



EduTrend Contents

P4C · EMOTIONS AND THE MIND · HIGH SCHOOL

Reason and Emotion

Should the head rule the heart?

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

Reason and Emotion

Students compare two positions. The Stoics argued that many emotions come from judgements we make, so we can change them by changing our judgements. David Hume wrote in *A Treatise of Human Nature* that reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions. Students test both with invented cases, such as fear before an exam and anger at unfair treatment.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain two views on reason and emotion;
- apply them to cases;
- evaluate strengths and weaknesses;
- construct a position.

KEY WORDS

reason · emotion · Stoic · Hume · judgement · passion

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: philosophy of mind and ethics. Psychology: emotion regulation. English: character motivation.

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
- 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 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 the Stoic and Humean positions and the case cards.	<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>"Can emotions be reasonable or unreasonable?"</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 whether reason should rule emotion.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Stoic thinkers such as Epictetus taught that people are disturbed not by things but by their judgements about them.

Hume argued that reason alone cannot move us to act without desire or feeling.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Emotions are the opposite of thinking.” Many involve judgements.
- “The Stoics wanted no feelings.” They aimed to change harmful judgements.
- “Hume said we should be irrational.” He described how reason and passion work together.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use one case.

Stretch

Find a case where both views struggle.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Test the views

Apply.

Test the views

Case	Stoic view	Hume’s view

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Should reason rule our feelings? 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

Reason and Emotion is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Emotions and the Mind 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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