



EduTrend Contents

P4C · AESTHETICS AND ART · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

Taste, judgement and David Hume

Ages 11–13

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 03

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

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

Students rate five artworks shown on cards, then compare ratings. Many differ, yet almost everyone agrees that some works are better made than others. Students meet David Hume's essay "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757), which suggests that experienced, unbiased critics can reach shared judgements. They enquire into whether beauty is only in the eye of the beholder.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- compare subjective and objective views;
- explain Hume's standard of taste;
- evaluate disagreement;
- reach a justified view.

KEY WORDS

taste · subjective · objective · critic
· Hume · judgement

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art and music: appraising work.
English: reviews. Maths: survey data.

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)

- Artwork cards
- Rating 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 03 · 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	Rate the works and compare the class results.	<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>"Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?"</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)

Argue whether some tastes can be better than others.

ACTIVITY 03 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Hume argued that qualified critics need practice, comparison, good sense and freedom from prejudice.

The saying “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” expresses the view that beauty depends on the viewer.

Common ideas to listen for

- “If it is subjective, all opinions are equal.” Hume disagreed.
- “Critics are always right.” They can be biased.
- “Taste never changes.” Taste can develop.

Adapting the activity

Support

Compare two works.

Stretch

Write a review using Hume’s qualities of a good critic.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Class ratings

Record.

Class ratings

Work	My rating	Class average	Why we differ

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Can one person's taste be better than another's? 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

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Aesthetics and Art 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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