



EduTrend Contents

P4C · REALITY AND IMAGINATION · PRIMARY

The Butterfly Dream

How do you know you are not dreaming?

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 Butterfly Dream

Pupils hear a retelling of the story of Zhuangzi, an ancient Chinese philosopher who dreamed he was a butterfly. When he woke, he wondered whether he was a man who had dreamed of being a butterfly or a butterfly now dreaming of being a man. Pupils list differences between dreams and waking life, then create questions and enquire into how we know we are awake.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- compare dreams and waking life;
- reason about how we know we are awake;
- give examples and counter-examples;
- build on others' ideas.

KEY WORDS

dream · awake · real · butterfly · sleep · know

CURRICULUM LINKS

English: dream stories. Science: sleep. Geography and history: ancient China.

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)

- Butterfly dream story
- Dream and awake chart
- 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	Tell the story of Zhuangzi's butterfly dream.	<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>"How do you know you are not dreaming?"</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)

Explain how you know you are awake.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Zhuangzi was a Chinese philosopher who lived over two thousand years ago. The butterfly dream is one of his best-known stories.

Dreams can feel real while they happen, which raises the question of how we tell them apart from waking life.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Dreams are always silly.” Some feel very real.
- “Pinching yourself proves you are awake.” You can dream a pinch.
- “This question has an easy answer.” Philosophers still debate it.

Adapting the activity

Support

List two differences.

Stretch

Ask: could this lesson be a dream?

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Dream or awake?

Compare.

Dream or awake?

Question	Dreams	Waking life
Can you choose what happens?		
Does it make sense?		
Do others share it?		
Can you remember it later?		

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Are dreams real? 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 Butterfly Dream is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Reality and Imagination 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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