



OTHER WORLD

Age: 8 +

Themes: planets, inference, modal verbs

Stimulus

NASA scientists have found a planet deep in space that looks like ours. They call it Other World. They want to send astronauts there but it would take 100 years to get there and 100 years to get back so they can't. They decide to send a probe to gather data about the planet instead.

After 250 years the probe returns. It has compiled lots of data about Otherworld. However some space dust has got into the computer and most of the data is corrupted. Technicians try and salvage what they can but they are only able to save four pieces of information about the planet:

1. All animals have four legs.
2. All cars go fast.
3. Everyone is nice
4. All animals are cuddly

Task Question

- ✓ Is there anything else we can say about Other World?

Children might infer things like 'There are no humans on the planet because humans don't have four legs' or 'there are no laws because everyone is nice.'

Stimulus Continued

Many people are disappointed not to learn more about Other World so scientists try to piece together a picture from what they already have. Here is the first one:

"All animals on Other World have four legs so snakes on other world will have four legs"

Task Question:

- ✓ Is this true?

Some other examples you can use are:

"All cars go fast on Otherworld so broken cars go fast."

"Everyone is nice on otherworld so robbers are nice."

"All animals are cuddly on Otherworld so Hedgehogs are cuddly."

Reasoning Tool: Modal Verbs

After eliciting some answers you might want to give the children a language structure for answering the question. Put three sheets of paper on the floor with the following written on them.

Must be true

Can't be true

Might/might not be true

Ask a child to stand next to which ever one they think applied to the statement about snakes having four legs. get them to explain their position. For example, if they say it might or might not be true that snakes have four legs then it might be because 'It depends if snakes exist on other world. If they do then it will be true but if they don't it won't be true.' Alternatively they might say "It can't be true because nothing that has four legs isn't a snake.' A good topic for further deb