



A series of fun and engaging short films, exploring fundamental philosophical concepts through everyday questions that children ask - and adults often struggle to answer.

The films provide a springboard into wider philosophical exploration and debate in the classroom and beyond, considering concepts such as morality, identity and fairness, and aim to help Key Stage 2 students to think logically, laterally and creatively.

There are two versions of each story: one that includes a breakout to class discussion for additional guidance, and one with just the stories, for you to use in the way that works best for you.

Tips for facilitating philosophical discussions in the classroom

by Lisa Naylor, P4C Specialist at Gallions Primary School, London

Start each session with a warm-up game: A good game for groups new to P4C [*Philosophy for/with Children*; see p7 for more information] is Ask the Bag a Question: put a familiar object in the middle of the circle (a bag, pair of shoes, a chair, a pencil, a globe, etc.) and everybody takes it in turns to ask the object a question.

Set clear ground rules: Ask the children what they need to have a good discussion. They might include: Don't talk when someone else is talking, look at the person talking and listen until they finish.

Encourage the children to pose open-ended 'thinking' or 'wondering' questions in response to the stimulus: I usually start by encouraging children to consider the main themes running through the stimulus and then ask them to draw out the big ideas from the themes.

Trust that over time, children will learn to think in a less literal and more philosophical way: Children new to P4C may at first respond very literally in a philosophical enquiry. Encourage children to probe deeper and over time, they will learn to think in a more philosophical way.

Encourage the children to respond to each other: Asking if they agree or disagree with previous speakers and probing for examples or reasons are good ways of helping children sharpen their capacity to think critically and build on each other's thoughts during the enquiry.

Facilitate the enquiry Some useful things to say to facilitate the enquiry could include:

- * *Do you agree or disagree with what you have just heard?*
- * *Can you clarify what you mean?*
- * *What I think you are saying is... Is that right?*
- * *Can you give an example to support your argument?*

Allow time for a final round: Allow everybody in the circle to share a final brief point, either adding to what has been said during the enquiry or commenting on how the session went. Encourage children who have made little or no contribution to the session to share, without rushing to finish the lesson.



WHAT MAKES ME ME ?

Adapted from *The If Machine*, by Peter Worley

During a long and dangerous voyage Dave's ship needs several repairs, eventually meaning that every single part of the ship has been replaced. When he gets home his wife is convinced he has a different ship...



Using the example of a ship changing over time and becoming materially completely different, this film encourages children to consider the meaning of identity, stimulating a discussion on memory, experience and the soul.

- * Watch the full version [here](#).
- * Watch the animation-only version [here](#).

Questions for discussion

Part 1:

Is it the same ship? And if it isn't, at what point did it become a different ship?

Part 2:

Are there two Theseuses, or just one? Which ship is the Theseus?

What is it that makes the Theseus, the Theseus?

Part 3:

Am I the same person I was when I was born? What makes me *me*?

If children suggest it's their memories: can you remember what you were like when you were a baby?

If children suggest it's their thoughts: if you took your brain out of your body, and put it in someone else's body, would that person still be 'you'?

If you could make a clone of yourself, would that clone also be you?

Use in the classroom



- * In **PSHE**, this film could accompany a discussion on identity.
- * In **Maths**, teachers could use the example of the ship to talk about parts and wholes, or percentages.
- * In **Science** this could stimulate a discussion on materials, and about transition and change.
- * In **English**, this could accompany an exercise in oracy through developing children's skills in speaking and listening.

WHO OWNS THE SKY ?

Adapted from *The Water Catchers*, by Jason Buckley

Two communities living along the same river come into conflict when one decides to build a dam.



This film explores the concept of ownership of natural resources and whether they can be shared, and even stolen. It encourages children to consider if and how natural resources like water can be owned and what happens when one community benefits from it at the expense of another.

- * Watch the full version [here](#).
- * Watch the animation-only version [here](#).

Questions for discussion

Part 1:

Have the farmers stolen the water?

Who owns the river? Who owns the fish in the river?

Can you steal resources like rivers and land, or even the sky?

How do we decide who owns things like rivers and land?

Part 2:

Are the farmers selfish for not considering the fisher people? What do you think they should all do?

Are the fisher people selfish for not wanting to move?

Should you put your own family or community before other families or communities that you don't know?

Use in the classroom



- * In **PSHE**, this film could accompany a discussion on who owns the rights to natural resources.
- * In **Geography** this film could begin a lesson on different environments and current climate issues that exist across the world.
- * In **English**, this could accompany an exercise in oracy through developing children's skills in speaking and listening.

WHY SHOULD I BE GOOD ?

Adapted from *The If Machine*, by Peter Worley

A boy finds a ring of invisibility and must decide what to do with it...



This film explores the concept of morality, considering how we know the difference between right and wrong and where our motives for behaviour come from. It encourages children to reflect on the origins of morality; whether it be parents and teachers, a religion, or whether we are born knowing the difference between right and wrong.

- * Watch the full version [here](#).
- * Watch the animation-only version [here](#).

Questions for discussion

Part 1:

What would you do with a ring of invisibility? What would be the *right* thing to do?

How do you know what is right and wrong?

Part 2:

Is it okay to do naughty things if you can't get caught?

What stops you from doing naughty things all the time?

Is it ever okay to be naughty?

Part 3:

Does doing good things make you happy? What other reasons are there for doing good things?

Is it still worth doing good things if nobody sees you?

Use in the classroom



- * In **PSHE** and **RE** this film could accompany a discussion on morality and rules.
- * In **English**, this could accompany an exercise in oracy through developing children's skills in speaking and listening.

WHAT'S FAIR ?

Adapted from The Backpackers, by Jason Buckley

Three friends are going on a quest to find a mysterious golden bird that lives deep in the forest. But first, they have to work out who's carrying what...



This film explores the concept of fairness, and how - or whether - burdens and resources should be shared. It encourages children to reflect on whether there is a difference between fairness and equality, and how we consider those that are in some way disadvantaged.

- * Watch the full version [here](#).
- * Watch the animation-only version [here](#).

Questions for discussion

Part 1:

What's the fairest way to share out the kit? What does fair mean?

Is 'fair' when everything is divided equally, or when people have what they need?

Is there a difference between equality and fairness?

If you are stronger, should you do more than someone who is weaker?

Part 2:

Is there a solution where everyone is happy? Is fairness important?

If you have more stuff, is it OK to share with someone who has less just to make them do what you want?



Use in the classroom

- * In **PSHE** this film could accompany a discussion on rights and responsibilities, and whether those that are disadvantaged should be treated the same as those that are advantaged.
- * In **English**, this could accompany an exercise in oracy through developing children's skills in speaking and listening.

AM I ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS ?



Adapted from The If Machine, by Peter Worley

A scorpion asks a frog to help her across the river, but will she be able to stop herself stinging him?

A film that explores the concept of personal responsibility and human nature, encouraging children to consider whether we are able to change our nature and whether we are therefore responsible for our actions.

- * Watch the full version [here](#).
- * Watch the animation-only version [here](#).

Questions for discussion

Part 1:

Should the frog carry the scorpion across the river?

Part 2:

Who was responsible for what happened to the frog and the scorpion? What did the scorpion mean when she said "it's in my nature"?

Did the frog have a choice? Did the scorpion have a choice?
If something is in our nature, can we control it?

Part 2:

Could Karim have stopped himself from breaking his promise? How is Karim's promise different to the scorpion's promise?

How much control do humans have over our character?
If we can control our character, then are we always responsible for what we do?'



Use in the classroom

- * In **PSHE** this film could accompany a discussion on responsibility, whether we can change our behaviour and how we treat others.
- * In **English**, this could accompany an exercise in oracy through developing children's skills in speaking and listening.

About Philosophy in the Classroom



These films are designed to provide a stimulus for philosophical enquiry in the classroom. Philosophical enquiry develops higher-order thinking and speaking and listening skills by encouraging children to discuss their ideas with their classmates and explain their reasoning and conclusions.

‘Philosophy for Children’ (P4C) was developed in the ‘70s by US professor Matthew Lipman, who created a model of doing philosophy that would

encourage his undergraduate students to think for themselves through developing a ‘community of enquiry’. P4C is a movement that is now practiced all over the world and backed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. There are different models of doing philosophy in the classroom, all based on developing communities of enquiry, from P4/wC (see SAPERE and The Philosophy Man below) to PhiE (Philosophical Enquiry - see Peter Worley and The Philosophy Foundation).

Research conducted into communities of philosophical enquiry over the last 40 years show benefits that include improved cognitive, affective and social skills among children participating in regular sessions. For more information see the listings on the [SAPERE](#) and [IAPC](#) websites.

If you’re considering using philosophy in the classroom then use the links below for further information and resources.

With thanks to Emma Worley

Further Resources

The If Machine: Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom by Peter Worley

The If Machine is a rich resource of ‘guided philosophy sessions’ containing many stories, both original and classic, aimed at developing higher order thinking through the activity of philosophy. Prize-winning author Peter Worley is the co-founder of the Philosophy Foundation, an award winning educational charity raising aspirations and attainment through doing philosophical enquiry in the classroom.

See www.philosophy-foundation.org



The Philosophy Man

Jason Buckley - aka The Philosophy Man - is a P4C expert who writes resources, runs pupil workshops and trains teachers in philosophy for children. He also runs a free weekly resource bulletin for teachers, offering games, stories and facilitation ideas.

See www.thephilosophyman.com

Sapere

SAPERE - the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education - is the internationally recognised educational charity that brings together a network of people throughout the UK practising and promoting philosophical enquiry for children and communities.

See www.sapere.org.uk