



Philosophical Enquiry for KS2

The Happiness Helmet

We all want to be happy right? With the Happiness Helmet it's happy ever after.... guaranteed.

Philosophical Content	Possible Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETHICS: Value of happiness, sadness and other emotional experiences. The value of reality versus illusions or authenticity versus inauthenticity • PHENOMENOLOGY: The qualitative feel of happiness, sadness and other emotional experiences • EPISTMOLOGY: Reality, Illusion, Knowledge, Truth Example Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is happiness? • What is happiness for? • Can happiness be bad for you? • Could sadness be good for you? • What's the difference between happiness and contentment? • Is real happiness better than illusory happiness? • If real happiness and illusory happiness feel the same, why prefer one over the other? • How important is happiness? • Is happiness the most important thing? • Can you live without happiness?
Philosophical Method	Participant Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplifying, Decision-Making, Revising, Reflecting Facilitator Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting in-role, Modelling Questions, Continuum Conversation
Useful Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Happiness Helmet (A bike helmet covered in tinfoil and wires) • Circle of chairs • Passing Pom-pom, flash cards, flip chart / white board, pens

PREPARATION		10 min
Introductions	Introduce everyone.	
Ethos	Where needed. briefly establish or reiterate your class expectations. E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ask interesting questions • We are happy to share our ideas 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We care about other people’s ideas too • We support our ideas with reasons • We offer examples and counter examples • We’re not scared to disagree • We can be persuaded to change our mind • We take turns and speak one at a time • We encourage speakers by listening and looking at them. • We think about our thinking 	
Warm up	<p>Exemplify (from personal experience)</p> <p>In pairs: Invite the children to tell a partner about a time they remember being happy. Ask them to provide as much detail as possible e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give an example of a time when you were happy? • What did it feel like? • What caused it? • How long did it last? • Why did it end? <p>Feedback: Capture the kinds of examples they give on the whiteboard e.g. birthdays, time with family, playing games with friends etc.</p>	
STIMULUS		15 min
Presenting stimulus	<p>Drawing on the children’s specific examples, tell the following story:</p> <p><i>“I’ve been thinking a lot about happiness. I’ve been thinking about how nice it is to have a birthday, spend time with your family and play games with your friends. I’ve been thinking about how wonderful it would be the feel happy more of the time. I’ve had an idea. My ideas is an invention...”</i></p> <p>Present the children with ‘The Happiness Helmet’ (A cycle helmet covered in tin foil, or something else suitably sci-fi)</p> <p><i>“The Happiness Helmet works by stimulating your brain with electricity, so that the wearer feels perfectly happy when they wear it. No matter how bad the weather; how hot or cold, or poorly or tired they are; no matter how much loneliness, unfriendliness, sadness and suffering there is around them; the person wearing the Happiness Helmet feels wonderfully happy - as happy as they would feel if they were celebrating a birthday with their family or paying games with their friends.”</i></p>	
Thinking time	<p>Give the group a moment to process the stimulus. Put the Happiness Helmet in the middle of the circle so that everyone can see it.</p> <p>Ask: What do you wonder about The Happiness Helmet?</p>	
Sharing time	<p>Facilitator models ‘wonderments’ about the Happiness Helmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder who would wear it • I wonder if we would want to be happy all the time 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wonder how we would feel after we took the helmet off <p>Gather a few wonders from the group. Facilitator writes up on board or flip chart.</p>	
QUESTION(S)		5 min
Prepared Questions	<p>First ask: Would you wear the Happiness Helmet for one day?</p> <p>Then later ask: Would wear the Happiness Helmet for the rest of your life?</p>	
DIALOGUE		25 min
First Words	<p>Return to paired discussion first. If necessary, prompt the children to prepare an answer that takes the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes because... No because... I don't know because... 	
Collecting Ideas	<p>Continuum Conversation:</p> <p>Ask the children to make their decision physical by standing along the continuum line according to whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement:</p> <p><i>"I would wear the Happiness Helmet for one day"</i></p> <p>Ask a selection of children from both sides for their reasons.</p>	
Getting Focused	<p>Sitting back down, begin a facilitated discussion, identifying and exploring key emergent idea(s) in depth These ideas may include:</p> <p>In favour of putting the helmet on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happiness is the best part of life, the more of it the merrier. Being happy for the day would be fun, like a birthday. Sad people with hard lives might really <i>need</i> the Happiness helmet. People wearing the helmet would be so happy, they wouldn't realise – or need to worry – that they are being deceived. <p>Against putting the helmet on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unhappiness is necessary in life to help us value happiness. Unhappiness as an essential part of 'the human experience'. It's appropriate to feel unhappy at very sad times, you wouldn't want to feel any other way. What we want is 'real' happiness, as opposed to illusory happiness. 	
The Twist	<p>Now tell the rest of the story:</p> <p><i>"There is something else you should know about the Happiness Helmet The inventor who made it found that when people took it off, they felt very sad indeed. Normal life just seemed so dull compared to the happy life they had experienced when wearing the Happiness Helmet. So, the inventor made one important change to the Helmet: once you put it on, you must wear it</i></p>	

	<i>forever. That way you'd always be happy and never feel sad because you'd taken it off."</i>	
Digging Deeper	<p>Now ask: Would you put the Happiness Helmet on for the rest of your life?</p> <p>Continuum Conversation: Ask the children to make their decision physical by standing along the continuum line according to whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement:</p> <p><i>"I would wear the Happiness Helmet for the rest of my life"</i></p> <p>Note the children who have switched sides after the earlier exercise and ask them for their reasons.</p>	
Final Words	<p>Sitting back down, go once round the circle hearing from everyone. You might find that one of the following questions helps focus this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important is happiness? • Is happiness the most important thing? • Can you live without happiness? 	
REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the Content	Ask the group to identify one concept they've explored during the session giving an example of what they said about it.	
Reflection on the Method	Ask the group to identify one thinking skill they think they've used in the session, giving an example of when and why they used it.	

EXTENSION		30 min
Alternative scenarios to explore:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there <i>any</i> circumstances in which you would wear the Happiness Helmet? • Is there anyone besides yourself who should wear the Happiness Helmet? • Would you wear your Happiness Helmet if everyone else wore theirs? 	

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