



EduTrend Contents

P4C · NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT · HIGH SCHOOL

Duties to Future Generations

Do we owe anything to people who do not exist yet?

Ages 15–18

Level: Advanced

60 minutes

Circle and pairs · up to
30

Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Duties to Future Generations

Students consider a puzzle: our choices today affect people who will live long after us, yet those people do not exist and cannot speak for themselves. Teams examine three arguments: we owe them a fair share of resources, we cannot owe anything to people who do not exist, and we owe them because of what we received from earlier generations. They apply the arguments to an invented decision about a new road through ancient woodland.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse arguments about future generations;
- apply principles to a policy case;
- evaluate objections;
- construct a reasoned position.

KEY WORDS

future generations · obligation · sustainability · intergenerational · policy · trade-off

CURRICULUM LINKS

Geography: sustainability. Politics: long-term policy. Economics: trade-offs.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree, add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Argument cards
- Road case sheet
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Stimulus	Present the future generations puzzle and the road case.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
10–22 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
22–52 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Do we owe anything to people who do not exist yet?"</i>
52–60 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Recommend a decision on the road and justify it with at least two arguments and one objection.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

The idea of sustainable development is often defined as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs, from the 1987 Brundtland Report.

Philosophers debate how to weigh the interests of people who do not yet exist.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Future people don't count until they exist." This is disputed.
- "We must sacrifice everything for the future." Balance is debated.
- "Sustainability only means recycling." It is about whole systems.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use two arguments.

Stretch

Research how a real public body considers future generations.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Arguments

Evaluate.

Arguments

Argument	Strength	Weakness

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

How should we weigh present needs against future ones? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Duties to Future Generations is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Nature and the Environment programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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