



EduTrend Contents

P4C · KNOWLEDGE AND EPISTEMOLOGY · HIGH SCHOOL

Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?

Testing a classic definition with Gettier cases

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

Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?

Students learn the classic analysis, discussed in Plato's Theaetetus, that knowledge is justified true belief. They then meet cases in the style of Edmund Gettier's 1963 paper, such as a stopped clock that happens to show the right time. Students decide whether the person knows, and enquire into whether the definition needs repair.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain the justified true belief analysis;
- apply it to Gettier-style cases;
- evaluate proposed repairs;
- construct a position.

KEY WORDS

justified · true · belief · Gettier ·
luck · definition

CURRICULUM LINKS

Philosophy: epistemology. Science:
evidence and justification. Maths:
proof.

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)

- Definition card
- Gettier-style 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	Present the definition and two Gettier-style cases.	<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>"Is knowledge justified true belief?"</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)

Propose and defend a repair to the definition.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

In a short 1963 paper, Edmund Gettier described cases where someone has a justified true belief but seems not to know.

Since then philosophers have proposed many repairs to the definition, and debate continues.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Gettier cases are just tricks.” They reveal a real problem.
- “Justification guarantees truth.” It does not.
- “Philosophers have solved this.” There is no agreed solution.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use the stopped clock case only.

Stretch

Invent your own Gettier case.

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 definition

Apply.

Test the definition

Case	Justified?	True?	Knowledge?

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Can you be right by luck and still know? 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

Is Knowledge Justified True Belief? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Knowledge and Epistemology 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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