



EduTrend Contents

P4C · GROWING UP AND CHANGE · HIGH SCHOOL

Thinking for Yourself

Maturity, autonomy and Kant's challenge

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

Thinking for Yourself

Students read a short summary of Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?", where he describes enlightenment as leaving self-imposed immaturity and urges people to dare to use their own understanding. Students test the idea with invented cases, such as following trends, relying on an app for answers and questioning a family tradition, and enquire into what maturity really involves.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain Kant's idea of enlightenment;
- apply it to cases;
- evaluate autonomy and dependence;
- construct a reasoned position.

KEY WORDS

autonomy · maturity · Kant ·
enlightenment · think ·
independence

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: ethics and political
philosophy. History: the
Enlightenment. PSHE:
independence.

1	2	3	4	5	6
STIMULUS	THINK	QUESTION	ENQUIRE	BUILD	REFLECT
Share something to think about	Quiet thinking time	Create and choose a question	Reason together	Agree, disagree, add	Last words

Materials (per class)

- Kant summary card
- Case cards
- 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	Share the Kant summary and case cards.	<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>"What does it mean to think for yourself?"</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)

Defend a view on what maturity involves.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Kant used the motto “Sapere aude”, meaning “Dare to be wise” or “Dare to use your own understanding”.

Philosophers debate how thinking for yourself fits with learning from others and relying on experts.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Thinking for yourself means ignoring everyone.” It means judging reasons.
- “Adults always think for themselves.” Kant thought many do not.
- “Relying on experts is immature.” Sensible trust can be reasonable.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use two cases.

Stretch

Find a case where relying on others is the mature choice.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Thinking for yourself

Apply Kant.

Thinking for yourself

Case	Thinking for yourself?	Why

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

**Is being grown up about age or about thinking? 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

Thinking for Yourself is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Growing Up and Change 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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