



EduTrend Contents

P4C · NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Is Nature Valuable in Itself?

Does a wild place matter if no person ever sees or uses it?

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

Is Nature Valuable in Itself?

Students consider cases: a mountain lake nobody visits, a rare beetle with no known use to humans, and a forest that could be turned into farmland to feed people. For each they list reasons it matters: useful to people, beautiful, home to creatures, or valuable in itself. They learn the terms instrumental and intrinsic value and enquire into whether nature matters only because of what it does for us.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- distinguish instrumental and intrinsic value;
- analyse cases of environmental value;
- weigh competing values;
- reach a reasoned judgement.

KEY WORDS

value · intrinsic · instrumental · wilderness · species · use

CURRICULUM LINKS

Science: biodiversity. Geography: land use. RE: stewardship.

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)

- 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 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	Present the three wild place cases.	<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>"Does nature matter if no person ever uses it?"</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 the rare beetle should be protected, using both kinds of value.

ACTIVITY 04 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Philosophers distinguish instrumental value (useful for something else) from intrinsic value (valuable in itself).

Environmental ethics debates whether species and ecosystems have intrinsic value.

Common ideas to listen for

- “If it’s not useful, it’s worthless.” Many disagree.
- “Intrinsic value means priceless.” It can still be weighed.
- “People and nature always conflict.” Sometimes they align.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use one case.

Stretch

Construct a case where intrinsic value should lose.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Why does it matter?

For each case.

Why does it matter?

Case	Useful to people	Valuable in itself
Mountain lake		
Rare beetle		
Forest or farm		

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Can something be valuable in itself? 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 Nature Valuable in Itself? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Nature and the Environment 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.