



EduTrend Contents

P4C · CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Definition Duel

Write a definition, then defend it against counter-examples

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

Definition Duel

Teams write a one-sentence definition of “sport”. They pass it to another team, who try to find a counter-example: something the definition includes that is not a sport, or excludes that is. The original team revises. After three rounds, teams compare definitions and enquire into whether perfect definitions are possible and whether we need them.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- write precise definitions;
- generate counter-examples;
- revise definitions;
- reflect on the nature of concepts.

KEY WORDS

definition · counter-example ·
necessary · sufficient · revise ·
precise

CURRICULUM LINKS

PE: what counts as sport. English:
definitions and dictionaries.
Science: classification.

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)

- Definition cards
- Round tracker
- 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	Ask teams to define “sport”.	<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 a perfect definition possible?”</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)

Produce a definition of sport that survives three counter-example attacks.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

A counter-example is a case that shows a definition is too wide or too narrow.

Revising definitions after counter-examples is a classic philosophical method.

Common ideas to listen for

- “The dictionary settles it.” Dictionaries describe usage.
- “One counter-example means give up.” Revise instead.
- “Precise means long.” Clear matters more than long.

Adapting the activity

Support

Offer definition starters.

Stretch

Try defining “art” or “work”.

WORKSHEET 1

Duel rounds

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Record changes.

Duel rounds

Round	Our definition	Counter-example

WORKSHEET 2

Thinking moves

Use these in the enquiry.

Thinking moves

Thinking move	My example
I agree with... because...	
I disagree with... because...	
An example is...	
A counter-example is...	
Building on what... said...	

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Do we need definitions to use words well? 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

Definition Duel is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Concepts and Definitions 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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