



EduTrend Contents

P4C · BELIEF AND EVIDENCE · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Extraordinary Claims

How much evidence do surprising claims need?

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

Extraordinary Claims

Students rate invented claims: “I had cereal for breakfast”, “My cousin met a famous footballer”, “I saw a ghost in the attic” and “This drink makes you run twice as fast.” For each, they decide how much evidence they would need to believe it. They create questions and enquire into whether surprising claims need stronger evidence.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- compare claims by plausibility;
- identify appropriate evidence;
- reason about proportioning belief;
- show respect in discussion.

KEY WORDS

claim · evidence · surprising · likely
· test · proof

CURRICULUM LINKS

Science: fair tests. PSHE:
advertising claims. English:
persuasive texts.

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)

- Claim cards
- Evidence scale
- 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	Share the claim cards for rating.	<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>"Do surprising claims need more evidence?"</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 how much evidence one claim needs and why.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Many thinkers argue that the more a claim goes against what we already know, the stronger the evidence we should ask for.

Scientists test surprising claims with careful experiments that others can repeat.

Common ideas to listen for

- “If you can’t disprove it, it must be true.” The burden is on the claim.
- “Surprising claims are always false.” Some turn out true.
- “Personal stories are enough.” They can mislead.

Adapting the activity

Support

Compare two claims.

Stretch

Design a fair test for the drink claim.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Evidence scale

Rate.

Evidence scale

Claim	How surprising?	Evidence needed

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

What would it take to change your mind? 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

Extraordinary Claims is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Belief and Evidence 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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