



EduTrend Contents

P4C · ASKING PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS · HIGH SCHOOL

Socratic Questioning

Using Socrates' method to examine a belief step by step

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

Socratic Questioning

Students learn about Socrates, the ancient Athenian philosopher known for questioning people about what they claimed to know. They study six kinds of Socratic questions: clarification, assumptions, reasons and evidence, viewpoints, implications and questions about the question. In pairs they run a dialogue examining a belief such as “success means being rich”, then reflect on how the belief changed.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain the Socratic method;
- use six types of questions;
- examine a belief systematically;
- reflect on changes in understanding.

KEY WORDS

Socratic · assumption · implication · viewpoint · belief · dialogue

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: ancient philosophy.
History: Athens. English: dialogue and argument.

1	2	3	4	5	6
STIMULUS	THINK	QUESTION	ENQUIRE	BUILD	REFLECT
Share something to think about	Quiet thinking time	Create and choose a question	Reason together	Agree, disagree, add	Last words

Materials (per class)

- Six question types card
- Belief 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 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	Introduce Socrates and the six question types.	<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>"Does questioning a belief make it stronger or weaker?"</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)

Run a dialogue that uses all six question types and summarise how the belief changed.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Socrates, as described in Plato's dialogues, questioned people to test whether their beliefs held up.

Questioning assumptions and implications often reveals that a belief needs to be refined rather than abandoned.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Socratic questioning is trying to win." It aims at understanding.
- "If a belief is questioned, it is wrong." It may survive.
- "Socrates wrote books." We know him mainly through Plato.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use three question types.

Stretch

Write a short dialogue in the style of Plato.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Six question types

Use each.

Six question types

Type	My question
Clarification	
Assumptions	
Reasons and evidence	
Viewpoints	
Implications	
The question itself	

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Is it possible to know that you know something? 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

Socratic Questioning is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Asking Philosophical Questions 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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