



EduTrend Contents

P4C · TIME AND CHANGE · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Could You Change the Past?

Time travel stories and their puzzles

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 04

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

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Could You Change the Past?

Students read an invented story in which a student travels back in time to stop herself from losing a school race. But if she wins, she would never have wanted to travel back. Students map the story on a timeline and find the puzzle. They create questions and enquire into whether the past can be changed and what time travel stories show about time.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse a time travel paradox;
- use timelines to reason;
- evaluate possible solutions;
- build a justified view.

KEY WORDS

past · future · paradox · timeline · cause · change

CURRICULUM LINKS

Science: physics of time. English: time travel fiction. History: the past and evidence.

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)

- Time travel story
- Timeline strips
- 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 04 · 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
0–8 min Stimulus	Read the time travel story and draw its timeline.	<i>“What did you notice?”</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>“Which question is most interesting to talk about?”</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other’s ideas.	<i>“Could you change the past?”</i>
44–50 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)

Explain the paradox and one possible solution.

ACTIVITY 04 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Time travel stories often create paradoxes, where an effect seems to prevent its own cause.

Some stories avoid paradoxes by making the traveller part of what always happened; others use branching timelines.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Time travel stories are just fantasy, so they teach nothing.” They test our ideas of time.
- “There is only one answer.” Stories use different solutions.
- “The past no longer matters.” It shapes the present.

Adapting the activity

Support

Draw the timeline together.

Stretch

Write a time travel story with no paradox.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Timeline puzzle

Map it.

Timeline puzzle

Event	Cause	Effect

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Is the past still real now it has gone? 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

Could You Change the Past? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Time and Change programme (middle school, level: intermediate). 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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