



EduTrend Contents

P4C · RULES AND LAWS · HIGH SCHOOL

Socrates in Prison

Plato's Crito and the duty to obey the law

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

Socrates in Prison

In Plato's *Crito*, Socrates has been sentenced to death. His friend Crito offers to help him escape. Socrates refuses, arguing that by living in Athens he had accepted its laws, that the laws had raised and protected him, and that escaping would harm the city. Students compare his reasons with Thomas Hobbes' idea in *Leviathan* (1651) that people accept laws in return for peace and security, and enquire into why we should keep the law.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain Socrates' arguments;
- compare them with Hobbes' social contract;
- evaluate arguments about obligations to the community;
- construct a reasoned position.

KEY WORDS

obligation · Socrates · Crito ·
Hobbes · social contract ·
community

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: political philosophy.
History: ancient Athens.
Citizenship: rule of law.

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)

- Crito summary card
- Hobbes summary card
- 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	Summarise the Crito dialogue and Hobbes' idea of a social contract.	<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>"Why should we keep the law?"</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 the duty to obey the law.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

The Crito is a short dialogue by Plato set in Socrates' prison cell before his execution in 399 BCE.

Hobbes argued that without shared laws life would be insecure, so people agree to rules that protect everyone.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Socrates thought the verdict was fair." He thought it was wrong but still kept his agreement.
- "Laws matter only because of punishment." Socrates and Hobbes both give other reasons.
- "This question is settled." Philosophers still discuss it.

Adapting the activity

Support

Focus on Socrates' main argument.

Stretch

Write Crito's reply to Socrates.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Socrates and Hobbes

Compare.

Socrates and Hobbes

Question	Socrates	Hobbes
Why keep the law?		
What do we gain?		
What do we owe?		

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Was Socrates right to stay? 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

Socrates in Prison is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Rules and Laws 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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