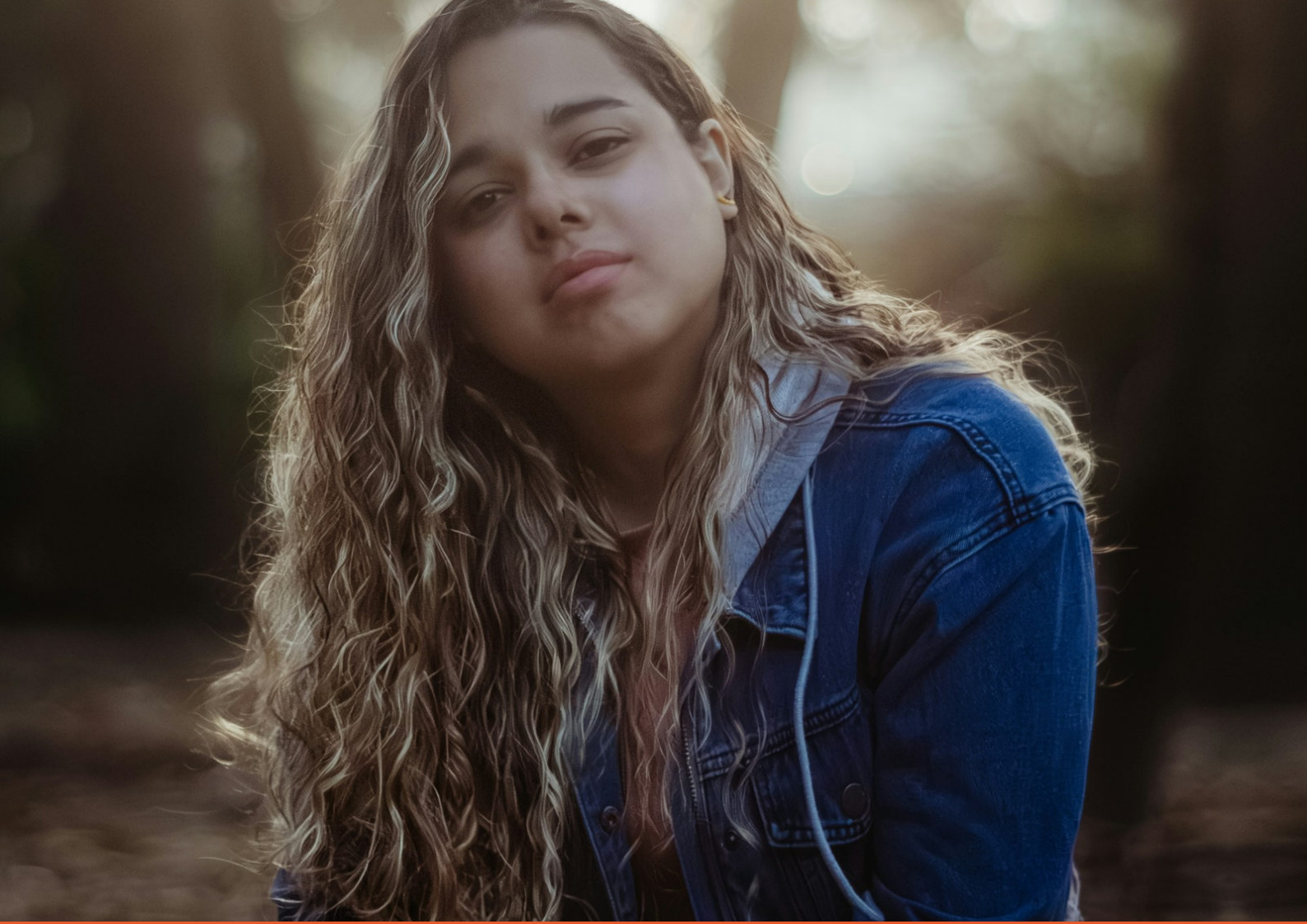




EduTrend Contents

P4C · FREEDOM AND CHOICE · HIGH SCHOOL

Free Will

Are our choices caused, and does it matter?

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

Free Will

Students consider a thought experiment: a super-computer knows everything about the universe and predicts every choice you will make. Students compare three positions: hard determinism (everything is caused, so free will is an illusion), libertarianism (some choices are not fully caused) and compatibilism (a choice is free if it comes from your own desires without force). They enquire into whether we can still be responsible.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain three positions on free will;
- apply them to cases;
- analyse the link with responsibility;
- construct a reasoned view.

KEY WORDS

free will · determinism ·
compatibilism · cause · responsible
· predict

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: metaphysics and
ethics. Science: cause and effect.
Law: responsibility.

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)

- Position cards
- Prediction machine card
- Responsibility cases
- 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	Present the prediction machine thought experiment.	<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>"Do we have free will?"</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 free will and responsibility.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Compatibilists such as David Hume argued that freedom means acting on your own will rather than being free of all causes.

Debates about free will connect to questions of praise, blame and punishment.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Determinism means nothing matters.” Choices still have effects.
- “Free will means no causes at all.” Compatibilists disagree.
- “This is only for scientists.” It is a philosophical question.

Adapting the activity

Support

Compare two positions.

Stretch

Write a reply from each position to the prediction machine.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Three positions

Compare.

Three positions

Position	Main claim	Strongest objection
Hard determinism		
Libertarianism		
Compatibilism		

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Can we be responsible if our choices have causes? 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

Free Will is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Freedom and Choice 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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