when time passes? Does time feel different at different times?



Author: William Steig

Title: Yellow & Pink

Plot Summary: Two small wooden figures, one pink and one yellow, are lying on old newspaper. The yellow one sits up and asks the pink one, "Do you happen to know what we're doing here?" The two engage in a conversation about whether someone created them (Pink's view) or whether, as Yellow contends, "We're an accident, somehow or other we just happened." The story follows their speculations about how they might either have been created or just exist by chance.

Questions:

WHAT IS IT TO CREATE SOMETHING?

Have the following things been created? If so, how?

Trees, children, stories, pizza, clouds, ideas, bananas, leaves, rivers, paintings, gardens, and colors.

Do you think something can exist without being created? Give an example.

Do you think that someone made you? Why or why not?

Do you have to be there when you get made? Would this mean that you would know your maker? The meaning of accidents

Can you think of something that has happened to you by accident?

Can you give some examples of things that are accidents and things that are not accidents?

Do you think that something can just happen without a cause? Does that make it an accident?

How can you tell if something is an accident?

If the same accident occurs more than once, is it still an accident? Even if you know the outcome?

Does it make a difference if the two accidents happen over a long period of time?

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD

How did the world begin? What was the very first thing that was created? Did anything come before that?

Do you think that a specific thing caused the existence of the world?

It's hard to imagine the universe starting from nothing, but if we can't imagine something, does that mean it's not possible?

Do you think that the whole world could have happened by accident?

Do you think that God played a role in the world's existence? How? Why or why not?

WHEN/WHERE

Where is the top of the sky?

Where is the end of the world?

When is the end of time?

Where is the end of a book?

When was the beginning of your life?

WHAT IS REAL?

Is the man more real than Yellow and Pink?

If you can touch something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can see something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can smell something, is it real? Give an example.

If you can hear something, is it real? Give an example.

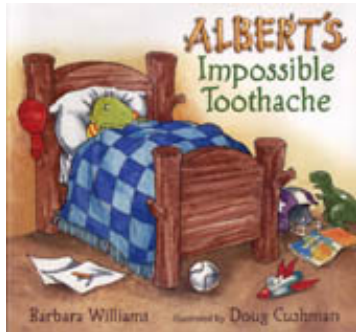
If you can taste something, is it real? Give an example.

If you dream about something, is it real? Give an example.

If you read about something, is it real? Give an example.

Are colors real?

Summary and questions for, Albert's Impossible Toothache are contributed by Gareth B. Matthews



Author: Barbara Williams

Summary: When little Albert Turtle complains that he has a toothache, his father assures him that that's impossible and points to his own toothless mouth. But Albert won't get out of bed, and Mother Turtle begins to worry. Will Albert's toothache ever go away? Even more important, will anyone ever believe him?

Questions:

The nature of reality

Albert Turtle says he has a toothache. Albert's father says it is impossible, and points to his own toothless mouth.

1. Do you need to have a tooth to have a toothache?
2. Just because something doesn't exist, does that mean that it is impossible?

Albert still insists he has a toothache. His father says that Albert's brother has never had a toothache; that Albert's sister has never had a toothache, and that Albert's mother has never had one. "It's impossible," Albert's father says, for anyone in this family to have a toothache.

1. If something has never happened before, does that mean it is impossible that it will ever happen?
2. Can you think of something that has never happened in the past, but might happen in the future? What?
3. Has anything ever happened to you that has never happened to anyone else? What?
4. How do you know it has never happened before?
5. Can something that's impossible ever happen?

Possibility and the Imagination

Turtles don't have teeth, but Albert says he has a toothache.

1. Can you imagine something that is "impossible"? What?
2. How do you know it is impossible?
3. Turtles don't have teeth, but Albert says he has a toothache. Is Albert just imagining that he has a toothache?
4. Is there such a thing as an imaginary ache?
5. Do imaginary aches hurt less than "real" ones? Is it possible for imaginary aches to hurt as much as real ones?

The nature of demonstrative action

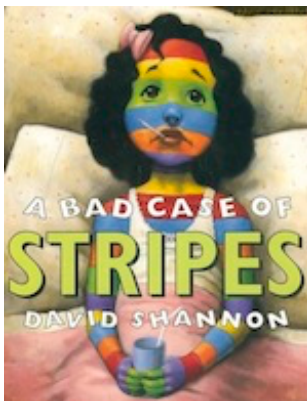
Albert "points" to his toothache, and his father points his own lack of teeth.

1. Can you point to something that isn't there, like no teeth?
2. Suppose you ask your friend for a cookie, and she points to the cookie jar. You reach in, and are disappointed to find that the jar is empty. Is your friend pointing to something that isn't there?
3. Is pointing to something the same as calling it by its name?
4. Are there times when you don't understand what someone is pointing to? When?
5. Are there times when you point to something, and people don't know what you mean? When?
6. Find something in the room and point to it. Now, without moving your finger, try to think of three different things someone might think you are pointing to. What are they?

Albert says the Gopher bit him. Maybe by "toothache" he meant the Gopher's teeth, and his ache.

1. Is it possible that Albert is pointing at a real ache, but not a toothache?
2. Can we point to things and talk about them, even if we don't know what to call them?
3. How will we know we are talking about the same thing?

Summary and Questions for, A Bad Case of the Stripes are contributed by Jo Fletcher



Author: David Shannon

Summary: *A Bad Case of Stripes*, by David Shannon, is the story of young Camilla Cream, a closeted lover of lima beans and a worrier about others' opinions of her. On the first day of school, Camilla wakes up to find herself completely covered in rainbow stripes! If the stripes were not bad enough, Camilla's skin develops everything people suggest she has – someone says 'checkerboards,' another says 'bacteria,' and she breaks out in checkerboard pattern and bacteria tails. When the Doctor, Specialists, Experts, and many others cannot figure out what's causing the stripes, a little old woman appears with what just might be the cure.

Questions:

Self-Perception

Camilla Cream loves lima beans but refuses to eat them because people tell her they are gross.

1. When we first meet Camilla, what is she doing?
2. What does that tell us about her?
3. Is there a food you love but other people do not like?
4. If Camilla likes lima beans so much, why doesn't she just eat them?
5. Is there a reason Camilla changes from stripes to checkerboards to a pill to her room?

6. Is it important to care about what other people think?
7. Do we define ourselves based on who we think we are, or who others think we are?
8. What does it mean to 'be yourself'?
9. Is it important? Why?

Identity

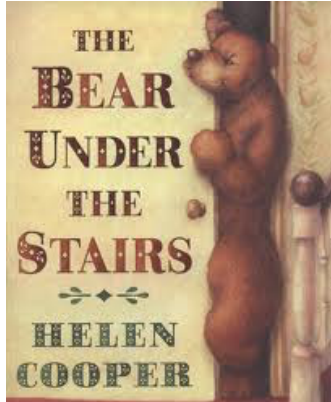
Camilla develops 'a bad case of stripes,' which seems to change as people try to figure out what is wrong with her.

1. How is Camilla recognized as Camilla when she is called "The Incredible Changing Kid"?
2. Does she ever stop being Camilla Cream?
3. What is a person's identity?
4. How does one develop an identity?
5. What does it mean to 'lose' one's identity?
6. How could that happen? Could it happen?
7. Does it happen to Camilla?
8. When Camilla changes back into a little girl, the old woman says she "knew the real you was in there somewhere." What does that mean?
9. Who or what is the 'real' Camilla?
10. Can a person have an essence, an identity defined by things that are essential to his or her person?
11. When the news reporters start camping outside her house, Camilla becomes something of a media sensation. What does that do to her identity?

Others' Perceptions and Bullying

Camilla's classmates laugh at her and call her names, and the news reporters set up outside to gawk at her.

1. What is bullying?
2. Why do Camilla's classmates tease her?
3. Is it okay to treat someone differently because they have stripes?
4. What if they have an illness?
5. A woman is shown talking about Camilla on TV - what is it she is doing?
6. Is an illness 'news'?
7. Does the reporter have a duty to share Camilla's story with the public?
8. Is what the reporter does different from what Camilla's classmates do to her?
9. Is it bullying?
10. Is it ethically wrong to report sensational news?

Summary and questions for, The Bear Under the Stairs are contributed by Ellen Duthie

Author: Helen Cooper

Summary: The text of *The Bear Under the Stairs* tells a straightforward story of a boy called William who is frightened of a big and hungry bear he believes he has seen behind the door under the stairs.

He's so scared of the prospect of the bear getting peckish and deciding to eat boys for tea, that he starts feeding it preventively, from leftovers and other bits and bobs, until his mother notices the stench coming from under the stairs and decides it's time for a clean.

After desperately trying to stop her, he finally blurts out his story about the bear under the stairs, and his mother suggests they both face up to it and fight it. They approach the door, mop and broom held like lances ready for battle. When they finally open it, they find an old furry rug instead of a bear, and lots of stinky food everywhere. They both clean up and then go and buy William his own grizzly teddy bear to keep him company in bed. And he is never ever scared of bears again.

To this straightforward story of a boy facing up to his fear, the illustrations add delightfully interesting complexity by suggesting different planes of reality, with William's imagination, the bear's imagination, and the reader's own imagination counting as much as any reality that might be. Who's imagining what?

Questions:**Fear**

1. In the story, William is frightened. Why is he frightened? What is he frightened of, exactly? Does he really have a reason to be frightened?
2. What things frighten you? Why? What do you think causes fear? What removes it?
3. Are you more frightened of real things or of ideas?
4. Is fear always a bad thing or can it be useful?
5. Do you think William dealt with his fear appropriately? What would you have done in William's situation, if you thought there might be a bear under the stairs?
6. Have you ever been "secretely" scared of something and not told anyone? What of? Why didn't you tell anyone?
7. After William finds out what he thought was a bear was in fact an old rug, his fear seems to go away. Does knowledge always remove fear? Is it possible to "know" that there isn't a bear under the stairs or a monster under your bed and still "be frightened" of it? How is that possible?

Reality

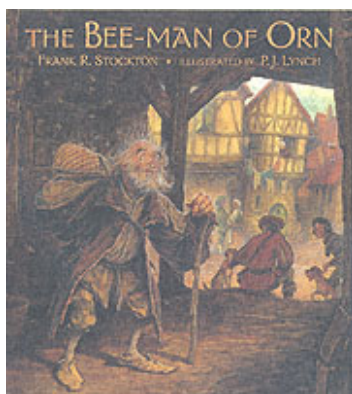
1. What is real and what is imaginary in *The Bear Under the Stairs*? Is the bear real? How do you know?

2. Could everything we see in the story be real? Both the bear's reality and William's reality?
3. Do you think the bear "really" draws William? Or do you think the drawing of William by the bear is part of a dream William's having? Why?
4. What's the difference between reality and imagination? How can we tell when something is real rather than imaginary?
5. What's the difference between reality and dreaming?
6. Have you ever been unsure as to whether something really happened or whether you dreamed it? How did you find out which was the case?
7. How do you know you are not dreaming now?
8. Are dreams real?
9. Are you real? How do you know?
10. Could you be the figment of someone else's imagination? A scared bear's imagination, for example?

Reliability of the senses

1. William "sees" the bear through the crack of the open door. Later he "sees" the rug. How does he know that it's a rug and his senses are not deceiving him? Why is the second time William "sees" more reliable than the first?
2. How do you know the table in front of you is real? If it is real because you can see it, is it still real when you close your eyes? What makes it real?
3. Do our eyes provide us with trustworthy information about the real world? Is reality as we see it?
4. When we stick a straw into a glass of water, our eyes tell us it's bent, but is it? How do we know that our eyes don't show us things differently from the way they really are all the time? What is "the way things really are"?
5. Dogs don't see colors the same way we do. Which reality is more "real", dogs' reality or ours?

Summary for, The Bee-Man or Orn are contributed by Jayme Johnson. Questions for, The Bee-Man of Orn are contributed by Gareth Matthews and Jayme Johnson



Author: Frank Richard Stockton

Summary: In the ancient country of Orn lived an old man called the Bee-man, because he spent his life in the company of bees. All seemed well and fine in the life of the Bee-man until an unexpected visit from a Junior Sorcerer sends him on a mission to examine himself. You see, the Junior Sorcerer told the Bee-man that he has been transformed into something else. "If you will find out what you have been transformed from, I will see that you are made all right again," the young Sorcerer tells him. Could it have been a giant, or a powerful prince, or some gorgeous being whom

the magicians or the fairies wish to punish? The Bee-man sets out to discover just what his original form might be.

Questions:

The Junior Sorcerer says that the Bee-Man has been transformed from something else into a bee-keeper.

1. Caterpillars change into butterflies. What other living things are transformed in nature?
2. Bees transform nectar from flowers into honey. What animals transform food they eat into foods for people?
3. The Junior Sorcerer says that people and animals are sometimes magically transformed. What is the difference between being magically transformed and being transformed through growth?
4. Growing up has changed you from a baby. How are you different from the baby you once were?
5. How long does it take you to change into something else? What stays the same as you change?

When the Lord of the Domain kicks him, the Bee-Man decides he could not have been a mean person.

1. Do people who were once good and kind sometimes become mean and cruel?
2. What might change them?
3. Do people who were once mean and cruel sometimes become good and kind? What might change them?
4. Think of a way that you are different than you were a year ago. What changed you?
5. How would you like to be different when you grow up?

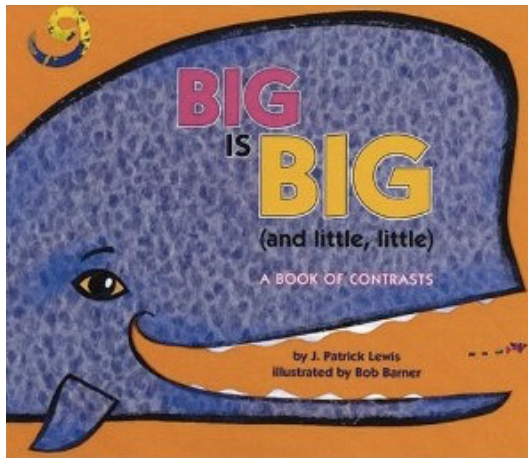
The Bee-Man throws his bees at the dragon and rescues the baby.

1. This is a brave thing to do. Is the Bee-Man always brave, or is this the first brave thing he ever did?
2. The Bee-Man knows what to do. Have you ever been in a difficult situation when you did not know what to do? What happened?
3. The Bee-Man feels good about saving his baby. Do you feel good about something you did? What? Why?
4. The Bee-man did not realize that it was brave to save the baby. Can you still be brave, even though you don't know that you are acting bravely?

The Sorcerer returns to the country of Orn and discovers that the Bee-Man has grown up to be a bee-keeper, just as he did the first time.

1. Do you think grown-ups might like to start life over and become someone different? Why?

2. Do you think it might be fun to have more than one chance to grow up? Why or why not?
3. Can you imagine being born in a different country? Speaking a different language? Enjoying different customs?
4. What is something about you that might not change? Why?



Author: J. Patrick Lewis

Summary: From big and little to day and night, from sweet and mean to tall and short, Big is Big explores a wide range of opposite concepts, encouraging children to think about the nature of opposites.

Questions:

The Notion of Opposites

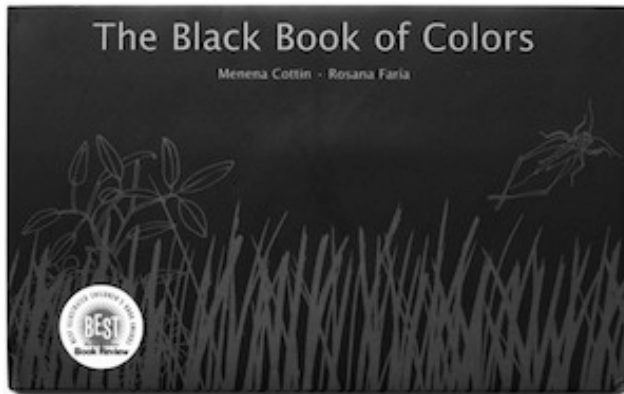
1. What things do you think are really big and what things do you think are really small?
2. Why do you think these things are big/small?
3. When you say something is big, do you think it is big by itself or you think it is big only when compared to other objects?
4. Do you think small things are always small and big things are always big?
5. If you think no, how does that change happen?

Belief and Perspectives

1. In the book, the adult giraffe thinks the tree is short, but the baby giraffe thinks it's tall. Is the tree tall or short? Why do you think so?
2. Have you had a similar experience that your description about something was very different and even the opposite of other people's description?
3. What do you think caused that difference?
4. Which answer do you think is the right answer?
5. Is there a correct way of describing everything?
6. Could two opposite beliefs about the same thing both be correct in the same time? Why?

Self-knowledge

1. Do you think a person can know who he is if he is completely isolated from the rest of the world?
2. How would you describe yourself to others?
3. Why would you describe those features instead of others?
4. Do you think you have to live in a community in order to have that self-description you just said?
5. Is your self-description different from your friends' description of you?
6. If yes, why do you think there is a difference?

Summary and questions for, The Black Book of Colors is contributed by Rosalie Shays

Authors: Menena Cottin and Rosana Faria

Summary: *The Black Book of Colors* is about a boy, Thomas, describing the way different colors taste, feel, smell, and sound. Written in American English as well as Braille, the book allows readers to experience the world as someone without sight might.

Questions**Color**

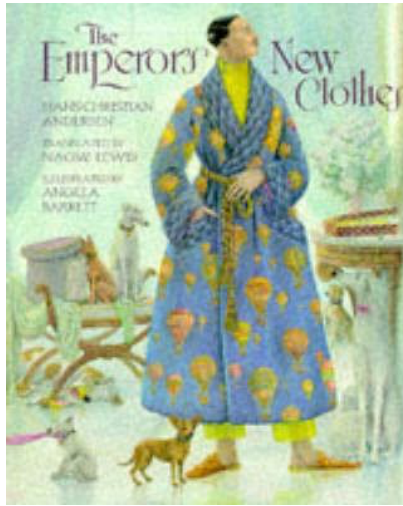
1. What is your favorite color? Why?
2. How would you describe some of the favorite things about your color?
3. How would you describe your favorite color using senses other than sight?
4. Do those words convey the experience of seeing your color?
5. What is the difference between a color and things that are that color?
6. In the book, Thomas says that black is the king of the colors. What do you think he means?
7. Can colors have a king? Do you agree that black would be the king?
8. Can color have a queen? What do you think the queen of color would be?
9. Can colors have gender?
10. Can something not have color?
11. Does everyone see the same color?
12. Is color one thing or many things?

Blindness

1. Close your eyes. Think about your favorite color. Tell us about it.
2. Did we experience that color? How?
3. Is it possible to show a blind person color? Why or why not?
4. If a person can't see color, are they blind? Why or why not?
5. Do people who are blind and people who have sight experience color the same way? How is it similar or different?
6. If not everyone can see color, does it mean that it's really there?
7. Do blind people need to be taught color or is it something that they learn on their own?
8. If a blind person knew that strawberries were red, do you think if they had surgery done to make them able to see that they would recognize a strawberry as a strawberry just by looking at it? Why or why not?
9. Are all of our senses connected or are they distinct?

Summary and questions for, The Emperor's New Clothes are contributed by Mark Mudryk

Translators: Naomi Lewis and Angela Barrett



Summary: This story is a translation of a classic tale by Hans Christian Andersen. An Emperor of a city is fond of new clothes. Two imposter weavers enter his city and tell him that they can create a suit for him that would be invisible to people who are unfit to hold their office, or excessively simple. The Emperor orders this suit to be made for him. The weavers pretend to weave this suit but in truth weave nothing at all, and present this fake "invisible" suit to everyone in the city as if it really exists. The Emperor along with all the people who look upon the suit are troubled by what they cannot see, and whether they are inadequate or not. This causes everyone in the city, including the Emperor, to lie and say they can see the suit although in reality they cannot. The Emperor leads a parade

through the city in his new suit even though he is actually naked. A child breaks everyone's delusion by shouting out "the Emperor is not wearing anything at all!"

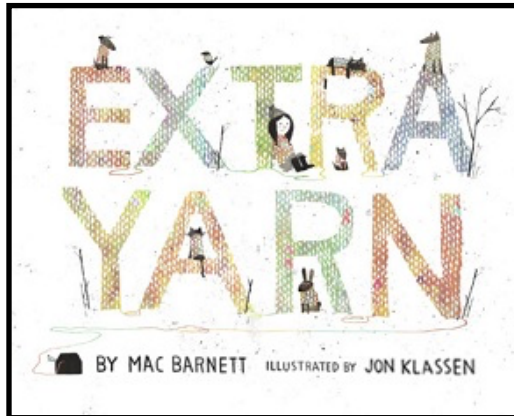
Questions:

Personal Experience

1. Have you ever convinced yourself that something was real/true(can use either) even if you knew it wasn't?
2. Have you ever done something just because everyone else was doing it?
3. Have you ever believed something because other people you knew believed the same thing? [giving your own personal example may help clarify]
4. Have you ever lied for a good reason?
5. Do you always feel bad when you lie?

The Story

1. Why did the characters in the story lie and say they could see the suit even if they could not?
2. Why is reputation so important to the characters in the story? [May have to explain the term reputation]
3. At the end of the story the young boy tells the crowd the truth. Why did the young boy speak the truth and no one else? [absence of social pressures perhaps]
4. Except the young boy, all the characters in the story lied . Does this make them all bad guys? Why or why not?
5. Do you have to believe something because everyone else believes it? Why or why not?
6. Is honesty important?
7. Can lying be good?
8. How do you decide who you trust?
9. What if the suit hadn't been fake? How could one tell if it is real or not?

Summary and questions for, Extra Yarn are contributed by Chan Jamin**Authors:** Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen

Summary: Annabelle finds a box of colorful yarn and knits sweaters for everyone in her town, then moves on to knit sweaters for trees and buildings and cars. She never runs out of yarn. One day an archduke offers to buy her box of colorful yarn for ten million dollars, but Annabelle refuses to sell it. At night, the archduke steals the box of yarn, but when he opens the box, he finds it empty.

Questions:**Magic**

1. Could the events in this story have really taken place?
2. Could Annabelle's box of yarn really exist? Why or why not?
3. Can we say that the box of yarn was magical? Why?
4. Does magic exist? Why do you think so?
5. What makes something magical?
6. When a magician makes a rabbit come out of a hat, is that magic? (Or is it a trick?)
7. If we agree that the box was magical, why was it only magical for Annabelle?

Money and Happiness

"Ten million!" shouted the archduke. "Take it or leave it!"

"Leave it," said Annabelle. "I won't sell the yarn."

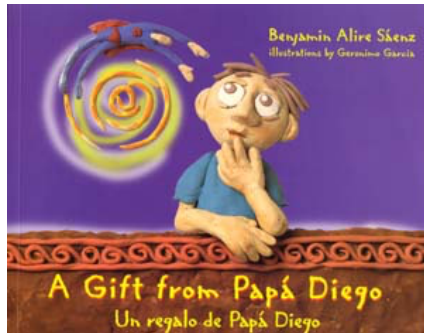
1. Why didn't Annabelle want to sell the yarn?
2. Would you have sold the yarn? Why or why not?
3. Ten million is a lot of money. Do you think Annabelle should have sold the yarn?
4. Why do you think the archduke was willing to pay so much for the box of yarn?
5. Would the archduke really be happy if Annabelle had sold him the yarn?
6. Would Annabelle have been happy if she had given the archduke the yarn?
7. Can money buy happiness?

Generosity & Sharing

1. Is it good to keep giving things away?
2. We can assume that Annabelle would be very sad if the yarn ever ran out. Should she keep the yarn safe (and for special occasions only) or keep giving the yarn away to things that don't even need it (like pickup trucks and buildings)?
3. Can we get happiness from giving away things? How?

Summary and questions for, **A Gift from Papá Diego** are contributed by Nancy Soudant and Gareth Matthews

Author: Benjamin Alire Sáenz



Summary: *A Gift from Papá Diego* is about a 6-year old boy named Diego. Diego lives in Texas and wishes desperately to be reunited with his grandfather who lives in Mexico. Diego asks for a Superman costume for his birthday in hopes of being able to fly to Mexico to visit his grandfather. He is disappointed when he realizes the costume does not give him the ability to do this. The story ends with a surprise visit from Diego's grandfather, and the whole family has a wonderful

birthday celebration.

Questions:

Superheroes

Diego wants a Superman costume for his birthday so he can fly to see his grandfather.

1. What is a super hero?
2. Can real people be superheroes?
3. Do you think that superheroes are real? If they are not real, then what are they?
4. Do you believe in superheroes?
5. Do you think that Superman is a superhero, and if so why?
6. What makes someone a superhero?
7. Do you have a favorite superhero?
8. Do you have a hero?
9. What is the difference between a hero and a superhero?
10. What other types of heroes are there?

Disappointment

Diego is disappointed to find that he can not fly to see his grandfather when he puts the Superman costume on.

1. Do you think that Diego's parents intentionally set him up for disappointment by buying him the costume knowing that he would not be able to fly?
2. Do you understand what it means to be disappointed?
3. Have you ever experienced disappointment?
4. What did it feel like?
5. Do you think it can ever be a good thing?
6. Do you think it is possible to feel disappointed without feeling sad?
7. Have you ever disappointed someone? If so how did it make you feel?

Patience

Diego has to wait all day to open his presents.

1. Diego had to be patient and wait all day to open his presents. Have you ever had to be patient and wait for something that you really wanted?
2. How did it make you feel?
3. Did you learn anything from the experience?
4. Do you think that patience is a good thing? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of a situation where being patient may not be a good thing?

Dreams

Diego very much wants to go and visit his grandfather.

1. Diego daydreams about flying to see his grandfather. Do you think daydreams are real, and if so explain why?
2. Are daydreams anything like the dreams you have at night when you go to bed?
3. Do you think you have control over your daydreams or do they just happen?

Love

Diego loves his grandfather very much.

1. In the story Diego loves and misses his Grandfather. Have you ever felt that sort of love towards someone in your life?
2. If so, how did you know it was love?
3. Diego's sister Gabriela was mean and made fun of him. Do you think it is possible to treat someone like that and still love them? Why or why not?
4. What other types of things can you love?
5. Is the love of something like your favorite food the same as the love you feel towards someone?

Summary and questions for, **Harry the Dirty Dog** are contributed by Kelsey Brower



Authors: Gene Zion and Margaret Bloy Graham

Summary: Harry is a happy dog who is white with black spots. He loves everything except for taking baths. When bath time comes around Harry runs away and has loads of fun getting dirty. Before he knows it he has changed from a white dog with black spots to a black dog with white spots. Harry starts to miss home, but when he returns, his family does not recognize him. How will Harry convince them that he is still Harry?

Questions:

Appearance vs. Reality

When Harry becomes a black dog with white spots his family no longer recognizes him.

1. Why didn't the family believe that it was Harry even when he did his old tricks?
2. Why did Harry's physical appearance present such a barrier to the family recognizing him?
3. How do people change their physical appearance?
4. Would you still recognize a person after a makeover?
5. If you didn't, would they still be the same person?

Essential Properties

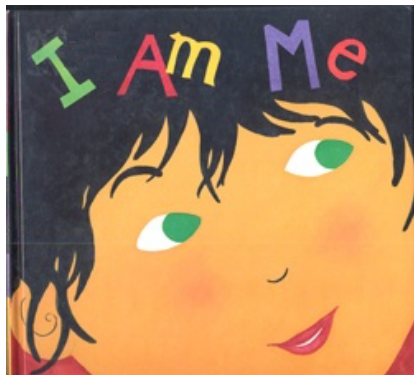
Harry's family knew him as a white dog with black spots.

1. Was Harry still the same dog even though he looked different?
2. At the end of the story Harry likes his bath. Is he still the same now that he likes different things?
3. What would you have to change about Harry that would make him no longer "Harry"?

Home

Harry was having fun out, but still wanted to go home.

1. Why didn't Harry stay out and play some more? Why did he want to go home?
2. Why is having a home so important to us? Why don't we just go out all the time?
3. Is a home more than just where we can sleep and eat?
4. If you were to move, would you still consider where you used to live "home"?

Summary and questions for, I Am Me are contributed by Lee Anglin

Author: Karla Kuskin

Summary: *I Am Me*, by Karla Kuskin, describes a little girl's self discovery while attending a family reunion. In responding to observations by other characters, she describes physical characteristics that resemble and diverge from those of her parents, and other relatives, and reviews a few expressions and behavior traits that trigger recollections of relatives. After making these comparisons, she emphasizes an idea of personal identity with the statement, "I am positively absolutely altogether no one else but ME!"

Questions:**Identity**

Everybody says I have my mother's eyes. . .

1. What physical characteristics does the girl share with her family? Which ones are different?
2. Do the rules of biology determine the probability of your eye color and make sure that you always have your parent's eye color? Is the probability of the way we think determined by the biology of your parents—just like our eye color? The character says “her little toe is different.” Do you agree that every person has unique physical and mental characteristics?
3. The character's mom says the characters smile “lights her face.” Is what makes us smile, or what makes us angry, or what makes us loving, determined by our brains or what we are taught?
4. Do our different physical characteristics help explain why we have different thoughts from our parents?
5. The children in the book are riding bikes down hill. If one crashed and had a severe head injury, and could no longer communicate, would that be the same person that existed before the crash?
6. Which physical characteristics does only one person have or are unique to each person?
7. When the character in *I Am Me* says “my hands are Mom's,” what do you think she means by this?

Duality (Mind verses Body)

I clear my throat to speak

1. When the narrator says “I clear my throat to speak” who does the “I” refer to?
2. Is there a mind or soul giving orders to the body?
3. Could my soul be placed in my mother's body?
4. Could my mother's soul be placed in my body?
5. Could my mind live without my body?
6. When the character shouts out “I am. . .ME!” what is her evidence?

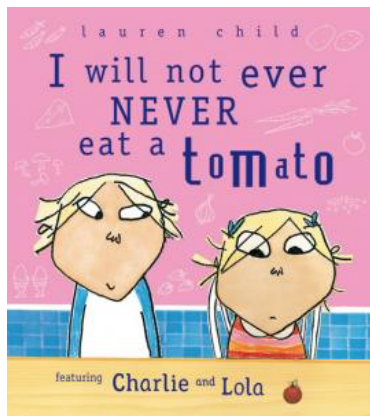
Design

Everybody says. . .I have my mother's pointed chin

1. The character notices that she resemble her relatives. Is this an accident or did somebody design her exactly that way?
2. Did your mother and father design you to look like them?
3. Was it an accident that my mother wound up with a pointed chin or did somebody design that pointed chin?
4. The narrator says “[she] is standing up straight, as straight as any tree.” Why do trees stand up straight?

5. The dad says, “Sally’s hair gets lighter in the sun.” Do you think that Sally goes into the sun on purpose to lighten her hair?
6. Why do people change their hair color? Why do trees stand tall? What is the difference?

Summary and questions for, I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato are contributed by Sandy Hsu



Author: Lauren Child

Summary: Lola is a fussy eater who dislikes carrots, peas, potatoes, mushrooms, spaghetti, eggs, sausages, cauliflower, cabbage, baked beans, bananas, oranges, apples, rice, cheese, fish sticks, and absolutely TOMATOES! Unfortunately, her brother, Charlie, sometimes has to be in charge of her dinner and keeps an eye on her to finish eating this wild range of food. He has to find creative ways to turn disliked foods into tempting treats. So carrots become twiglets from Jupiter and peas become droplets from Greenland. Mashed potatoes become cloud fluff from the pointiest peak of Mount Fuji and fish sticks become ocean nibbles

from the supermarket under the sea. The most disgusting food for Lola – tomatoes – now becomes moonsquirters! Smart Charlie successfully made her sister tempt to clean her plates.

Questions:

Deception

Charlie said “Oh, you think these are carrots. These are not carrots. These are orange twiglets from Jupiter.”

1. Does Charlie deceive his sister?
2. Is tricking someone into believing something the same as lying?
3. Have you told a lie before? What is your feeling after you tell a lie?
4. Why do you think it is okay to lie and why not?
5. What makes it okay to lie?
6. How would you feel if your best friend lied to you but it was for your own good?

Imagination and Reality

Lola tried the orange twiglets from Jupiter and she took another bite.

1. What are the orange twiglets from Jupiter? What is the carrot?
2. How do you think Lola can eat orange twiglets from Jupiter?
3. Why do you think the object “carrot” and “orange twiglets” are the same object or different?
4. Why did Lola not eat carrot but she ate twiglet from Jupiter?

5. Why do you think “orange twiglets from Jupiter, green drops from Greenland, cloud fluff from the pointiest peak of Mount Fuji, ocean nibbles from the supermarket under the sea, and moonsquirters” exist in the world or not?
6. Why do you like to play make-believe or why not?
7. Why do you think Lola believes that tomatoes are moonsquirters?
8. How do you know what is real?
9. What is the difference between “make-believe” and “real”?

Never not ever

When Lola was sitting at the table, waiting for her dinner and she said: “I absolutely will never not ever eat a tomato.”

1. What does Lola said what she said?
2. Why does Lola eat the tomatoes the end of the stories?
3. How do you know she changed her mind?
4. What do you think about never said never?
5. What do you think about “what if”?

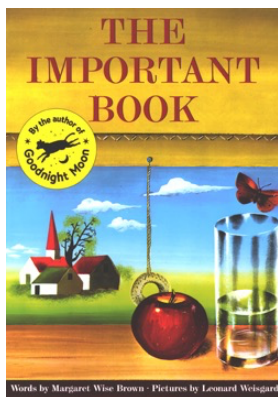
Eating Healthy

Sometimes Charlie has to give Lola her dinner, but he said it is difficult because she is a very fussy eater.

1. Why do you think Charlie wants Lola to eat everything?
2. Do you think Charlie eat everything, why or why not?
3. Why is it important to eat healthy?

Summary, questions, and discussion guide for, The Important Book are contributed by Tom Wartenberg

Author: Margaret Wise Brown



Summary: The important thing about *The Important Book* -- is that you think about for yourself what is important about the sun and the moon and the wind and the rain and a bug and a bee and a chair and a table and a pencil and a bear and a rainbow and a cat. What is most important about many familiar things -- like rain and wind, apples and daisies -- is suggested in rhythmic words and vivid pictures.

Questions:

The book says that the most important thing about a spoon is that you eat with it.

1. Have you ever seen a spoon that is not a spoon that you eat with?
2. What are some other things about spoons that are important?

3. Is there one “most important” thing about a spoon? If so, what is it and why? If not, why not?

The book says that the most important thing about an apple is that it is round.

1. What are some other important things about apples?
2. Is being round the most important thing about an apple?
3. Could something be an apple and have some other shape?
4. Is there one most important thing about being an apple?

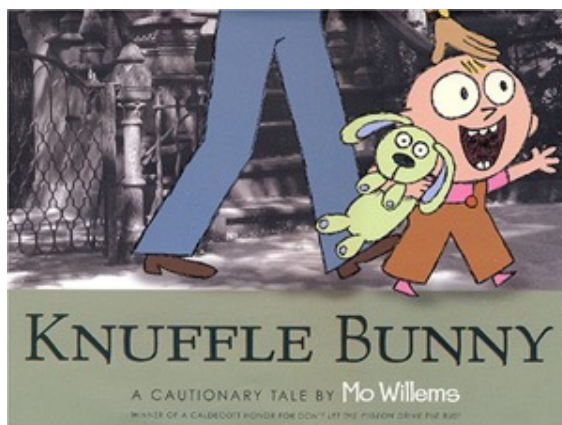
The book says that the most important thing about you is that you are you.

1. Tell us one very important thing about you.
2. Could you still be you and not possess that very important thing?
3. What makes you you

Discussion Guide

A good way to begin discussing this book is to ask the children to make a chart with you on large paper or a blackboard. There should be three columns: Object, Most Important Thing, Other Things. Then go through some (or all, depending on time) of the objects that the books discusses and fill out the chart, listing the object, what the book says the most important things about the object are, what the book says other things that are true of the object are. Make sure to include one created thing like a spoon, one natural thing like an apple, and “you.” Once you’ve done this – or, perhaps, as you are filling out the chart – ask the children if they agree with what the book says. The idea is to get them to think about two things: First, is the book right in its classification of the most important thing about an object? Generally, they will see that they don’t agree with what the book said. Second, is there actually a “most important thing” about the object in question? Here, they probably will at least disagree about what is most important about the things we are discussing. You might ask them the following:

Summary and questions for, Knuffle Bunny are contributed by Ariel Sykes



Author: Mo Willems

Summary: An exciting trip to the laundromat goes bad when Trixie realizes that her Knuffle Bunny has somehow gotten lost along the way. Will she be able to find the words to tell her father what is wrong? Or will he continue to guess the wrong thing?

Questions:

Communication

Before Trixie could even speak words, she went on an errand with her daddy to the laundromat.

1. How did Trixie communicate with her father “before she could even speak words?”
2. Did Trixie have any other choice than to cry to try to get her dad to realize her bunny was missing?
3. Was Trixie successful in communicating to her father what was wrong? She successful in showing she was upset, she knew that smiling wouldn’t be sufficient. She conveyed the right emotion. What if she had said “quack?”
4. Have you ever had trouble communicating something to someone? What made it difficult?
5. How did you solve the communication problem?
6. If Trixie was ultimately unsuccessful in telling her father what was wrong, can you ever be truly 100% successful when communicating with others?
7. Is what something means to you always mean the same thing for another person?
8. Think of describing the color blue, do you describe it and see it as the same color as your friend?

Language and Behavior

When Trixie realizes she left her favorite stuffed animal behind, she tries to tell her father through her actions.

1. Are there some things that words are better at communicating than actions? What about behavior?
2. Can behavior ever be as specific as words?
3. Does the way a person is acting when they are saying something change how you understand what they are saying?
4. How do you know when someone is being silly or serious with their words?
5. Is language just as dependent on behavior as it is on words?

The Nature of Meaning

When Trixie finally speaks, she says “Knuffle Bunny!”

1. How do you know the meaning of a word? What does it take to know a word?
2. There are lots of words that you haven’t looked up in a dictionary, how do you know what they mean? If you have never asked someone to define the meaning of “the” and have ever looked it up, how do you still know what it means?
3. Are there words or concepts that you just learned this year?
4. If you don’t know a word, when will you learn it? Is there a certain age, grade, experience that makes you able to learn a word?
5. What does it mean to know a word?

6. For a blind person, is their idea or a word or concept different than yours? Even if a blind person can give the dictionary definition of a word, is this the same thing as understanding the word?
7. If you don't need to be able to hear and see to learn words, then what does this suggest about the nature of language? English seems to be based on verbal and visual meanings.

Misusing Words

1. Do you ever use a word that you don't mean? Example: I am starving, I am dying of thirst, the use of the word "like"
2. Why don't you use the correct word instead? Why do you say that word if that isn't what you actually mean? For example: I am really hungry instead of I am starving
3. Why does everyone else understand what you are saying even when you don't use the word correctly?

Knowledge and Meaning

Even though Trixie could not speak, she still knew that she was missing her knuffle bunny.

1. Are there some things that words fail to explain?
2. Can you know something without being able to explain it?
3. What about an oxymoron? For example: a little big, bad luck, bigger half, jumbo shrimp, good grief, etc.

Variation in Meaning

1. Why do some words have many meanings? Is it useful?
2. How can you make sure that the person listening to you knows what meaning you are intending? Do words that have many meanings make miscommunication more likely? Who decides what meaning is correct?
3. When I think of Disneyland, I will be thinking of a different set of things than you. Why is this the case? How do experiences and assumptions influence our understandings of words?
4. If some words all mean the same thing, then how do you decide which one to use? For example: different, unique, distinct, dissimilar, unlike, not the same, unequal, not matching, diverse, etc. Why do we have so many different words that mean the same thing? What is the purpose?
5. Do meanings of words always stay the same, or can they change?
6. Can we invent words?
7. What makes a word a real word?

Thought

Even though Trixie could not speak, she was still able to think about what she was trying to tell her father.

1. How does language shape our thoughts?

2. When you learn more, do you think more?
3. Can you think without words? Can thoughts exist without a language?
4. How could you tell?

The Nature of Language

Before Trixie could talk, she tried to communicate with her father through her own language.

1. What is necessary for a language to be a language?
2. What about sign-language?
3. Is there a reason why some languages have many letter and words and some don't?
4. Could one language be more useful than another?
5. More or less confusing?
6. Chinese vs. Hawaiian

The Role of Language

1. Why are there so many different languages? What is different and the same about them?
2. Why is there a need to have different languages? Would it be ideal to have just one language? Are there ethical issues? Would parts of cultures be lost? Is it possible just to have one language?
3. Are there some things that everyone can understand and communicate even without having a shared language? What makes it so that everyone can understand such things? Is there a true universal language?
4. Have you ever visited a place where no one spoke English? How did you communicate? Was it hard?
5. What strategies were successful in communicating? Which ones were not helpful?
6. Do you think humans always had a language? How did we communicate before we had a language?
7. If we lived in a world without language, how would we communicate?
8. Would we be successful in communicating?
9. Do you think language would exist if you were the only person on earth? Would there be a need for words?
10. If you lived in a world in which nothing had a name, would you still have concepts of things?

Extension

At one point when Trixie is trying to tell her father what is wrong she points.

1. When I say, "look at that" while pointing to an object what am I referring to?
2. Is it the color, shape, texture, a certain part of the object, or the object as a whole?

Names

1. Does your name have a meaning?
2. What about people who have the same name as you?

Language and Animals

1. Do animals have thoughts? How can you tell?
2. Do animals have a language?
3. Is it that we can't understand animal language?
4. When a dog barks at something, is he trying to tell you something? How can you tell?
5. Do you think the dog is thinking about what it is trying to tell you? Or is it just barking out of instinct, as a reaction?
6. When you tell a dog the command, "sit" and it sits, is this because the dog understands what is being asked of him? Do dogs understand the meaning of "to sit"? Is sitting just a learned behavior?

Summary and questions for, Late for School are contributed by Jake

Author: Mike Reiss

Summary: When he is late for school, Smitty tells of his troubles in getting to school, and how, though he had the best of intentions numerous obstacles situations and circumstances hindered him. As he tells his story, they constantly get more and more outrageous until it's clear he couldn't possibly have dealt with any of these things, the reader begins to question and then completely doubts his credibility.

Questions:

Truths and Lies

Smitty told us many stories, all of which were amazing.

1. Did you believe everything Smitty said?
2. Was some of it hard to believe?
3. If something is hard to believe, does that mean it is not true?
4. How real do you think Smitty's story is?
5. Do you think Smitty was lying when he told about all the things he did on his way to school?
6. A lot of his details are exaggerated, is that lying- if you only add, or embellish?
7. If a story is so unbelievable that's its clearly unreal is it a lie?
8. Have you ever told a story that wasn't true?
9. Did the person believe you? If not, did the person think you were lying?
10. Is it wrong to lie? If so why?
11. Are there different kinds of lies?
12. In order to explain himself to the teacher, Smitty lied, is there ever a good reason to lie?
13. Is it ever OK to lie? If so, when and why?

14. Is it OK to lie if you have a good reason? If so how do you know if you have a good reason to lie?
15. Are you lying if you leave something out of a story? If so why? Or why not?
16. Are you lying if you add something to a story? If so why? Or why not?
17. Does a story have to be believable to be a lie?

Absolutes

Smitty said that he lives by one rule "...I am never late to school..."

1. Is it possible to live by one rule? And never break it?
2. Do you think that Smitty's rule about never being late to school is a good one, Do you think he can always follow it? Is it OK to break your one rule, like Smitty broke his by being late to school?
3. If you break that rule by accident does that make it worth nothing forever?
4. What if something really bad happens?

Tardiness

Smitty had the best of intention to be on time.

1. Why did Smitty try so hard not to be late for school?
2. Have you ever been late to anything? Was it a bad thing being late? Why was it a bad thing to be late?
3. Even with a valid excuse is it still wrong? What counts as valid?
4. Even when bad things happen, why do we try not to be late?
5. If someone is always late what do you think about that person? Why do you think that?
6. Do you think it's "better late than not at all"?
7. If some one has a good reason that they were late does that make it ok that they were late? if so why?

Perseverance

Smitty dealt with many strange and huge things.

1. If you were Smitty's would you have turned back at some point? or would you have gone through everything he did to get to school? If not, is that giving up? If so, why do you think trying hard respected?
2. Is that giving up? Why is perseverance respected? (Especially in extreme circumstance)

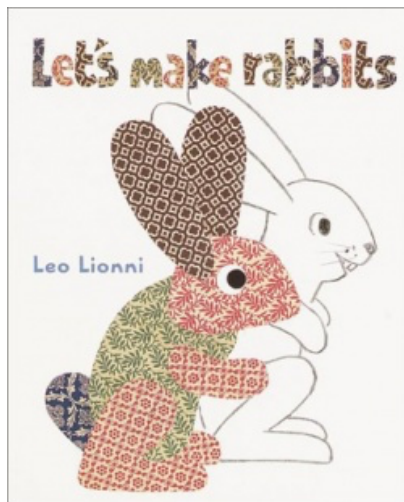
Dreams and Reality

Smitty woke up on Monday after falling asleep outside the school.

1. Do you think his adventure to get to school was just a dream? Why or why not?
2. How do we know he was or was not dreaming??

3. Have you ever dreamed something that could have happened- so real that you thought it did?
4. How do you know your awake now?

Summary, questions, and activities for, Let's Make Rabbits are contributed by Claudia Catalano, Katie D'Ambly, and Rebecca Bailey



Author: Leo Lionni

Summary: The scissors says, "Let's make rabbits" to the pencil. Suddenly, two rabbits appear, one cut out from paper and the other one drawn with pencil. When the rabbits get hungry, the scissors cuts out a picture of a carrot and the pencil draws a carrot so they can eat. Then, one day the rabbits find a real carrot, eat it, and become real.

Questions and Activities:

1. What does it mean to be a real rabbit?
2. If something isn't "real", what is it?
3. If it's not real, how can we be talking about it right now?
4. What are the differences between real and not real?
5. In the story, how do they know that the carrot is real?
6. Does the shadow make it real?
7. Do all things have shadows?
8. Are the scissors and pencil real?
9. Are there any not-real things that have a shadow?
10. If the rabbits aren't real at the beginning of the story, how can they eat the real carrot?
11. How can they be hungry?

Show a real carrot, on a piece of white paper, beside the illustration of the "real" carrot.

1. What is different about the carrot?
2. What is the same?
3. Which carrots are real?
4. How can you tell?

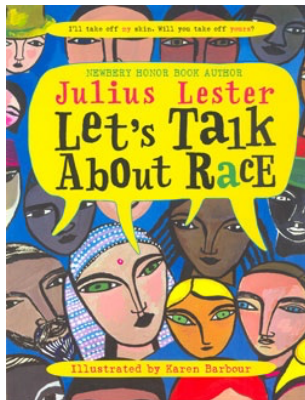
Even before they eat the "real" carrot and get shadows, the scissors and the pencil bunnies talk, move, sleep, and eat.

1. Are they alive?
2. What does it mean to be alive?
3. How can you tell if something is alive?
4. Does it have to talk, move, eat and sleep?

5. Can you tell me some things that are alive? (On chart paper make two columns, headed "alive" and "not alive". Go around the circle, using the list below, asking each student to say whether the thing you have told them is alive and give a reason for their thinking. Note the student name and write the item in the correct column, along with their reason. If you have another adult available, have one adult be the writer to keep the pace moving along. Other students may have different opinions which they can add along with their reasons.)

a rock rolling down the hill	a flower in the vase	an apple on a tree	milk	a stream of water
a rock buried in the dirt	a flower growing in the ground	an apple on the ground	a chicken egg	a light that is on
the sun	the moon	an apple on a table	a bird flying	water running in a sink
a sea turtle egg buried in the sand	a chair	sadness	a bird standing on the ground	
a truck	a blanket	a bulldozer	the wind	

Summary and questions for, Let's Talk About Race are contributed by Nina Miller



Author: Julius Lester

Summary: The author, Julius Lester invites you into his book by writing "I am a story. So are you." He discusses about how each individual has many different elements to their story, from family, to name, to likes and dislikes and maybe even race. However, he says that race is just a portion of your story, but why do people think it is so important? He explains that sometimes we get too caught up on race and make quick assumptions based on skin color. He shares his own story as he explores what makes each of us special.

Questions:

Stories

"I am a story. So are you. So is everyone."

1. Does your story begin when you were born? Why or why not?
2. What makes up your story? Favorite food? Hobbies? Religion? Nationality? Favorite color? RACE?

3. Is skin color a part of your story?
4. How does the color of your skin affect you?
5. What is the important thing about your story?
6. The author says, “race is a story” what does he mean by this?

Race

"Just as I am a story and you are a story and countries tell stories about themselves, race is a story, too."

1. Is race an important part of someone's life? Why is race important and does it define you?
2. Is a person the color of their skin, their eyes, and their hair?
3. If they were to change their skin, hair and eyes would they be the same person?
4. Is race an important part of your story? If so, why? If not why?
5. Why is the race story not true? Why is your story true?

Equality

"There are other ways all of us—even me, even you—think we are better than others."

1. Does being better at a sport make someone a better person than someone else?
2. What does it mean to say everyone is equal?
3. Are better at something than others?
4. Is that part of your story?

Summary and questions for, Zero are contributed by Rudmila Salek



Author: Kathryn Otoshi

Summary: Zero, the main character of ‘Zero’ explores issues of value and self-worth. Zero worries about whether she is worth anything and goes on a roller coaster ride to find the value in her. She fails miserably at first, but in the end she discovers that she does have value, just like the other numbers, and she can help the other numbers count for more. The importance of self esteem is portrayed here in a very playful manner, as we can see Zero rise up from feeling hopeless about herself to becoming very happy and proud in the end

when she finds that she has value too. The reason Zero felt valueless in the beginning was because she had a hollow centre and as a result, she felt empty inside. She compared herself with 1 and got intimidated by his solid, bold strokes and started thinking that she needs to ‘look’ more like 1 and the other numbers in order to have value. However, she later goes on to realize that

regardless of her looks, she holds value. This book can be used beautifully to explain how appearance isn't what gives you value.

Questions:

We know that having zero amount of something means that we have nothing

1. Can something, which is nothing, have value?
2. Does that mean that zero has no value?
3. Would we rather have something than nothing?

The value that Zero finds in herself in the end is a complementary one. Her value is apparent only when she is combined with other numbers such as 1,2,3, etc

1. Is there anything that has value in and of itself?

Zero compared herself with 1 and got intimidated by his solid, bold strokes and started thinking that she needs to 'look' more like 1 and the other numbers in order to have value.

1. Does physical appearance give you value? Why or why not?

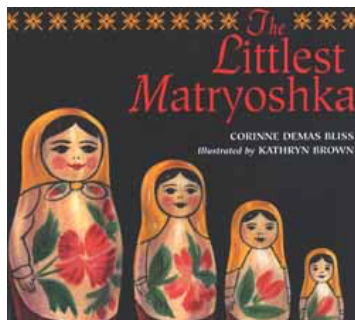
We know all things don't have the same value.

1. Does something worth \$10 necessarily have more value than something worth \$5?
2. How do we decide how much value something has?

Value can be of several different kinds- Monetary, sentimental, practical, etc

1. Do some kinds of value have more value than others?
2. Is monetary value more important than other kinds of value? For example, is a large sum of money, such as \$5000, worth more than an old ring, that happens to be a family heirloom?

Summary and questions for, The Littlest Matryoshka are contributed by Sara Vazquez; edited by Jayme Johnson



Author: Corinne Bliss

Summary: The journey begins in a Russian village, where six special sisters are made out of wood—they are nested dolls you see... So these Matryoshka sisters travel far, seeking a home in America. The biggest sister, Anna, is made to keep them safe, but Nina, the smallest sister, faces danger as her sisters are sold at a discount. Swept away, she finds scary situations; her only comfort, remembering her sisters. How will Nina find them?

Questions:

Essence and Consciousness

1. How is Nina like a person?
2. How is she different?
3. Is Nina a person? How do you know?
4. Is she more like a person or a doll? Why?
5. What is Nina like? Does Nina have a character/personality?

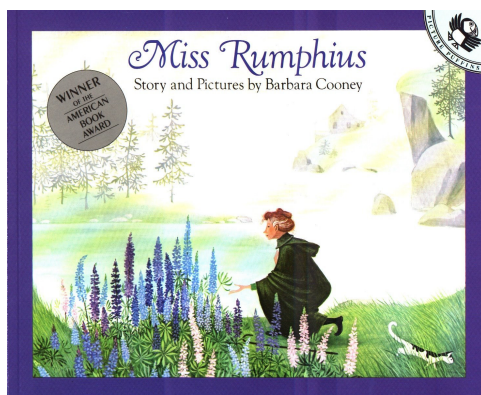
Nicholai the toy maker said, "You are six sisters," and gave each one a name. Then he sends them to find a home in America.

1. Do Nina and her sisters really know that each other are there? Why or why not?
2. Do they know they are sisters? Explain.

Philosophy of Mind

1. How can you let someone know what you are thinking or feeling?
2. If a person can't let you know what they think or how they feel by doing the things listed does that mean they can't think or feel? Why or why not?
3. If a person can't hear, speak, or see, does that mean the person can't think? Why or why not?
4. How is that like or different than the sisters in the story?
5. What do you need to think?
6. What does it mean when someone says, "Think with your heart," or "follow your heart?"
7. Is it different than when someone says, "Use your head!"? If so, what is the difference?
8. Do people ever have to decide between thinking with their heart or thinking with their head?
9. Is the mind the same thing as the brain?
10. Could it be different?
11. Nadia and Nina seem to have minds?

Summary and questions for, Miss Rumphius are contributed by Jenna Caputo



Author: Barbara Cooney

Summary: Miss Rumphius' Grandfather tells her to make the world more beautiful. She has difficulty coming up with a way to do this until she plants Lupin and the wind carries the seeds. The next summer she travels, spreading Lupin seeds. She presents the same challenge to her great niece at the conclusion of the book.

Questions:**Making the World More Beautiful**

Miss Rumphius' grandfather tells her that she must make the world more beautiful

1. What does Miss Rumphius' grandfather do to make the world more beautiful?
2. What does Miss Rumphius do to make the world more beautiful?
3. Are there other ways to make the world more beautiful? Explain.
4. Is there a right or wrong way to make the world more beautiful?
5. Name something that you think is beautiful. What would you do to make it more beautiful?
6. Does making something more beautiful make it better?
7. Can you make a person more beautiful? Does that make a better person?

Family Values

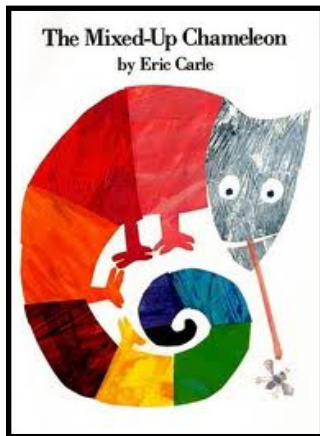
Miss Rumphius' grandfather gives her a duty, which she passes along to her great niece

1. What did Miss Rumphius want to do just like her grandfather?
2. What does Miss Rumphius' grandfather tell her that she must do?
3. What is something that your parents have told you that you must do? Did you also think it was important, or did you just listen because they were your parents?
4. When you grow up, do you think it's still important to listen to your parents?
5. Do you think that you have a responsibility to do absolutely everything you can to make sure that the desires of your family members are fulfilled?

Friendship

When Miss Rumphius travels to Faraway places she meets many people who become her friends

1. What does the Bapa Raja give to Miss Rumphius?
2. Why did Miss Rumphius become friends with him?
3. What do you like about the people who are your friends.
4. Is it possible to be friends with somebody who you know you probably won't see again?
5. What is it about a person that makes them your friend?

Summary and questions for, The Mixed-Up Chameleon are contributed by Ellen Duthie**Author:** Eric Carle

Summary: The Mixed-Up Chameleon is the story of a chameleon who is pretty much like any other chameleon you might come across. It changes colour every now and then, from green to brown, to red to yellow. It's bright and green when it's warm and its belly is full, and grey and dull when it's cold and hungry. It sits around eating flies, like all other chameleons, and leads a generally unexciting life. One day, it goes to the zoo and is amazed by all those different animals it sees. It looks around and the action starts. It sees a polar bear and wishes it was as big and white as that. Bang! Its wish comes true. It sees a flamingo and wishes it was as beautiful as that. Bang! Its wish

comes true and it grows wings and flamingo legs. It sees a fox and wishes it had a tail like that. Its wish comes true. And it continues wishing until it ends up with fish fins, deer antlers, a giraffe's neck, a tortoise's shell, an elephant's face and trunk and a pair of seal flippers (see picture below). Suddenly it sees a fly. Our chameleon friend is hungry but how can it possibly get at the fly in its current state? It wishes it was itself again. And bang! Its wish comes true. And it uses its super sticky tongue to eat the fly!

Questions:**Happiness**

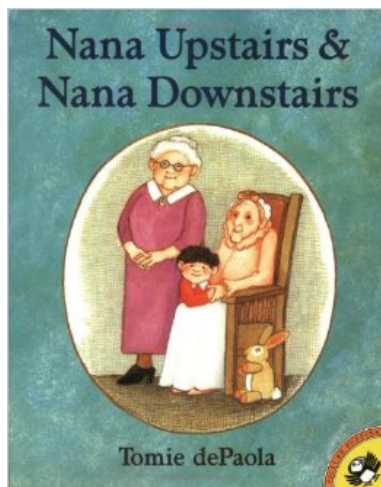
1. The chameleon looks at what other animals have and wishes it was like them. Do you sometimes wish you had something other people have? Like what? Do you think it would make you happier to have those things? Why?
2. The chameleon gets everything it wants. Does it bring it happiness? Why?
3. Is it possible to get given everything you want and not be happy? Is it possible that what makes us happy at a given time may actually make us more miserable in the long term?
4. Say three things that make you very happy. What is it to be happy? And what is it to live a happy life? Could a happy life contain moments of unhappiness?
5. At the end, the chameleon wishes it was itself again. What do you like about being yourself? Is there anything you don't like about being yourself? Do you think liking things about being yourself gives you happiness?
6. Have you ever positively not wanted something and, when given it, found out that it made you very happy?
7. Do you think happiness is something we can set out to achieve or is it something that falls our way?

Change

1. The chameleon changes a lot throughout the story. Would you say the chameleon is still a chameleon, and still the same chameleon, after becoming big and white like a polar bear? What about after growing flamingo wings and legs? After getting a fox tail?
2. By the time it sees the fly, there is not one bit of the original chameleon's body left. Is it still a chameleon? Is it still our friend from the first page? Why? Why not?
3. If you gradually change all of something's parts, can it still be the same thing? If we have a sock with a hole in it and darn it and then darn it again when it grows another hole, and again and again, until none of the original threads are left, but only the threads used for darning, is this the same sock we started off with? Why? Why not?
4. If we change a ship's planks over the years, until we end up with all new planks, is it still the same ship? Why? If we change all the planks of a ship at once, is it still the same ship? Why? What's the difference between changing them gradually over time and suddenly, now?
5. What if someone has kept all the old planks of the ship and decides to build a second ship with them? Which is the original ship?

Personal Identity

1. What makes a chameleon a chameleon? What makes a person a person?
2. If we took away your arm, would you still be yourself? How about both arms? Your body? Part of your brain?
3. What makes you yourself? What would have to be taken away from you for you to no longer be yourself?
4. What makes you the same person you were when you were a baby? How can we be so different (much, much bigger, with much more control over our bodies and much more complex thoughts) and yet the same?



Author: Tomie dePaola

Summary: Tommy loves his Sunday visits to see his two Nanas. One Nana lives upstairs in bed, because she is ninety four. One day she dies. Tommy rushes to the bed where she once was, only to find it empty. Tommy must come to understand that death means not seeing Nana again, at least as the person he remembers. But, Tommy wonders over a falling star, perhaps Nana Upstairs is not so far off after all.

Questions:

Tommy is told that Nana Upstairs has died.

1. Has someone close to you ever died? If so, how did you feel when you found out?

2. Tommy wonders where Nana Upstairs went. Where do you think we go when we die? Do we go anywhere?
3. What do you think happens to a person when they die?
4. Do you think it is possible to survive death? If so, how so? If not, why not?

His mother tells him that Nana lives on in his memories.

1. What does it mean to live on in a memory? Is it the same as being alive? How is it different? Are there any similarities?
2. Do you think that being remembered is a way to survive death?
3. Do you think your memories of people or pets that have died somehow allow them to continue to survive after death?
4. Do you think other people's memories of you will allow you to survive death someday? How? What do you think reality will be like?

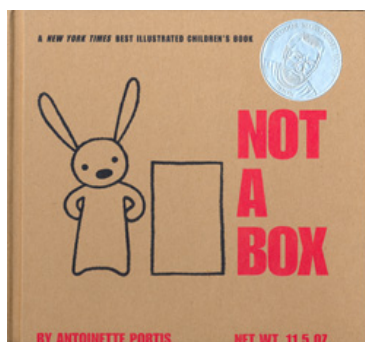
One day, Tommy realizes that Nana Downstairs has come to be very much like Nana Upstairs.

1. Have you ever noticed that some people are older than you? Have you ever noticed that someone has gotten older?
2. What do you think happens when you get old? Is it scary? What makes it seem scary? Why might it not be scary?
3. Both of Tommy's Nanas were very old when they died. Do you have to be old to die?

At the end of the story, Tommy says that both of his Nanas are Nana Upstairs's

1. Why does seeing a shooting star make Tommy think of his Nana? Do you think there is connection between his Nana and the shooting star? What is the connection?
2. What does Tommy mean when he says that both of his Nanas are Nana Upstairs's? Why do you think so?
3. Does Tommy think that his Nanas have survived death? Why do you think so? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

Summary and questions for, Not a Box are contributed by Caitlin Granahan



Author: Antoinette Portis

Summary: Bunny sure has fun with a cardboard box but some people just don't understand. When repeatedly asked why he is playing with the box, Bunny makes it clear that the box can become whatever he wants it to be, whether it is a rocket, robot, or racecar. It is his Not-A-Box!

Questions:**Imagination**

In the story, the narrator asks, “Why are you sitting in a box?” The bunny then insists that, “It’s not a box.”

1. How does bunny reply to people when they ask him what he is doing with the box?
2. What is bunny doing when he is playing with his not-a-box?
3. What are some examples of the things bunny pretends the box is?
4. Do you ever use objects and pretend they are something different? Do you still know what they are in real life even though you are pretending it is something different?
5. Do you think bunny knows that his not-a-box is a box in real life?
6. Are movies pretend or real life? How do you know?
7. When you watch a scary movie, are you scared in real life?
8. How can you be scared but know that you really aren’t in danger?
9. If you know the movie is just pretend, then why are you scared?

Reality

In the story, the narrator states “Now you’re wearing a box? But again, the bunny insists, “This is not a box.”

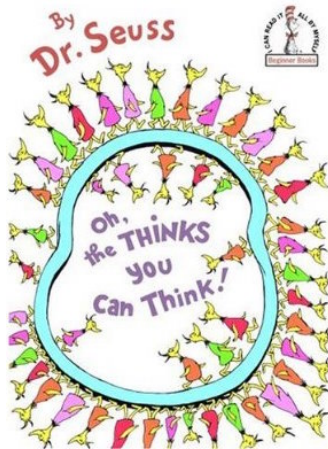
1. How can bunny imagine that the box is all these different things?
2. Does he know that these objects exist in reality?
3. Can you imagine about things you have not experienced? Do you think bunny has experienced being a robot, flying in a spaceship or driving a racecar?
4. How do we know about things we have not experienced?
5. Can you imagine things that don’t already exist in reality? How do we invent new things then, like computers, TV etc?
6. What are other ways in which we use our imagination?
7. (see Figure 1) What do you see when you look at this picture? Some may see duck, some may see rabbit.
8. How is it that some people see a duck and some people see a rabbit?
9. Why might this be important? What does this difference show us?

Fiction

Near the end of the story, the narrator asks bunny, “Are you still standing around in that box?” and bunny yells, “It’s NOT NOT NOT NOT a box!”

1. Are the scenarios that bunny is creating fiction or reality?
2. What else do we imagine that create worlds that are not real (fictional)? Like when people play games, daydream, dream, or creating art?
3. Can fictional worlds actually happen in real life?

Summary, activity, and questions for, Oh the Thinks You Can Think are contributed by Nathaniel Mahlberg and modified by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz



Author: Dr. Seuss

Summary: “Oh the Thinks you can Think” by Dr. Seuss is a lively way to inspire a conversation among elementary school children about puzzling philosophical matters such as the nature of thought, imagination, reality, art, and representation, as well as issues of possibility and conceivability. Children should be charmed by Dr. Seuss’ play on the word “thinks” for the “things” in the pictures. The pun is a trick on our inclination to consider pictures to be the things they portray – a trick that reminds us that pictures are imaginings, creations of a mind ... thinks. Yet pictures are real in a real way.

Because Dr. Seuss drew these crazy things he thought up we, the readers/lookers, are able to think them too. In other words, something about pictures allows Dr. Seuss to create what is “in his head” such that we can have those thoughts, too.

Activity & Questions:

Before reading the book, ask the children to draw a picture with black water, a white sky, a boat, and bloogs blowing by. After you have finished reading the book you can return to the page, "Think of black water;/ Think up a black sky ..." You may ask:

1. How is your picture different from Dr. Seuss'?
2. Are you right about what bloogs are? Is Dr. Seuss? Why? What do you have to know to know what "bloog" means?
3. If Dr. Seuss had said there were leaves blowing by instead of bloogs, would the pictures we all drew be the same? Why are we more likely to agree about what “leaves” means?
4. How did you learn what the word “leaf” means? Is this how we learned what “bloog” means? Does the word “bloog” have a meaning now?

Dr. Seuss describes his pictures and calls the things in his pictures "thinks."

1. Are his pictures of things or thinks? Why does Dr. Seuss call them "thinks"?
2. Are the thinks you think when reading this book exactly the same thinks Dr. Seuss was thinking? How do you know?
3. How does this book get you to think these thinks?
4. How can you represent thoughts? What are some ways you think? In words, pictures, or feelings?

Turn to the "Think left!/ Think right!/ ... " page and cover the words.

1. What are the thinks\things you think\see in this picture?
2. When I read the words, how does this change?
3. What are the words able to add to what you think about when looking at the picture?

4. Are the thinks you can think with words different than the thinks you can think with pictures? How? Why?
5. When you think, do you think in words, or in picture, or both, or in something else, or in nothing?

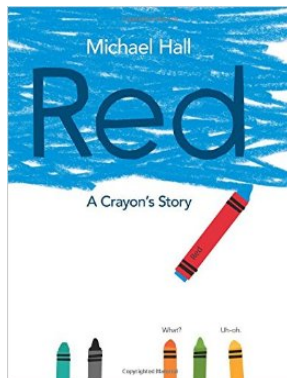
Turn to the page, "You can think about Night,/ a night in Na-Nupp..."

1. Three moons!? How can there be three moons?
2. Why can we think of things that don't actually exist? Why can Dr. Seuss draw them?
3. Can we think of things that can't possibly exist? Can Dr. Seuss draw them? Why?
4. Are there some things it is impossible for us to think about? What are they? Why can't we think about them?
5. Can Dr. Seuss draw them or write them? [Different things you can suggest to puzzle about here that may draw different answers: infinity, what it would be like to be someone else (or to have been born someone else), a square circle, $2+2=5$...]

Meta Cognition and reality

1. When you read do you think?
2. Do you ever think about your thinking?
3. How does picturing what you are reading help you understand a text?
4. Are thoughts real?
5. Do thoughts become real when you say them, right them down, or act them out?

Summary and questions for, Red: A Crayon's Story are contributed by Alicia Crew and Piyari Paienjton



Author: Michael Hall

Summary: Meet Red, a blue crayon with a red label. Everyone calls him Red, well, because that's what his label says. Following this logic, everyone expects him to draw in red, but as much as Red tries he can't draw anything red. Some people say he just needs more practice. Others think he is just not that bright. Then one day, a friend asks him to draw her an ocean for her boat, and he's great at it! After this, he realizes his label was wrong. He's not Red, he's Blue! Once his peers recognize he is a blue crayon, they praise his drawing abilities and call him brilliant. Blue himself draws proudly in blue from then on.

Questions:

Expectations and Value

"He was red, but he wasn't very good at it..."

1. How can one tell he was not very good at it?
2. Can you be good or bad at being yourself?

3. Have you ever tried to do something that you just couldn't do, no matter how hard you tried?
4. If somebody sees you struggling to do something right, is it helpful or frustrating for them to keep giving you advice on how to do that one thing?

"Will you make a blue ocean for my boat?" ... "I can't. I'm red."

1. Why did Red refuse to draw a blue ocean at first?
2. Are labels always accurate?
3. Have you ever felt you needed to be good at something because of a label somebody gave you?
4. Have you ever tried to avoid doing something you don't know anything about? Why?
5. Are you ever scared to try something new?

"Give him time .. He'll catch on." ... "But he didn't catch on ..."

1. Has there been any time you have been given a label that you do not identify with? When / why?
2. Who gets to decide labels?
3. Are labels ever harmful?
4. Can you think of an example of labels being helpful? Can they help at all in social organization?
5. If labels can be both helpful and harmful, what kinds of situations is it okay to use labels in?

"Who could have known he was blue?"

1. What's the difference between being a bad red and a good blue?
2. Are expectations good tools for measuring the value of a product?
3. Can your expectations blind you from seeing the worth of something if it is different from what you expected?
4. If expectations can be both good and bad, what is a productive way of using expectations as a tool without restricting ourselves?
5. Are expectations more beneficial if they are applied to tasks, or to people themselves?

"Everyone seemed to have something to say.."

1. Is our worth and identity defined by society's expectations?
2. Is our worth determined by our judgement of ourselves? Judgement of what?
3. Does your quality of the work mirror your own value? Does the A you got on a math test say something about your personal value?
4. Are all people "worthy" of respect?
5. If a person is very worthy, does his/her value decrease if their performance deteriorates?

Identity and Mutability

"I'm Blue!"

1. What makes you you?
2. Is it how you see yourself?
3. Or is it some objective property that you possess?
4. Is it how well you do on a test?

“But even with all our help and all his hard work, he just couldn’t get the hang of it.”

1. How are identity and labels related?
2. Can we ever change our identity? In the eyes of others? In the eyes of ourselves?
3. If we can change some things, what are they?
4. What parts of our identity are unchangeable? Are these aspects significant?

“Frankly, I don’t think he is very bright.”

1. What effect can labels have on how we perform?
2. Have you ever felt less motivated to do something because you have been “labelled” bad at it?
3. Do you think that our focus on “intelligence” or being conventionally good at something can blind us to recognizing unique talents that somebody might have?
4. Or are some talents or proficiencies just more valuable than others?

“Nice! It’s so you!” .. “But it so wasn’t.”

1. Can you tell what somebody is good at just by looking at them?
2. Is it true that only men are good at science and only women are good at art?
3. Have you ever felt discouraged from trying to become good at something because you have been told you are not “meant” to be good at it?

Summary and questions for, **So Few of Me** are contributed by Kate Doyle



Author: Peter H. Reynolds

Summary: Leo works really hard to get things done. But Leo encounters a problem: no matter how hard he works to get things done, he always finds more things to do! He decides it might be easier to enlist the help of more Leos to help him get everything done. The work keeps growing and two Leos quickly progress to ten Leos, with a never-ending amount of work. He finally decides to take a nap and has a dream. The other Leos catch him and get upset with him for doing something that was not on the list. Leo finally decides that he

is content with just one of him so he can have time to dream.

Questions:

Leo felt pressure to get things done, but the tasks never ended.

1. Why did Leo feel like he had to finish all the tasks?
2. Why do people make lists? Have you ever made a list? Did it help?
3. Why do you think there was a never-ending supply of things for the Leos to do?
4. Do your parents and teachers ask you to do things like chores and homework? Do you feel like you have to do them? Why?
5. Do you think adding more of you would help you get chores done or just create more work to be done? Why or Why not?
6. Do the chores and homework interfere with your ability to do other things you like to do? How do you balance these competing demands?
7. Is it better to do something really well or a lot of things not as well?

Free Time

Leo wanted less time to do tasks and more time to dream. He decided just doing his best was enough.

1. Do you think Leo should have put “dreaming” on his to-do list? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the other Leos for yelling at the original Leo for dreaming?
3. Is dreaming more or less important than doing chores and activities? Why or why not?
4. Have you even gotten in trouble for “day-dreaming” in class? If so, why?
5. Do you think you should be allowed “free time,” a time in which you don’t have to do anything? Why or why not?
6. If you made a to-do list, would you put “free time” on it? Why or why not?

Identity

Leo wanted the ten other Leos to disappear. He wanted more time to dream and decided doing his best was enough.

1. Are the other Leos exact copies of the original Leo? Why or why not?
2. Who is the real Leo? How can you tell which Leo is which?
3. If all the Leos are doing different things at the same time (one playing soccer and one playing violin) are they different people? Why or why not?
4. Do you have a voice in your head telling you need to do things? If so, who is it? Why?

Summary and questions for, Spork are contributed by Amalie Dahl Haue**Author:** Kyo Maclear

Summary: *Spork* is a story about a piece of cutlery, which is neither a spoon nor a fork. Throughout the story it first tries to be more 'spoonish', by hiding its 'forkish' attributes and then more 'forkish' by hiding its 'spoonish' attributes. None of this works out very well and the poor utensil doesn't seem to fit in anywhere, until a big messy thing hits the kitchen!

Questions:**Objects for Thoughts**

At one point in the story Spork tries to look more 'spoonish' and at another point he tries to look more 'forkish'.

1. How do you understand spoonish and forkish?
2. What distinguishes a spoon from a fork?
3. Can you name some important properties of a fork and a spoon?
4. Is Spork a fork, when he doesn't wear the paper crown?
5. Which important properties of a fork does Spork have when he is wearing the paper crown?
6. Why does Spork decide to try to pick just one thing to be?
7. Is a fork really just one thing? After all, you can use it for different things like...

Intersecting Thoughts

In the story, Spork is said to be a bit of both – namely a spoon and a fork.

1. What are cockapoos, labradoodles and cadoodles?
2. What, if anything, do these breeds have in common with Spork?
3. Similarly, is Spork both a spoon and a fork, or a third thing?
4. Now, explain how you understand a bit of both!
5. Can you be a bit of a lot of things? How? Are you?

Creating Thoughts

In the story Spork is upset until a baby uses him to eat.

1. Why is Spork upset?
2. Did Spork change towards the end of the story? Explain!
3. Do you think a ball is valuable when you use it for a game?
4. Do you think a ball is valuable when you keep it in your room, while you are doing homework?
5. Which similarities and differences do you find between a ball and Spork?
6. Do you think a diamond is valuable? Explain!

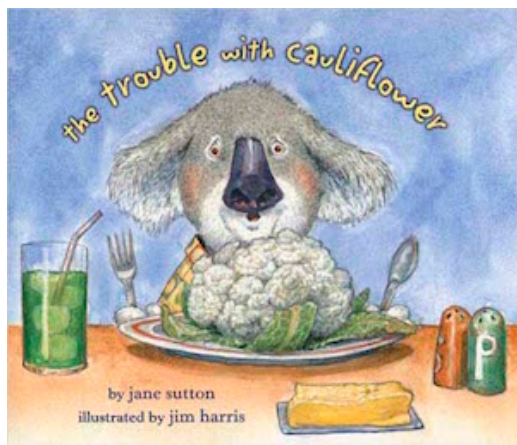
7. Do you have something that is valuable? Explain what makes it valuable.
8. Name one person that you love and explain what makes this person lovable.
9. Compare value and love and explain some differences and similarities between them.
10. With our discussion in mind, can you explain what makes something valuable?

Imperfect Thoughts

In the story, Spork's mum and dad think he is perfect just the way he is.

1. Do you think Spork is perfect because his parents think he is?
2. Do you need someone to tell you that you are perfect, or can you be the only one to know?
3. Can you tell us about some things that are valuable but not perfect and vice versa?
><p align=left>*At the end of the story, the book describes Spork as "Just a bit round. Just a bit pointy. Just right."*
4. What does it mean to be just right?
5. Did Spork become just right, or was he just right throughout the entire story?
6. What does a perfect circle look like?
7. Do you think all perfect things are good?
8. Do you think perfect things exist at all? Describe them or explain why you cannot find any!
9. What do you imagine when you think of a perfect world?

Summary and questions for, *The Trouble with Cauliflower* are contributed by Elizabeth King and modified by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz



Author: Jane Sutton

Summary: Mortimer (a koala) is convinced that cauliflower causes bad luck. When he eats a stew with cauliflower in it anyway, he does in fact have bad luck the next day. Yet, when he eats his friend's "vegetable surprise" casserole, without knowing it contains cauliflower, he has a wonderful time at the fair. This story explores the ideas of luck, superstition, and expectations.

Questions:

Luck

"It's just that whenever I eat cauliflower, I have bad luck the next day."

1. Do you know someone who is especially lucky?
2. What makes them lucky?

3. What about bad luck? Can someone be unlucky?
4. Can an object give you good or bad luck?
5. Do you think that there really is such a thing as luck? Why?

Self-fulfilling Prophecies

"Cauliflower is bad luck! I never should have eaten that stew."

1. Does cauliflower give Mortimer bad luck?
2. Was Mortimer's bad day luck, or a coincidence?
3. If Mortimer hadn't eaten the cauliflower, how would his day have been?
4. If Mortimer had believed that cauliflower gave him good luck, would his day have been really good?
5. Can believing something about your future (even if it isn't true) affect what happens to you?

Culpability

Mortimer did not pass the [driving] test... "I will never eat cauliflower again!" Mortimer moaned

1. Is it someone's fault that Mortimer had bad luck? If so, whose?
2. Is the fact that Mortimer crashes the car and fails his driving test his fault? What about his bad luck?
3. Was it Mortimer's fault that he spilled his juice? Was what about his bad luck?
4. Do people call something bad luck just so that they don't get in trouble?

Questions by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. Can your thoughts and beliefs affect reality? How?
2. Can your thoughts and beliefs affect your perception?
3. If you tell yourself that you are going to have a good day, do you?
4. DO you have any superstitions?

Summary and questions for, Tusk Tusk are contributed by Sulaiha Schwartz

TUSK TUSK
David McKee



Author: David McKee

Summary: *Tusk Tusk* is about black and white elephants that wage a war against one another. The peace-loving elephants disappear into the jungle and the other black and white elephants kill each other. For many years there are no elephants in the world, until the grandchildren of the peace-loving elephants emerge from the jungle.

Questions:**Violence**

The black and white elephants kill each other because they do not like each other. The peace-loving elephants run away.

1. Have you ever hurt someone because you didn't like them?
2. Has anyone ever hurt you because they didn't like you?
3. Is it good to hurt someone because you don't like them?
4. Is it always wrong, or do you think that it is okay to use violence to solve problems sometimes?
5. Can you think of examples when it would be wrong?
6. When would it be acceptable?
7. Should the peace-loving elephants have run away, or could they have done something to help solve the elephants' problems?

Character

The elephants in the story did not like each other because they looked different from one another.

1. Do you think the elephants' skin color or the size of their ears means that they are bad elephants?
2. Do you think that the way you look on the outside reflects your inner qualities (i.e. your personality)?
3. Can you dislike someone before you even get to know them?

Prejudice

The elephants in the story did not like each other because of the color of their skin.

1. Would you dislike your friend if s/he had bigger or smaller ears than you?
2. What if s/he had a different color skin than you?
3. Do you think it is okay to judge someone because they look different than you do?
4. Is it the same thing to not like someone because they look different than you as it is to not like someone because they were mean to you?

At the end of the book the grey elephants don't like each other because they have little and big ears.

1. If you were to continue writing the story, what would you write?
2. Do you think that the elephants will stay peaceful or will they wage war against each other like their grandparents did because of the color of their skin?
3. What does it mean to be peace-loving?
4. If the grey elephants were peace-loving, why were they still finding fault with one another's appearance?
5. Would you still consider the elephants to be peace-loving even though they were prejudiced towards each other?
6. Do you think it is possible to not be prejudiced at all and to never judge someone based on a character trait?

Metaphysics warm up activities

Contributed by: University of Washington, Center for Philosophy for Children

Warm-up #1:

If you had to describe yourself using only 5 words, what would they be? Write them down.

Warm-up #2:

Think of something that's real.

Is there a way it might not be real? Think of something that's not real. Is there a way it could be real?

Warm-up #3:

Think of (and write down) something that happened (or is happening) In the Present

1 minute ago 1 hour ago

1 day ago

1 year ago

5 years ago

10 years ago

Your earliest memory

Now, return to the present and think of something: 1 minute from now

1 hour from now

1 day from now

1 year from now

5 years from now

10 years from now

As far in the future as you can imagine

Warm-up #4:

Think of:

Something that is Something that was Something that will be Something that won't be Something that could be Something that can't be

<https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/range-warm-activities-philosophy-sessions/>

Something that should be Something that shouldn't be Something you wish was

Warm-up #5:

Think of:

Something that exists

Something that doesn't exist Something that might exist

Something that might not exist Something that could exist but doesn't

Something that doesn't exist but could Something that used to exist

Something that will exist

Something you will exist



Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for Year KS1 – KS2

How many Apples?

Seems easy enough, but how many apples are there really?

Philosophical Potential	Metaphysics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reality, Existence, Ontology, Imagination Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation, Sign, Signifier Epistemology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empiricism (knowledge from sensory experience) Evidence
Session Objective(s)	Community of Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should connect contributions to what others have said when prompted Some children should connect contributions to what others have said spontaneously
Facilitation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many apples have I presented? Is everything I've shared an apple? Are any of the things I've shared real? Are any of things I've shared not real? If you could order the things I've how would you do so and why? If you can see / taste / touch / smell / hear something is it real? Are there real things that you can't see / taste / touch / smell / hear? Are all real things physical? Can non-physical things be real? Can imaginary things be real? Can you think of something that you can imagine that is not real? Can you think of something real, but you can't imagine it? Is there one apple that is more real than the others? Can things be more or less real?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pom-pom Circle of chairs A real apple A model apple A photograph of an apple A drawing of an apple The word 'Apple' written on a card

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An invisible apple 	
1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Re) introduce facilitator(s) Briefly establish or reiterate your class rules. E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're always asking questions We share our ideas We care about other people's ideas too We support our ideas with reasons (we say 'because') We're not scared to disagree We often change our mind We speak one at a time We encourage speakers by listening and looking at them 	
2. STIMULUS		10 min
Presentation of stimulus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the apples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A granny smith A plastic apple An invisible apple <p>You may want to present these at the same time, or leave them for later</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A photo of an apple A drawing on an apple The word 'apple' 	
Thinking Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass each 'apple' round the circle in silence. 	
Sharing Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share one word Share one word that came to mind during your thinking time. E.g. <i>Real, trick, invisible, game, pretend, taste, touch,</i> <p>These words help you assess comprehension and detect topics for the central question.</p>	
3. QUESTIONS		2 min
Initial Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Question: How many apples (have I presented)? 	
4. DIALOGUE		30 min
First Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin the dialogue with a volunteer's contribution 	
Collecting Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite children with a range of different answers to share their reasons, linking their comments to the last speaker. 	
Detecting Central Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detect a central question from the topics discussed so far. Write this new question on the board. Possible questions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is real? Are there real things you can't see / taste / touch / smell / hear? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are all real things physical? ○ Can imaginary things be real? 	
Getting Focused	<p>Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is everything I've shared an apple? ○ Are any of the things I've shared real? ○ Are any of things I've shared not real? ○ If you could order the things I've how would you do so and why? ○ If you can see / taste / touch / smell / hear something is it real? ○ Are there real things that you can't see / taste / touch / smell / hear? ○ Are all real things physical? ○ Can non-physical things be real? ○ Can imaginary things be real? ○ Can you think of something that you can imagine that is not real? ○ Can you think of something real, but you can't imagine it? ○ Is there one apple that is more real than the others? ○ Can things be more or less real? 	
Digging Deeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group break-out discussion on particularly challenging aspects of the emerging ideas(s). 	
Final Push	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible and profitable, link the detected question to the initial question How many apples? 	5 min
5. REFLECTION		7 min
Reflection on the Community of Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening reflection: Something Interesting someone else said 	

The Invisible Pet

By: Sara Stanley

The following is an extract from an enquiry with nursery children (F indicates me as facilitator. The children's names have been changed).

I filled an empty cardboard box with a furry blanket and asked the children if they would like to hold my new pet.

Ellie: I just want to see it.

Kate: No...

F: Why not?

Kate: I don't like to... I don't love it.

I showed the children the contents of the empty box and asked them to indicate who had seen my pet. Only three children said yes.

F: So do you think you'd like to play with it now?

Mollie: Yes, but it's so small.

Ellie: I do.

F: But you said you didn't see it Ella.

Ellie: It was deep down, I think.

Sarah: You said you couldn't see it so why do you want to play with it?

F: I'm going to let him have a little sleep now because he's very tired. Maybe you can see him later.

The children went off to play. A while later I declared that he had escaped. I gathered them all together and asked the children whether they could help find him. All the children without exception joined in for several minutes. Many brought back stuffed toys or nursery equipment, which we put in the middle of the circle when we reconvened.

F: I don't think any of these things you've found are my pet. Was there really a pet in my box, do you think? All these people said they couldn't see it but everybody went to look for it. How can you look for something you couldn't see?

Ellie: It was too deep down. We just couldn't see it.

Mollie: You should have lifted the blanket up for us.

F: Oh look, there he is. I've found him (I hold him in my hand). Can you all see him now?

Kelly: (Reaches out to stroke him) I can feel him but not see him.

Max: Yeah, oh, I don't know where he is.

Lucy: He might have hopped off again.

Mollie: No, he's not there any more.

Interestingly, Mollie was one of the children who claimed previously to have seen him. I wanted to test her indecision again.

F: Do you want to hold him, Mollie?

Mollie: Yes, oh, he's so tickly.

Pippa: (Stroking it) We are just stroking our hands. There is nothing there.

Jack: There is, look. Tickle tickle.

Mollie: But we found different pets.

Jack: Mrs. Stanley's pet hopped away. He might have needed a wee.

Pippa: Maybe he is just invisible?

Mollie: If he is invisible he must still be in the classroom, maybe in the walls? We might hear him squeaking?

Henry: You can't play a game with something that's not real, you know.

Lucy Looks for a Real Number

By: Peter Worley

Stimulus:

It's Lucy's birthday and today she has turned 10. She has finally reached the age of her favourite number: the number 10.

She has decided that she wants to try and find a real number 10 so that she can keep it forever. Lucy thinks to herself '... Mmm, where am I going to find a number 10?' She thinks for a while longer and then she has an idea. 'I know, she says, I'm 10 today, so: am I a number 10?'

Task question 1: Is Lucy a number 10?

(Anchor the children with the following question: has she found a real number 10? Or this one: so, what is a real number? Use this to anchor the children to the task-question throughout the enquiry.)

Next she thinks, 'maybe I can find a real number 10 on the number line', so she goes along to the number line in the classroom and points to the number 10. 'Is that a real number 10?'

TQ 2: Is the number 10 on the number line a real number 10?

Lucy then has another idea, so she runs to her piggy bank holds it upside down and rattles it around for a few minutes until she has 10 ten pence coins. She places the 10 coins next to each other and wonders if she has finally found a real number 10.

TQ 3: Is '10 things' a real number 10?

Finally, Lucy stands up and counts out loud: 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, TEN! There,' she says, 'now I've found a real number 10.'

TQ 4: Has she finally found a real number 10 by counting out loud to 10?

TQ 5: How do you think you might find a real number 10?

Nested Questions:

- What are numbers?
- Where are numbers?
- If there were no human beings would there still be any numbers?
- What happens to numbers when we are not using them?
- Are numbers invented or discovered? Is zero a number?
- Can you touch a number?
- Is it possible to find a number?

Extension activity:

How would you explain what a number is to someone who has never heard of numbers?

Ask the children to get into pairs or groups and prepare how they would undertake this task. You could even get them to try it with younger children in the school. The teacher could role-play an alien or child that doesn't know what numbers are and at each stage of their explanation let them know when what they have said, in some way, depends on knowing what numbers are:

Children: "Numbers are when you count."

Role-playing teacher: "But I don't know what 'counting' is because I don't know what 'numbers' are. Try again."

You may want to remind them that there was a time when they didn't know what numbers were, but then they learned what they were. You could ask them: "how did you learn what numbers were?"

Teaching Strategy: break the circle on number

Write the word 'number' in the centre of the board and ask the children to say what a number is, but tell them they are not allowed to say the word 'number' or 'numbers' in their answer. Write the beginning of this sentence: "It is..." on the board in the top left hand corner. Encourage them to say what has not already been said and tell them to listen carefully so that they don't do this. This activity can be done with any word you ask the children to define and it encourages them to avoid simply thinking in a circular way: "a number is when you count numbers." This leaves you with the same question: but what are numbers?

What Shape is Time?

Metaphysical lesson/activity by Jason Buckley

I suggest running this enquiry as a “Starting Positions” session, with the participants first in pairs, then fours, then eights as you move from a quick warm-up question to something more substantial and then on to the main question which will be the focus for the bulk of your session. I’ve put the questions on the attached PPT for your convenience.

Have the class stand in a circle around you, pair up, and then one from each pair takes a step towards you and turns to face their partner so that you have an inner and an outer circle. That makes it easy to assign sides for the first two questions if you want to add the energy of disagreement, and to quickly move from pairs to fours to eights.

2s Question – Future or Past?

You have a time machine that you can use to go either to the future or to the past. It will take you there and bring you back. You can only use it once, and it is the only time machine that will ever exist. Future or past?

4s Question – The Reality of Time

“You cannot suffer the past or future because they do not exist. What you are suffering is your memory and your imagination.” Agree or disagree?

This is a quotation from the Indian spiritualist, Sadhguru. It’s a nice fusion of metaphysical questions of the reality of time and questions about the value of living in the moment.

8s Question – What shape is time?

Perhaps because we can’t see time, when we talk about it we sometimes use words that are normally about places: “The distant past”, “The near future”. But for different cultures, time has a different shape.

In Western countries, something that happened a week ago is “closer in time” than something that happened a year ago. But some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples see time differently. For them, something that happened many years ago that was important to their community can be “closer in time” than something that happened last week somewhere else. What shape is time?

People might see it as a straight line, or as a circle, or as a shape with many facets. The first time I asked this question, one girl, Freya, suggested it was the shape of all shapes together in the same place, because everyone had their own sense of time, so we called that a “Freyagon”. This is more of a creative enquiry than one that presents a clear choice between incompatible views.

Which is more important - place or time?

How we think of time is more than just an academic curiosity. One way of understanding the conflicts between liberal internationalism and conservative nationalism is very well expressed by Theresa May's barb, "But if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere." There is a tension between a fast-developing, technology-dominated international culture that is increasingly the same the world over, the "culture of now", and a sense of belonging to a particular place that has a uniqueness and traditions that endure over time, the "culture of here".

To those rooted in place, with a sense of national identity and history, people immersed in the culture of now seem rootless, bland, interchangeable; from the standpoint of the culture of now, with its continuous change and convergence, a strong connection to a particular place and national identity can seem quaint, narrow, out-of date. Not recognising that these are different, coherent ways of seeing the world that each have merits is part of the general failure to understand one another that mars current discourse.

Numbers and Reality

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/numbers-and-reality



Posted by: David A. White - Philosophy for Kids (Prufrock Press 2001)

Designed for: Middle School

Estimated Time Necessary: 1 Class

Period

[addtoany]



Learning Objectives

Understanding Numbers in the Context of a Human World - a conversation about which things in the room are real, and whether or not any things in the room are 'more real' than others. Ask the same of numbers. Are numbers as real as you are?

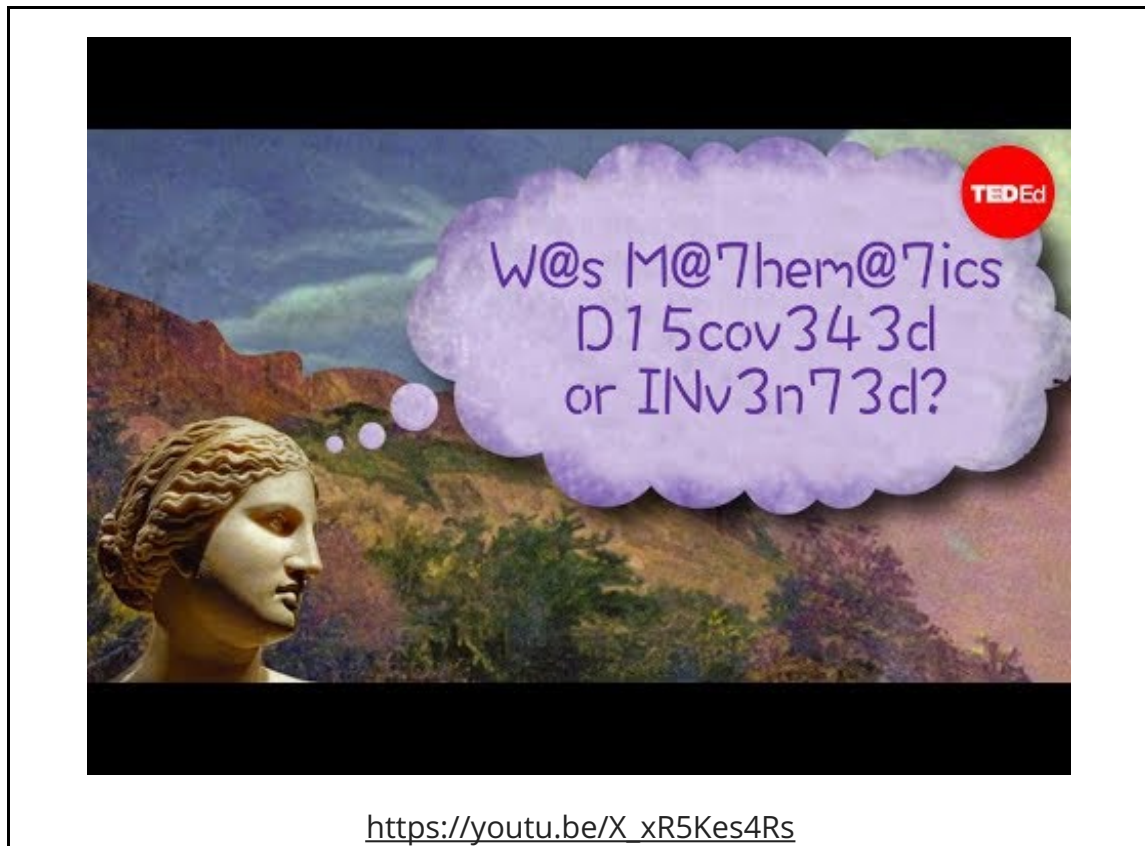
Tool Text

Have students answer yes or no to the quiz questions (found below) on a sheet of paper. Next have a discussion around some of the discussion questions.

If students answer no to all questions than they would probably agree with the position in metaphysics that maintains that all real things are real in the same way. This position holds that something is either 'real' or it does not exist; there are no gradations of reality.

However, Aristotle argued that philosophers should take the time to argue how things are real that there are not just two categories of reality and nonreality, but it instead can be described in terms of levels, degrees, and forms.

Have Your Class Watch This Video



Possible Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean for something to be real? Is it the same or different than the idea of existence?
2. If something is real, must it be something we can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell?
3. Does a certain property make a thing more real than a thing that lacks that property? For example, if numbers are eternal, are numbers more real than a human because humans have limited life spans?
4. Is a thing more real if it has more properties?
5. Does it make a difference if we say that numbers are real or not? What might be the consequences either way?
6. Is a snowflake more real than an atom?
7. Is an atom more real than a subatomic particle?
8. Is a subatomic particle more real than a centaur?
9. Is a centaur more real than a square circle?

Kant's Box

By: Peter Worley (Ben Jeffreys and Claire Field's original idea)

Stimulus:

Imagine a box. Now imagine emptying the box. The aim is to have nothing in it at all.

Task Question: Do you think this would be possible?

The methodology of the facilitator is that whenever someone introduces something that is still there you anchor them by saying 'ok, lets remove that to, have we finally emptied it completely?'.

Nested questions:

- Is there something that we can never remove?
- Once everything has been removed what do you think you would be left with?

Stimulus:

I want you to imagine that everything has been removed from the box, including everything that has been mentioned (list them: germs, atoms, sides of the box etc.) so that we have an empty space. Can we remove the space?

Task Question 2: Would it be a space or would it be nothing?

Nested question:

- Is space the same as nothing?
- What is space?
- Does space exist?
- Can you touch space?

Stimulus:

Introduce Leibniz, Newton (and Kant if children talk about how space is dependent on thinking, e.g. 'You can only have space if you can think about it', is one response we've had), and ask them to consider who they agree with and why. Diagrams may help in the description of each philosopher's ideas. This is how you introduce it:

Draw a box on the board and ask them to imagine it is an empty space.

There was a scientist / natural philosopher, called Newton, who thought the space was always there even if there was nothing in it.

(You can introduce the term 'absolute space' if you think the children can cope with it)

Draw another box next to that one, with two circles in the box.

There was another philosopher called Leibniz, who thought that there was only space when you have two objects that have space between them.

Draw a two-headed arrow between the objects.

(Introduce the term 'relative space' if you think the children can cope with it).

Task Question 3: Which philosopher do you agree with and why?

Introduce Kant in a similar way if possible: Draw another box, with a man standing next to it and a think bubble coming out of the man around the box.

Kant thought that space is in our mind.

Repeat Task Question 3 above.

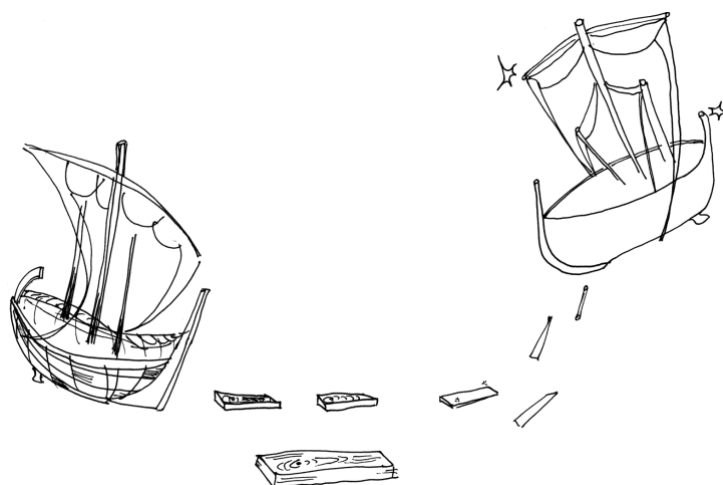
Extension Activity

Sometimes a child may say space is a vacuum, bring in dictionary definition of vacuum. Either look it up there and then or bring it in yourself:

Dictionary definition of vacuum: space entirely devoid of matter.

Task Question: If you have a vacuum can you take the space away?

The Ship of Theseus



Ship of Theseus

For the 2009 Year 5 class at Horniman Primary School, Lewisham.

Suitable for age 9 and upwards.
Star rating: **

Themes

Identity
Personal
identity Change

Philosophy

The Ship of Theseus was famously supplied as a philosophical thought-experiment by the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes. He drew the example

The Ship of Theseus 103

from Plutarch, a Roman writer. Theseus comes from Greek mythology and is the same Theseus who defeated the Minotaur with the help of Ariadne.

In order for this session to be philosophically fruitful it is necessary to understand the philosophical subtleties involved in an exploration of the thought-experiment. Read the stimulus below before reading on. One important nested question to bear in mind in this enquiry is: 'If it is a new ship when all the parts are replaced, then at what point does it become a new ship?' This is where a lot of the philosophy will lie because here we are faced with the 'problem of vagueness'. If it is a new ship when the parts are all replaced and only then, would that mean that when it only had one part left to replace, it was still the old ship? If so, this seems a little odd. If not, then when does it become the new ship? This particular problem is a version of what is known as the *sorites paradox* (from the Greek word for 'heap'): 'How many grains of sand make a heap?'



Teaching strategy: If the idea – 'Let's test it.' (page 41)

For the purpose of keeping things clear for the discussion, it is a good idea to illustrate all this with examples as you go. I would ask the children to imagine the ship has 100 parts (for the sake of argument). You can then use this at each point of the discussion to have them explore and reach the difficulties for themselves. For example, if someone says it would be the new ship when more than half the parts are replaced, *if the idea* to test it: 'Let's test it: if it has 51 new parts and only 49 old parts then is it a new ship?' Ask the class what they think about this.

For this session, you will need about 12 pens or pencils (ideally identical to each other) for your ship and two sheets of blank A4 paper for the sail.

Stimulus

Read or say the following [square brackets contain instructions to perform; do not read these out]:

Imagine that you are explorers on a ship. You have been at sea for many months. And here is a model of your ship. [Using half the pens, construct a simple model on the floor.] After a while of exploring, a part of your ship gets broken. [Remove

104 The If Machine

a pen from your model.] You stop at a port [explain if necessary] and have the broken part replaced. [Take one of the spare pens and put it in place of the 'broken' piece.] After another few months another part becomes rotten [remove another part] and you get that replaced with a new part [replace the second part]. [Carry on in this way until all the parts of the ship, including the sail, have been replaced. Once all parts have been replaced and the old ones discarded are in a pile next to the ship, say the following.] So, here's the question for today:

TQ 1: Once all the parts have been replaced, is it the same ship as when it first set out on its journey? (This task question can be shortened to 'Is it the same ship?' in most cases, but occasionally you may want to remind them of the fuller question when *anchoring*.)

Leave it open whether the parts were replaced with the same material as this may well become one of the points of interest in the discussion. Remember to *either-or-the-if* (see page 48) if necessary, e.g. Pupil: 'The parts might have been replaced with different material; it might have been oak and then replaced with pine.' *Either-or-the-if*: Facilitator: 'So, if it was oak and then replaced with pine, would it be the same ship?' Take responses, then ask: 'And if it was oak and then replaced with oak, would it be the same ship?' Take responses. *Either-or-the-if* will help with many of the variables the children might put to you, such as: 'The inside might not have been replaced', or 'The new one might go faster', or 'It might look different', and so on.

Likely controversies are as follows:

- That change results in a different ship or that change does not result in a different ship. (Identity)
- The issue of exactly when it becomes a different ship: after the first change? After the second? When half (or more) of the pieces are changed? When the last piece is changed? (Vagueness)



The Ship of Theseus 105

- Whether its identity resides in its material parts or in how it is perceived, its function or design, and so on. (Materialism and idealism)
- Whether there is an essential part or parts that must remain the same regardless of other less important changes. (Essentialism)

Listen out for any *distinctions* (see page 55, such as those between different kinds of 'same' or different kinds of 'change', in phrases such as 'It depends what you mean by...', as these may help the discussion progress and to, provisionally anyway, answer the question: 'So, if by X you mean..., then it is/is not the same ship because...'



Extension activity

This may well be introduced by the children during the discussion, but you can also introduce it as an extension to the first scenario. Read the following:

One of the crew on the ship wants his or her own ship but they can't afford one, so he or she decides to collect the old pieces when they are discarded and put them back together.

Take the pile of discarded pens and the sheet of paper and re-construct them into the same model or shape they were in before they were replaced. There should now be two models of the ship on the floor next to each other that look the same. The task question you use will depend on the context of the discussion at the point you introduce it (or when it is introduced by the children), but here are some I've used:

TQ 2a: Which is the original ship?

TQ 2b: Which is the crew member's ship?

TQ 2c: Are they both the same ship?

The 'Self' of Theseus

At some point you will want to talk about how the discussion of the ship pertains to how we think of ourselves. This will either happen very naturally when the children start to make the connection or you will need to make the connection explicit yourself. Here are some suggestions of how it can be done.

106 The If Machine

- Show two photographs next to each other of someone as a young child and as an old person. Ask the children whether they think this is the same person and why.
- If you are with older children (age ten upwards), you can explain how scientists tell us that our cells (explain what these are) are completely replaced every seven years or so and then ask the children if this means they are a different person every seven years.

The key **nested question** here is:

What is it that makes us the same person at different times?

Possible responses and **response questions (RQs)** to this problem are as follows.

- *People and things* are different.

RQ: How are they different?

- People have thoughts and memories but ships don't.
- We might change on the outside but our personalities stay the same.

RQ: Does this mean our personalities can't change?

A suggested task question to deepen this enquiry follows.

TQ 3: Where is the 'me bit' inside of us?

One 11-year-old girl said in answer to this: 'The "me bit" is the thoughts inside my head.' (See companion website: Descartes and Dualism, 'I think therefore I am'.)

Each of these insights can lead to further related discussions in themselves. The philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) believed that we are linked by memory to our past selves, which makes us the same person through time. So, for Locke, it is not our body that makes us the same person – as this is constantly changing – but our mental life that lasts through change.

RQ: 'If we lose our memory, would that make us a different person?'

The Ship of Theseus 107



Hints and Tips: Concrete and personalised discussions

Listen out for when the children make references or analogies to their own experience: their bike, themselves, or their house. Continue the discussion making use of their own examples to make it have meaning for them. However, try not to put any one child under too much close examination; instead, work with fictitious names using the same situation or scenario.

Online

Main philosophy: Hobbes and Materialism

Related philosophy: Berkley and Idealism
Descartes and Dualism
Heraclitus and Change
Leibniz and Identity
Socrates, Aristotle and the Soul
Zeno, Paradoxes and Infinity





Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for KS2 and KS3

The Spaceship of Theseus

*Re-wring, re-painting, re-programming;
Theseus has made so many repairs to his Spaceship, he's lost count.
But has he lost his Spaceship in the process?*

Philosophical Potential	Metaphysics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity, Change, Time
Session Objective(s)	<p>Identify your own community and enquiry-focused objectives e.g.</p> <p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should share an idea with a partner Some children should share their ideas with the whole group <p>Enquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should give reasons when prompted Some children should give reasons spontaneously
Facilitation Questions	<p>Part one</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the Spaceship that returns to earth Theseus' Spaceship? Is the Spaceship that returns the same Spaceships the one that took off? Is it the same Spaceship if only one part has been changed? What if 10% 50% or 99% of the parts have been changed? If the Spaceship is different, at what point did it become different? Does it matter what part is changed as to whether the Spaceship is a different one –e.g. if the engine was changed? Or a few nuts and bolts? Does it matter if the change is sudden or gradual? Does it matter what people call the Spaceship? What does it mean to say something is the same? Can anything ever stay the same? <p>Part two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which Spaceship (if any) is Theseus' Spaceship? Does that mean that the other Spaceship isn't Theseus' Spaceship? Can one thing ever become two? If yes, is this true of all things or some things? Does it matter which one Theseus calls 'his Spaceship'? Does it matter which one people think is Theseus' Spaceship?

Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jigsaw images of Theseus Spaceship (take an image of a Spaceship and cut it into pieces) • Circle of chairs, pencils, pens, enquiry reflection sheets
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stimulus can be presented as two parts of the same session (as in this plan) or as two separate sessions.

1. PREPARATION		10 min
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Ethos: If necessary, briefly establish or reiterate your class expectations. E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We decide what we really think, the teachers can't tell us the answers ○ We're always asking questions ○ We share what we really think ○ We care what other people think too ○ We give reasons for our opinions ○ We're not scared to disagree ○ We often change our mind ○ We speak one at a time ○ We encourage speakers by listening and looking at them 	
Warm up	<p>Meditation: What's changed?</p> <p>Ask the children to close their eyes and picture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something that has changed over the last five years • Something that has changes over the last year • Something that has changed over the last month • Something that has changed over the last week • Something that has changes today • Something that has changed since this activity began 	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presentation of Stimulus	<p>Theseus's Spaceship: Part One</p> <p>The crowds at NASA wave as Theseus's Spaceship blasts off. They know he will be gone for a very long time. In fact, Theseus is away for many years. During this time his space ship springs leaks and has to be mended. The metal outer body of the ship is damaged by the heat of take off and has to be mended during a space walk. The internal fixtures and fittings wear out and are replaced. The oxygen tanks are emptied and new ones are retrieved from the international space station. So the repairs and replacements go on until after seven years when every part of the space ship Theseus set out in has been replaced. Every single part has been replaced with something new!</p> <p>After seven years Theseus makes a daring re entry to earth. The crowds who come to meet him at the landing site "Here is Theseus' Spaceship at last!"</p>	
Thinking Time	A minute in silence.	

3. QUESTIONS		1 min
Prepared Question	Ask: Are they right? Is it the same Spaceship?	
4. DIALOGUE		25 min
First Thoughts	Paired discussion.	
Collecting Ideas	Facilitated discussion gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	<p>Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth.</p> <p>Possible sub questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Spaceship that returns to earth Theseus' Spaceship? • Is the Spaceship that returns the same Spaceships the one that took off? • Is it the same Spaceship if only one part has been changed? • What if 10% 50% or 99% of the parts have been changed? • If the Spaceship is different, at what point did it become different? • Does it matter what part is changed as to whether the Spaceship is a different one –e.g. if the engine was changes or a few nuts and bolts? • Does it matter if the change is sudden or gradual? • Does it matter what people call the Spaceship? • What does it mean to say something is the same? • Can anything ever stay the same? 	

OPTIONAL TWIST		
Stimulus – Part Two	<p>Theseus's Spaceship Problem: Part Two</p> <p>While Theseus is in space all the original parts of his Spaceship are replaced are kept and stored in large containers. When Theseus returns to the earth after seven years, he hears what people are saying about his Spaceship and he wonders if the repaired Spaceship is one and the same space ship he set out in.</p> <p>He persuades the expert engineers to build a Spaceship out of all the old pieces, (metal casing, wiring, screws etc.) When the crowds people see two Spaceships side by side in the space station they are astonished! "Which is Theseus" Spaceship?" they ask.</p>	
Prepared Question	Ask: Which is Theseus' Spaceship?	
Collecting Ideas	Facilitated discussion gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth.	

	<p>Possible sub questions that may be useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which Spaceship (if any) is Theseus' Spaceship? • Does that mean that the other Spaceship isn't Theseus' Spaceship? • Can one thing ever become two? • If yes, is this true of all things or some things? • Does it matter which one Theseus calls 'his Spaceship'? • Does it matter which one people think is Theseus' Spaceship? 	
Digging Deeper	Paired break-out discussion on particularly challenging aspects of emerging ideas(s).	
Final Push	Return to the original question(s). If you have used both the original story and the twist, draw the children's attention to the differences between their answers to each case.	
Last thoughts	<p>What next?</p> <p>Invite everyone in the group to suggest a question that we should ask next, in light of the discussion they have just had. Pass the pom-pom once round the circle, to facilitate this. Co-facilitators model first.</p> <p>Alternatively, if pressed for time, hear from a few volunteers.</p>	
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the Enquiry	Ask for some volunteers to feedback on one interesting idea they had during the session	
Reflection on the Community	Ask for some different volunteers to feedback on one helpful thing they did during the session	

In another class - thinking about identity, vagueness and sets

By: Peter Worley

This session began life as an extension activity to The Ship of Theseus session (see The If Machine p. 86) but has now developed into a session in it's own right. It's a good get-up-and-do session.

Equipment needed and preparation: space, a class of children

Starting age: 8 years

Key concepts / vocabulary: change, identity, same, at what point, borderline, black-and-white-thinking, different,

Subject links: Maths, PSHE,

Key controversies: At what point, if at all, does something become something else?

Philosophy:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/vagueness/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vagueness>

https://philosophynow.org/issues/25/Vagueness_an_introduction_sort_of

Critical thinking tool: Evaluation – in P4C it is sometimes believed by teachers, practitioners and the children that 'there are no right and wrong answers'. One of the most overlooked aspects of critical thinking is the need to make judgments; in other words, to decide what argument or idea one thinks is right, according to the quality of reasons given. In his *On Rhetoric* Aristotle describes three ways that one may persuade: ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is the appeal to the authority or credibility of the presenter, pathos is the appeal to the emotions of the listener, and logos is the appeal to reason. Philosophy's focus is logos.

Key Facilitation Skill: Invite persuasion (logos) – sometimes the dialogue lends itself to making evaluative judgments. For example, if two children hold opposite conclusions. Imagine one girl says that the 'Class A' is now where 'Class B' was because 'that's where all the people from 'Class A' are now', and a boy says, 'The one that started as 'Class A' is still called 'Class A' so that's still 'Class A' even though all the children have moved.' You could invite them to try to persuade (logos) the other that they are right. This invites them to dig deeper in order to provide a more powerful argument. You could ask other members of the class to see if they can persuade (logos) others that either the girl or the boy are right. Never tell the class who you think is right, though. This approach reminds the class of three things: 1) that judgments can be made and 2) that when judgments are made they are made on the quality of the arguments and 3) to make better arguments.

Session Plan:

- 1) Have the class stand up.
- 2) Split the class into two (equal or as close as).
- 3) Have them stand in two circles or two lines opposite one another.
- 4) Name one group 'class A' and the other 'class B'.
- 5) Ask everyone to begin by putting their thumbs up.
- 6) Ask them to put their thumbs down when they think the class is no longer the same class.
- 7) Tap two children (one from each 'class') on the shoulder and have the two children swap places, joining the other class.
- 8) Tap another two children and have them do the same.
- 9) Carry on in this way until all the children have swapped classes.

Task Questions:

- If you changed your thumb direction, at what point did you change your thumb direction?
- Why did you change your thumb direction when you did?
- Why didn't you change your thumb direction?
- Which is Class A and which is Class B?

Nested Questions:

- Is there a point at which something becomes something else?
- Are there reasons why something remains the same thing no matter what changes occur? If so, what would they be?
- Can change occur without loss of identity?

Extension activities:

Holidays!

- 1) Find out the name of the class (e.g. 'Oak class' or '4RD' etc.)
- 2) Ask the children where they went on their holidays.
- 3) Ask them to imagine drawing a line from X (e.g. Scotland) to Y (e.g. Mexico) etc. forming a big imaginary circle on a map.

Task Question: While you were all on your holidays how big was 'X' class?

Nested Questions:

- Did 'X' class still exist?
- When you are in the classroom does 'class x' still exist?
- When you leave the classroom does 'class x' still exist?
- What is a class?
- Where is a class?

Big or small?

- 1) Have the class huddle up as close as possible to each other in the middle of the room.

Task Question: Is the class smaller?

- 2) Have the class spread out to the walls of the classroom as far as they can?

Task Question: Is the class bigger?

Nested Questions:

- See Holidays! above

Related Resources:

Once Upon an If: As Clear As The Edge of a Cloud (pp. 61-62)

The If Machine: The Ship of Theseus, The Rebuild,

The If Odyssey: The Storyteller, The Stranger

The Philosophy Shop: Metaphysics: Personal Identity, A Heap of Exercises? (The sorites paradox), Across The River and Into The Trees, Tralse, Said and Unsaid.



Enquiry Plan

Philosophical Enquiry for KS2 and KS3

Not a Stick

A stick is just a stick... unless it's not a stick.

Philosophical Potential	Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naming objects, referring to objects, communicating what you mean Metaphysics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properties, existence, essence, imagination and reality
Session Objective(s)	Identify your own community and enquiry-focused objectives e.g. Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should look and listen to the person speaking Some children should build on what the person has said Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children should provide an example/analogy when prompted Some children should provide an example/analogy spontaneously
Facilitation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a stick? What makes it a stick? How do you tell something is a stick and not something else? A plank? A rod? A twig? Does naming something "stick" make it a stick? Could a stick be a stick, even if we had no word for it? Are there any properties that are special to sticks? Pointyness? Woodenness? If any object is pointy or wooden, does it make it a stick? Counter examples: What about a needle or a stool? What about a stake? If we name a stick "sword" does it stop being a stick If we use a stick as a fishing rod. Does it stop being a stick?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle of chairs, white board, pens, Pom-pom, flash cards, question sorting flash cards. Some sticks Storybook "Not a Stick" by Antoinette Portis Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LATNNj-mu14

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Ethos: If necessary, briefly establish or reiterate your class expectations. E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We decide what we really think, the teachers can't tell us the answers ○ We're always asking questions ○ We share what we really think ○ We care what other people think too ○ We give reasons for our opinions ○ We're not scared to disagree ○ We often change our mind ○ We speak one at a time ○ We encourage speakers by listening and looking at them 	
Warm Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the class into four or five groups • Give one stick to each group. • Task 'Find as many uses as possible, for this stick.' <i>E.g. A giant pencil, a crutch, a rolling pin etc.</i> • Co-facilitators, keep a tally on number of uses. • Feedback from the group who finds the most uses. 	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presenting Stimulus	<p>A stick is just a stick... unless it's not a stick. From fishing rod to dragon-taming sword a small pig shows that a stick will go as far as the imagination allows.</p> <p>Read story.</p> <p>You can share the book's illustrations or play the images in the background: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LATNNj-mu14</p>	
Thinking Time	<p>A minute in silence.</p> <p>Focus Question: 'What would you most like to talk about?'</p>	
Sharing Time	<p>Discuss in pairs: 'What would you most like to talk about?'</p> <p>Feedback from 3 or 4 pairs. Invite quiet children to speak.</p>	
3. QUESTIONS		10 min
Composing Questions	In fours, strictly just one question.	
Sharing Questions	<p>Each group shares their question.</p> <p>Groups should 'pitch' their question presenting three good reasons to vote for it</p> <p>Hint: Children might give some indication of what ground the discussion could cover if their question was selected.</p>	
Sharpening Questions	Identify themes, duplication and ambiguity. Redraft if necessary.	

Selecting Questions	Blind vote - all children close their eyes, the facilitator reads out the group questions and the children put their hands up to pick one.	
4. DIALOGUE		25 min
First Thoughts	The participants who proposed the question share what they think.	
Collecting Ideas	Facilitated discussion gathering a range of responses.	
Getting Focused	Facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth	
Digging Deeper	<p>Paired break-out discussion on particularly challenging aspects of emerging ideas(s).</p> <p>Possible sub questions that may be useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a stick? • What makes it a stick? • How do you tell something is a stick and not something else? A plank? A rod? A twig? • Does naming something “stick” make it a stick? • Could a stick be a stick, even if we had no word for it? • Are there any properties that are special to sticks? Pointyness? Woodenness? • If any object is pointy or wooden, does it make it a stick? Counter examples: What about a needle or a stool? What about a stake? • If we name a stick “sword” does it stop being a stick? • If we use a stick as a fishing rod. Does it stop being a stick? 	
Final Push	Return to the original question or to an appropriate reformulation of the original question.	
Last Thoughts	<p>Ask the group: ‘Has anyone changed their mind?’</p> <p>If anyone has changed their mind, let them have the final words to explain why.</p>	
5. REFLECTION		10 min
Reflection on Enquiry	‘What new questions do we need to ask now?’	
Reflection on Community	‘What could we do to make our enquiry work better next time?’	

Perfect People

By: Sara Stanley

Stimulus: Playdough people and the following letter from Planet Leader.

Stimulus details: Letter from the Planet Leader.

Dear People,

I am giving you a very important job. I am going on holiday and need you to carry on my work. You must create some people for my new planet. They must be the very best people in every way. Please let me know all about the people you make. I have given you some people-making material. Please create carefully. We cannot risk any mistakes.

Thank you.

Leader of Planet Plato.

Skill focus: First thoughts. Clarifying ideas.

Thinking focus: What is a person?

Preparation

Allow time for children to explore books and stories about a variety of people.

Presentation

This activity is best done in smaller groups of five or six children at a time, working around a table. Prepare enough playdough for each child to form a model person (you may wish to provide different colours). Read the stimulus letter to them and ask them if they can make the perfect person. Join in this activity yourself.

Conversation and thinking time

While the children create their 'people', they can chat informally about what they are doing to make their person. What does it need to look like? What colour have they chosen?

First words

As the models progress, ask the children questions

such as “Would it matter if your person had no arms? Eyes? Heart? Legs?”, etc. Allow them to express their ideas about what makes a perfectly functioning person.

Building

Introduce the idea that the person you have made might not be accepted by the leader because it is sometimes badly behaved. Can they suggest some things that it does wrong? Ask the children if they can help you ‘fix’ your person so that it is perfect again.

Last words

Do the children think there can ever be the perfect person, or is it all right if they make mistakes or look different?

Recipe for 1 Human: Ingredients

By Tim Beardmore-Gray

Background to session

This enquiry was written for a Yr5 class that had lead a previous enquiry into exploring the EQ: “What features would a robot have to have in order to be a real human?” They had expressed a desire to explore this further the following week. Engagement was a given and we could dive quickly into a TQ that is both conceptually and grammatically very open. Though ‘The Recipe Game’ should help with preparation for TQ1, it would be interesting to see how the enquiry fares when introduced without previous foundation.

The Recipe Game

Starter Question: What is a recipe?

Listen out for children mentioning ‘a list of ingredients’ being part of a recipe, but don’t stop as soon as you hear it. Good to hear some different ways of thinking about recipes. After a brief discussion, inform the class that for this session you will all be thinking about the ingredients needed for different recipes (you could begin with this and skip the starter question). Then ask them to discuss the ingredients for each of the following (or anything suitably similar).

1. One Boiled Egg
2. Pancakes
3. Mobile Phone
4. A Good Story (this was specific to a certain project, could be left out)
5. A Fun Party

The idea is that they become more complicated and potentially more relative as you move down the list. This game is a good way of introducing and exploring necessary and sufficient conditions, ‘what is needed’ and ‘what is enough’. Each ingredient list can be left open and inconclusive.

Stimulus

Imagine that we are all friends with a genius scientist who has been working on building a robot that is exactly the same as a human. After years and years, she has finally worked out how to build her robot. She knows how to make it look like a human, how to make it move like a human, and even how to build it a brain. The one thing she is not sure about is what ingredients she needs to put into her robot’s brain to make it the same as a human. So today we’re going to help her.

(A picture might help with this. I had a drawing at the top of a roll of parcel paper which was revealed as I spoke, see [resource below](#))

TQ1: What ingredients does the scientist need to put into her robot’s brain to make it the same as a human?

Collect as many ideas as possible (write them down on the board or paper roll).

Testing and Exploration Questions

Once you have a good list and/or the class are ready to stop sharing ingredients (you can always add more later), explore the suggestions. The possibilities of the enquiry become very open at this point. One could explore some suggestions in detail (e.g. “The robot would need some knowledge” - What is knowledge? What would a robot need to know to be human? Can humans know nothing?), test each idea (e.g. If someone didn’t have a personality, would they not be human?), or develop the enquiry with the nested and emergent questions below. To avoid influencing the philosophy, try to randomly pick suggested ingredients (ask two children for two different numbers between 5 and 20, subtract or add them, and then count down the list).

Nested and Emergent Questions

1. If our robot had all of these features/ingredients, would it be human?
2. Is it possible to make a robot the same as a human? (the stimulus seems to assume a theoretical 'yes' to this question and some children will probably want to challenge this)
3. Is there one thing that makes us human or lots of things?
4. Can you be human without a human body?
5. What is a human body?
6. Is there a difference between a human and a person?
7. Can there be non-human persons?
8. What ingredients do we need to make a person?
9. Could we tell the difference between a perfect robot human and a human?
10. Could the robot human decide what to do?
11. Could the robot human decide what/who to be?
12. Should scientists try to make robot humans?
13. What ingredients should a robot human have? (normative/descriptive distinction)
14. Should robot humans/persons have the same rights as humans/human persons?
15. What ingredients would a perfect human have?
16. Should we use science to try to make perfect humans?
17. Does a human/person have a function? If yes, what is it?
18. Is the/a brain the same as the/a mind?

In a field of sunflowers, five creatures were arguing about who it was best to be.

"I would hate to be a mole," said the crow to the mole. "I can see for miles, as clear as can be. But you are half blind. What a pity you can never know what the world really looks like."

"I would hate to be a crow," said the dog to the crow. "I can smell where my owner has walked hours after he has gone. But you can hardly smell the difference between a cat and a dog. What a pity you can never know what the world really smells like."

"I would hate to be a dog," said the fly to the dog. "I can taste anything through my feet as soon as I land. But you can hardly tell one tin of food from another. What a pity you will never know how wonderful the world really tastes."

"I would hate to be a fly," said the bat to the fly, standing so that the fly could see her. "I can tell how juicy a moth is by the way it bounces back the sound of my cries, but you have no ears at all. What a pity you can never know what the world really sounds like."

"I would hate to be a bat," said the mole to the bat. "I can feel a footstep at the other side of the field. But most of the time, all you feel is the air. What a pity you can never know what the world really feels like."

As they argued, the sunflowers kept turning their heads round to face the sun.

Senses

This scene, which raises questions about perceptions and whether we can know what the world is “really” like, is derived from two sources. The first is the Indian folktale of a group of blind men who touch an elephant to learn what it is like. Each touches a different part, so when they compare notes they disagree – the one who touched the tail thinks it is like a snake, the one who touched its tusk thinks it is like a spear.

The second is a famous article by philosopher Thomas Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?”. It considers how no matter what we learn about the “how it works” of being a bat, we can never experience the “what it is like” from the inside.

In this scene, each creature thinks it has the final take on reality through its sharpened sense. Children’s knowledge of the extremes of the animal kingdom may enrich the discussion – that some animals see colours or hear sounds that we can’t detect, or can find their way to the same place on enormous migrations using senses science has only recently identified.

The connections between perception and reality are interesting scientifically as well as philosophically, and you might be able to tie this in with a wider unit of work.

One way to explore the stimulus is for the children to decide which creature they would prefer to be and why.

You may get questions about whether it is better to be blind or to be deaf, which might be interesting in extending children’s powers of empathy. You might do a follow on exercise ranking the senses in order of how important they are for an understanding of the real world. Of course, if you have children who are or have family members that are hearing or visually impaired, this might be rather sensitive – and it’s easy to kid yourself that you are giving a child the chance to speak to his experience when you may be reinforcing a role as the object of curiosity.

Or you could pursue the line of how our senses tie up with reality using some of these questions (perhaps with a “dividing line” game).

Which is more real?

- the feel of an ice cube or the way it shines?
- a ball dropping to the floor or the sound it makes?
- the weight of an apple or its colour?
- the flavour of an orange or its colour?
- a person in a dream or a person in a painting?

Some snakes can see whether something is hot or cold. So do they have a better understanding of what the world is really like than we do? Do plants like the sunflowers turning to face the sun have “senses”, or is that nonsense?

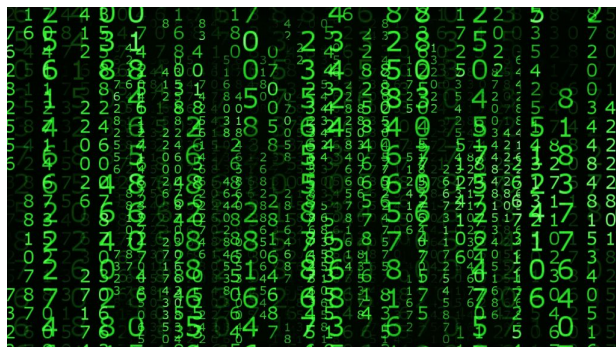
Can we ever know what the world is really like? How/how not and why/why not?

Or you could explore the notion of illusions and the reliability of the senses. A particularly fascinating experiment to follow this up is to get kids to notice how huge the moon looks when it is close to the horizon compared to when it is up in the sky. Has it got bigger or closer, or is there something else going on?

There’s also a rather charming picture book called “Duck! Rabbit!” by Amy Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenfeld. (Google “Duckrabbit” to see it). Or google/youtube “McGurk effect” for an illusion that mingles the senses.

Center for Philosophy for Children

 depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonplans/the-matrix



The Matrix

The film *The Matrix* is based on Plato's Allegory of the Cave, and this lesson works well as a follow-up to the [Allegory of the Cave lesson plan](#). In the film, the humans trapped in the Matrix are like the people in Plato's cave. They see only what the machines want them to see, but they believe they see reality as it really is. They accept what their senses tell them as all that exists. Neo suspects that this is all a lie, but he's not sure how the Matrix works. Morpheus, who runs the resistance to the Matrix, brings Neo into the Resistance, believing that Neo is the person who has been foreseen by the Oracle to be able to defeat the Matrix.

In the film clip, one of the members of the Resistance, Cypher, is choosing to give information about the Resistance to an agent working for the machines, in exchange for being able to go back into the Matrix and forget all he now knows about it. Then Neo is taken to see the Oracle.



<https://youtu.be/l5y68ErffgM>

What does the oracle tell Neo? Would you want to know the future? She says that he thinks he is in control of his future – is he? Are you?

Cypher chooses to leave the resistance and go back to the Matrix. He doesn't want to live the truth anymore, because it is too ugly and painful. He decides that he prefers the pleasurable lies of the Matrix. What's wrong with the Matrix, if what we feel is pleasurable? Is it better in some ways to live in the Matrix than to see things as they really are? This is what Cypher concludes – is he wrong?

The Experience Machine

In his 1971 book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick introduced a “thought experiment” that has become known as “the experience machine.”

Suppose there were an experience machine that would give you any experience you desired. Superduper neuropsychologists could stimulate your brain so that you would think and feel you were writing a great novel, or making a friend, or reading an interesting book. All the time you would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain. Should you plug into this machine for life, preprogramming your life's desires?...Of course, while in the tank you won't know that you're there; you'll think it's all actually happening. Others can also plug in to have the experiences they want, so there's no need to stay unplugged to serve them. (Ignore problems such as who will service the machines if everyone plugs in.) Would you plug in? What else can matter to us, other than how our lives feel from the inside?”

Give the class 5 minutes to think and jot notes in response to the following questions:

Should you hook up to the experience machine for life, pre-programming all of your life's desires? Why or why not?

Would it make any difference to you if you were actually doing these things?

If in every respect it seems to you that you're in a good situation, isn't it true, at least for you, that you are in a good situation?

Group discussion

Do we care about certain things independent of the experiences they create for us? For example, is being in reality important even if the experience isn't pleasant? Is it better to live happily in the Matrix than miserably in reality? Why or why not?

How do we know that we are not in an experience machine? Can we prove we are not?

How do we know that what we perceive is real?

Scientific Realism and the Weird World

 plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/philosophers-tool-scientific-realism-and-the-weird-world



Posted by: Stephen Miller - Oakwood Friends School, Marist College

Designed for: College/University, High School

Topics Covered: Scientific Realism, Philosophy of Science

Estimated Time Necessary: Approximately 60 minutes

[addtoany]



Tool Text

[Click Here for Reading](#)

Overview

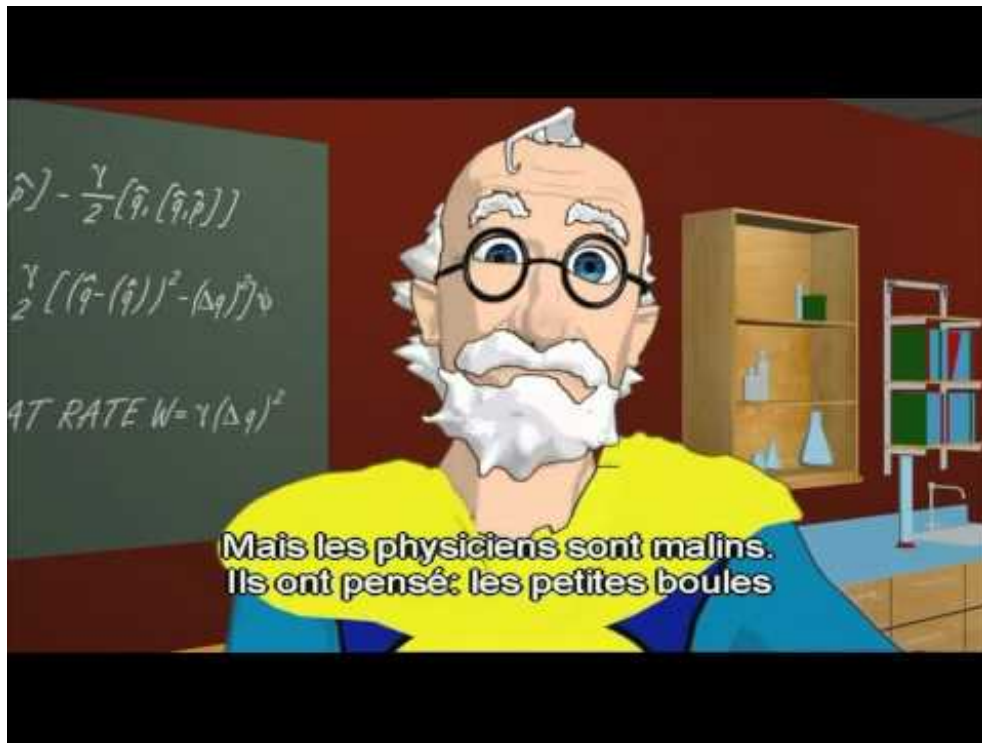
One of the most fundamental questions involved in the Philosophy of Science involves the problem of Scientific Realism. It asks us to think about the status of scientific claims. For instance, when your Chemistry teacher talks about atoms, are these real entities or are they just a linguistic model that's a convenient way to refer to a set of observations?

Scientific Realism at its heart makes two claims:

1. Reality exists independently of our thoughts and observations
2. Scientific claims about the world at least sometimes get it right — they actually describe reality

However over time, three categories of objections have been raised:

1. Those that question the status of empiricism, particularly of unobservable objects
 2. Those that question whether or not terms like "jade" or "gold" or "mammal" actually describe reality or if they are convenient constructs that may actually contribute to making a world and finally,
 3. What we might call the instrumental evasion (common to engineers) which suggests that there could never be an answer to this question and that it simply doesn't matter. If I can accurately build a bridge and it doesn't fall down, does it matter if my understanding of reality is accurate?
-



<https://youtu.be/zKdoE1vX7k4>

Possible Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Scientific Realism? What are the practical consequences of believing this or Anti-Realism?
2. What is the Miracle Argument? Is it adequate proof of Scientific Realism?
3. Does it matter whether or not science describes "Reality" if it is able to make accurate predictions (what we might call Scientific Instrumentalism)?
4. After watching the video about the quantum particle/ wave effect, what questions are raised about Scientific Realism? How does the fact of observation affecting the electron being observed change this?
5. Is Scientific Realism important? Formulate arguments for and against this position.
6. Discuss scientific theories that suggest that the world is "weird" (for instance, basic chemistry tells us that the sensible world around us is really almost fully made up of empty space!). What relationship do these have with "reality"?

Questions for Double Split experiment

Contributed by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Audience: 8 years-old and higher

These questions are intended to be paired with the lesson “Scientific Realism and the Weird World” by PLATO

What happened when someone observed the experiment?

The narrator claimed, “The electron decided to act differently as though it was aware it was being watched?” What do you think about that?

Does that mean that reality changed?

Does reality happen if no one is there to see it? (If a tree falls in the woods does it make a sound?)

Is what happens when no one watches more or less real than when someone does?

Can we ever know reality?

Does the meaning of the word “objective” change to you?

Why do you think the electrons act differently when someone is watching it?

What do you think would happen if an animal watched instead?

Metaphysics Videos

The following descriptions, discussion questions, and activities were created and written by Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1) Publisher: BBC Radio 4 & The Open University

Animator: Cogni+ive

Script writer: Nigel Warburton

Narrator: Aidan Turner

Video Title: Esse est Percipi - ('To be is to be perceived')

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iBryNYU49Y&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=8>

Discussion Questions:

Does matter exist? Do our thoughts exist? Do things exist beyond our experiences? Do you need to go to a place to know it exists? If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around does it make a sound?

2)Publisher: BBC Radio 4 & The Open University

Animator: Cogni+ive

Script writer: Nigel Warburton

Narrator: Aidan Turner

Video Title: Wittgenstein's Beetle in a Box Analogy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x86hLtOkou8&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=7>

Discussion Questions:

The meaning of the term “Beetle” comes from the way people use it. Are there any other terms that get their meaning from how people use them? What does the Beetle represent? How do we know if everyone experiences pain or colors the same? Do we rely on the shared meaning of certain things? How does having a shared meaning of an object, sensation, or experience help us communicate?

3)Publisher: BBC Radio 4 & The Open University

Animator: Cogni+ive

Script writer: Nigel Warburton

Narrator: Gillian Anderson

Video Title: The Big Bang

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMPIOHSEwF8&list=PL95970EFE70300C93&index=40>

Discussions Questions:

Did matter always exist? Do you think a big bang created our world? If the world began in a moment is that when time began? Does time exist in a universe where nothing has happened? If nothing happened in space before the big bang, does that mean that there was nothing there? How can something come from nothing?

Additional Resources

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

Three fantastic lists of reference books on P4C:

<https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/resources/p4c-library/>
<https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/recommended-reading>
<https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/Main/Books>

The Latest Teaching Guide on P4C (with free resources)

Topping, K. J. , Trickey, S., & Cleghorn, P. (2019). A teacher's guide to Philosophy for Children. New York and London: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-138-39326-4.
 Resources website: www.routledge.com/9781138393264

P4C Videos for students:

<http://www.wi-phi.com/videos>
<http://vaps.vic.edu.au/resources/video-resources-and-philosophical-movies>
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL95970EFE70300C93>

Videos of P4C sessions:

Grace Lockrobin with Thinking space.org.uk has a philosophy circle with a group of 10 year-old students (year 6 in U.K.) where they discuss morality and ethics. This is a wonderful example of what P4C sessions should look like.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lupY8KNU4EY>

This is a philosophy circle with 10 year-old students in the U.K. They are comparing and incomplete puzzle to life. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awr4InsWRkA>

Interviews on the benefits of P4C and clips of a group of Australian children engaging in a P4C session. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk_B32HtnWg

“Big Ideas for little kids” is a WGBY documentary on Tom Wartenberg’s P4C sessions and college course: <https://video.wgby.org/video/wgby-documentaries-big-ideas-little-kids/>

“Philosophical Children” by The University of Washington highlights P4C sessions with commentary from professionals and students. <https://vimeo.com/136588083>

Online resources:

Young Philosophers: This site includes book modules, lessons, supplemental materials, discussion questions and more. <http://prokid.org/philosophy/>

Teaching Children Philosophy: Many of the book modules in this guide came from this site and there are even more titles, discussion questions, and even guidelines for teaching. This site also offers resources, sample courses, a list of helpful books, and a parent's page as well. <http://teachingchildrenphilosophy.org>

SAPERE: A database for recommended reading material, free downloadable lessons, rule posters, links to videos, and more. <https://archive.sapere.org.uk/Default.aspx?tabid=289>

University of Washington: Center for Philosophy for Children: This is an invaluable resource for P4C. Several of the book modules in this guide came from this site and not even half were mentioned. The Center for Philosophy for children also has lesson plans, professional development opportunities, pod casts, webinars, and much more. <https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/>

The Philosophy Man: Run by Jason Buckley, this eclectic site offers videos, free resources, resources for purchase, and more. Best of all, you can subscribe free of charge and receive two lesson plans a week! <https://www.thephilosophyman.com/free-p4c-resources>

Erik Kenyon is a professor at Rollins College and has a site that provides lesson plans, handouts, and story books on P4C. <https://sites.google.com/site/erikkenyonphd/home>

Thinking space: Enquiry plans, recipe cards, a curriculum guide, video stimuli and a reading list are all available on this very useful website. <https://thinkingspace.org.uk/>

The Philosophy Foundation: This foundation is out of London. The site includes videos for children on P4C topics, lesson plans, lectures, recommended readings, articles, and more. It is definitely worth checking out!

Lessons: <https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/enquiries/>

Other resources: <https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/resources>

Oxfam Education: A guide to teaching P4C and free resources. This site allows you to narrow your search by refining results by age group, topic, location, resource type and curriculum area. <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/philosophy-for-children>

PLATO's Toolkit: Free online lessons that may be used to start philosophical discussions across multiple subjects. There are so many teacher friendly lessons here, several of which are included in this guide. <https://www.plato-philosophy.org/teachertoolkit/>

Techniques from Ancient Philosophers That You Can Implement in Everyday Lessons

By Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

1. The Socratic Method

- Socrates believed that we are born knowing everything we will ever know. In order to access that knowledge it has to be pulled out through experience or discourse.
- This is a commonly used technique in the classroom and is a much more engaging than lecturing. It involves asking students questions to prompt thinking.
- This is a great technique for a variety of subjects especially when the objective is to analyze.
- How to implement the Socratic Method:
 - The teacher presents stimuli or simply asks a question
 - Students state what they believe based on prior knowledge and experiences
 - The teacher asks questions that build on their thinking, leading them to a more concise answer. (The teacher never tells a student that they are wrong, the student discovers this themselves when they re-examining their thinking.)
 - The students analyze their thoughts and adjust their responses
 - The teacher continues to ask questions until the concept has been achieved.
 - The students apply the revelation to content to promote conceptualization

(Jacobsen, 1999)

2. Plato's Dialectic or Guided Discovery

- Guided discovery is very similar to the Socratic method, yet guided discovery involves more hands on tasks/presented materials which prompts student thinking.
- The teacher presents selected materials which are specifically chosen to guide students to a desired end or result. The teacher guides the students in the right direction, but does not tell them the answer. The students tell the teacher!
- Guided discovery is a fantastic technique to use for science. In fact the program Mystery Science is structured using the guided discovery approach.
- How to implement Guided Discovery
 - The following process repeats until the end goal or revelation is achieved:
 1. The teacher presents material/students engage in a hands on task
 2. The students make observations, problem solve or apply thinking
 3. The teacher prompts with questions

(Jacobsen, 1999)

3. Aristotle's Concept Analysis & Coordinate Concepts

- This technique aims to define what an object or idea is and what it is not.
- Concept analysis and coordinate concepts are used to define objects, form concepts, and form generalizations.
- This technique uses deductive reasoning and sets students up for the syllogisms in logic and critical reasoning.
- Concept analysis & coordinate concepts are useful strategies to employ when the objective is to sort, classify, or define.

- How to implement concept analysis & coordinate concepts
 1. The teacher chooses an object/ idea that they want the students to define
 2. The class establishes features of an object to form a concept of it.
 3. The teacher then gives a coordinating concept (something that fits into the students definition of the object, but does not fit into the established category).
 4. The students then readjust their concept of the object
 5. Steps 3 and 4 repeat until a solid concept has been formed

(Jacobsen, 1999)

- Example: Lesson on sorting animals using concept analysis & coordinate concepts by
Rebecca-Jo Schwetz

(T): The teacher shows pictures of various birds to the students. “What type of animal are all of these?”

(S): “Birds!”

(T): “Right! We are going to work together to discover what makes an animal a bird. What is a feature that you notice about these birds? What makes an animal a bird?”

(S): “They all have wings!” “They all fly!”

(T): “Okay, so you are you saying that all animals that that fly and have wings are birds?”

(S): “Yes... wait no! We learned that penguins are birds. They can’t fly.”

(T): “What makes a penguin a bird then?”

(S): “It lays eggs!”

(T): “Right! Do all birds lay eggs?”

(S): “Yes!”

(T): “So, So far we have that an animal is a bird if...?”

(S): “It lays eggs and has wings.”

(T) “That sounds pretty good. But wait. This animal here lays eggs and has wings is this a bird?”

The teacher shows a picture of a butterfly.”

(S): “No that’s a bug!”

(T): “Why isn’t it a bird? It lays eggs and has wings.”

(S): “Because it’s too small, you can squish a bug. And you can’t squish a bird.”

(T): “I like the way you are thinking, let’s imagine that this butterfly was bigger. Would it be a bird then?”

(S): “No.”

(T): “What does a butterfly lack that birds have?”

(S): “I know, feathers!”

(T): “Oh my, you are right! A butterfly doesn’t have feathers! Do all birds have feathers? Can you think of a bird that doesn’t have feathers? Take a moment to talk with a partner.” The teacher gives the students a couple of minutes to talk. “And we’re back in three, two, one... did any of you think of a bird that doesn’t have feathers?”

(S): “No.”

(T): “I can’t either. So, I think it is safe to say that if an animal has feathers”

(S): “...lays eggs and has wings, then it is a bird.”

(T): “Great Job!”

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Section V

Recommendations

It is recommended that the teacher attend a P4C professional development course before implementing this curriculum guide (*see professional development opportunities for P4C*). The week long course over the summer in New Jersey will be the most beneficial.

If professional development is not possible, do a quick search on the universities around your area and their philosophy departments. There are outreach programs supported by colleges around the country — it doesn't hurt to look. If no luck, then start with watching videos on P4C to see how the teacher and students communicate and to understand structure.

Before starting P4C circles, establish rules for the students to follow. The first and second philosophy lessons focus on setting up expectations, rules, explaining the virtues, and modeling how to respond to peers respectfully. It is imperative to the success of philosophy sessions that students understand and uphold the philosophical virtues and respect their peers. The virtues in this guide are written in fancy language, so modify as necessary. Teachers must model and explicitly teach how to phrase counter opinions so that students do not become frustrated. William (1993) stated that success in this program is reliant on the teacher's pedagogy. A teacher must have firm rules and expectations during philosophy sessions, implement teacher and peer modeling, and provide positive feedback.

Start with a picture book that the students are familiar with, but haven't necessarily read deeply. Choose a book for the following week based on the discussion. Start with reviewing prior learning and then segue into the new stimuli to ensure a smooth transition.

Always read a book or familiarize yourself with the stimuli before you present it to the

children. Also, think of questions that connect the themes to prior discussions and learning. The questions in this guide are just there if you are stuck or would like to use them. Remember that this is student centered learning. Let the students come up with most of the questions and topics discussed.

Just like with every other subject that is taught, it is the teacher's job to understand their students and figure out which approach would work best for them and the teacher's style as well. Williams (1993) noticed that some groups of children liked the predictability of P4C sessions while other groups favored variety.

If the students favor and work better with predictability and structure:

- 1) Pick an instructional strategy and stick with it
- 2) Limit the stimuli to children's literature and disregard the lessons in this guide.

On the other hand, if students prefer variety, change it up as you see fitting using the lessons, but you should always start and end with a philosophy circle with each new topic. I would still recommend choosing an instructional strategy and follow it on those days; it still needs to be somewhat structured.

It is recommended that you tell the parents that you are going to start P4C. Let them know the benefits!

The last recommendation is to have fun!

Reflection

I truly enjoyed making this guide. From beginning to end I always had a plan and knew where it was going. After I wrote my proposal, I started finding the book summaries and discussion questions. Formatting and citing these took up the majority of my time on this project.

Next, I bounced around from finding lessons and video to finding supporting materials to writing up assisting materials. I hit a road block when I discovered that I had to ask permissions for the lessons that were used. I'm sorry to anyone who was angered by my ignorance. So, I sought out permission and basically had to start from scratch. The reference section was completely torn apart and I supplemented with lessons of my own making when I didn't receive a response from some individuals. I also had to recompile everything due to the paging.

When I started this guide it was just for my master's project. I never knew that it would become this big of a deal and that professionals in the field of P4C would support me and would be interested in my work. I am truly humbled.

Action Plan

When I have my own classroom I plan on having "Philosophy Fridays." Just like with the research mentioned, it will be for about an hour and be in lieu of a reading lesson. I also plan on implementing it first thing in the morning. What a great way to start a Friday right? I plan on attending a professional development in P4C in the near future, so that I can better implement P4C as well. I have also talked with Jason Buckley, from thephilosophyman.com. This guide will be shared on their website in order to help teachers that want to implement P4C!