



EduTrend Contents

P4C · FALLACIES AND TRICKY THINKING · PRIMARY

The Slippery Slope

Does one small thing always lead to a big disaster?

Ages 8–11

Level: Developing

45 minutes

Whole class circle · up
to 30

Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

The Slippery Slope

Pupils hear an invented argument: “If we let you have one sweet, you will want another, then the whole jar, then you will eat sweets for every meal, and your teeth will fall out!” They lay out each step as cards in a chain and test each link: is this step likely? Then they create questions and enquire into when warnings about slippery slopes are reasonable.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- identify a chain of predictions;
- test each link;
- distinguish likely and unlikely steps;
- build on others’ ideas.

KEY WORDS

chain · step · likely · prediction ·
exaggerate · slope

CURRICULUM LINKS

PSHE: making choices. English:
cause and effect. Science:
predictions.

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)

- Chain step 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 02 · 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	Lay out the sweet jar chain cards.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–18 min Questions	Pupils create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
18–40 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Does one thing always lead to another?"</i>
40–45 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)

Find the weakest link in the sweet jar chain and explain why.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

A slippery slope argument claims one step will lead to extreme results without showing each step is likely.

Some chains are real, so the skill is checking each link rather than rejecting all warnings.

Common ideas to listen for

- “All warnings are silly.” Some chains are real.
- “If it could happen, it will.” Possible is not likely.
- “Big claims need no evidence.” They need more.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use a three-step chain.

Stretch

Write a slippery slope that is actually sensible.

WORKSHEET 1

Test the chain

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Rate each step.

Test the chain

Step	Likely?	Why

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.

**When is a warning about the future sensible? Before the enquiry I thought...
Now I think... because...**

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	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

The Slippery Slope is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Fallacies and Tricky Thinking programme (primary, level: developing). 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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