The Philosophy Foundation
THINKING CHANGES

THE SCIENCE PROJECT

A TWO-MINUTE PLAY BY PAUL BODIN.

(Words inside brackets are stage directions only. They are not meant to be said out loud.)

For information on how to use this play in the classroom, take a look at Pete's blog here: https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/blog/dialogues-in-philosophy-with-children (https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/blog/dialogues-in-philosophy-with-children)

THE SCIENCE PROJECT

Player One Hi _____. Hey, what are you going to do for your science project? We have to let our teacher know what our topic will be by tomorrow.

Player Two I'm not sure yet. What are you going to do?

Player One I'm really excited about my project. I'm building a big maze out of wood and cardboard. My mom is helping me with the hard stuff, like cutting the plywood base and gluing the cardboard strips.

Player Two I don't get it. What's a big maze got to do with science?

Player One Oh, I forgot to tell you the best part! We're going to put my pet gerbil in the maze and see how long it takes for her to get from the start to the finish. We going to put her through five times and see if she improves her time as she gets to know the maze. My theory is that gerbils are smart enough to perform better each time, as long as they have a prize at the end.

Player Two What's the prize at the end?

Player One Food, of course! We'll put a small plate of her favorite gerbil treats at the end of the maze. That will give her plenty of reason to keep going.

Player Two *(looking a little uncertain about Player One's idea)* I'm not sure this is fair to your pet gerbil. Does she have any say-so in whether she has to be part of your experiment?

Player One What are you talking about?

Player Two What I mean is, doesn't she have rights too? What if she doesn't feel like being put into a maze five times in front of a classroom of strange kids? What if she would rather stay home and sleep in her little gerbil cage?

Player One She's my pet. And if I want to use her in an experiment, that's *my* right as her owner. After all, I feed her and clean out her cage. So she's just paying me back for all the love and attention I give her. Anyway, I'm not hurting her, just using her in the name of science.

Player Two Well, I think it's cruel to make her run through a maze just so that you can get a good grade on your science project.

Player One So, by the way, what did you bring for lunch today?

Player Two An apple … some celery sticks … and a chicken salad.

Player One A-ha! You think I'm cruel to use my gerbil for a science project. But you're okay EATING a chicken as part of your lunch!

Player Two I didn't kill the chicken. I'm just eating it. A lot of people eat meat.

Player One Okay, and I'm not killing my gerbil. I'm just testing it. A lot of scientists use animals in tests.