



# About Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Philosophy for Children (P4C)\* has long been valued by educators as a method for developing critical and creative thinking skills that goes beyond information to seek understanding. Young people assimilate how to collaborate in question-led enquiries with meaningful dialogue, where their ideas and those of others are valued and listened to.

Critical thinking is an essential part of climate education. Young people need to develop the skills to critically engage with information and viewpoints that they encounter in their lives, whether these are from the internet, media, books or school, or from other people in their lives such as family and friends. Alongside this critical engagement, P4C helps to develop independent thinking and nurtures open-mindedness, questioning and curiosity.

## What if?

## Imagine...

## How do you feel?

\*Philosophy for Children, or P4C as it is more commonly known, is a thinking skills programme which was developed by Matthew Lipman and Anne Sharp with their associates at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), Montclair State University in the 1970s. For more information about Philosophy for Children (P4C) in UK, please see SAPERE P4C: Philosophy for Children

# How to deliver a P4C lesson

## What's included in a P4C lesson?

In a P4C lesson, young people are presented with a **stimulus** – or ‘curiosity catalyst’ which can be a short video, an image, an article, a drawing. This aims to prompt **questions about ‘big ideas’**. The stimuli suggested in this programme have been selected to encourage cross-curricular thinking beyond geography and science, including for example, art and literacy. In preparation for the group to be able to generate **their own ‘big ideas’ questions** in response to a stimulus, a series of example questions are provided. These include two starter questions and a more conceptual question.

- 01 What if? questions**

These kinds of questions help develop creative thinking. These questions are ideal as a starter activity before a stimulus and are designed to be very inclusive for everyone, enabling young people to practise speculating and imagining. These can be relevant skills for the practical application of predicting and forecasting the weather, and considering solutions for mitigating or adapting to climate change
- 02 How do you feel? questions**

These kinds of questions help develop caring thinking with an emotional connection to weather and climate. This question provides an opportunity for the group to share their ideas and experiences on a more personal level
- 03 ‘Think about it’ or ‘big ideas’ questions**

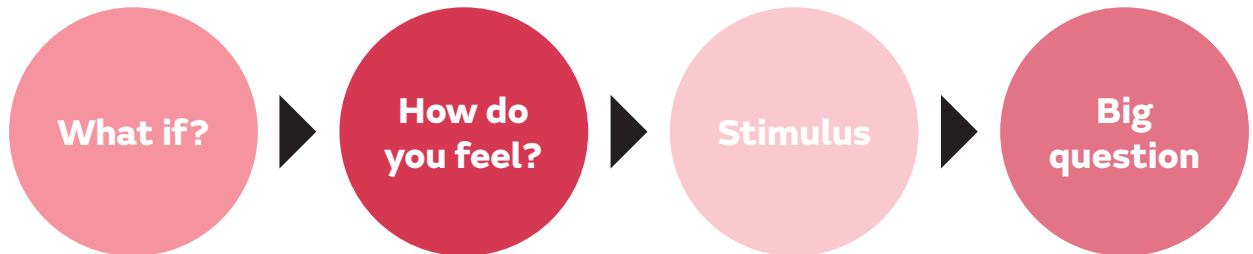
These kinds of questions help to develop critical and creative thinking. These questions are more contestable and bring opportunities for the group to explore different points of view. A ‘big ideas’ question helps to build understanding about concepts. Young people are encouraged to think deeply about the question in relation to the stimulus and beyond the stimulus, giving examples from other contexts

“When the world is plunged into uncertainty and disorder, we turn to philosophy.”

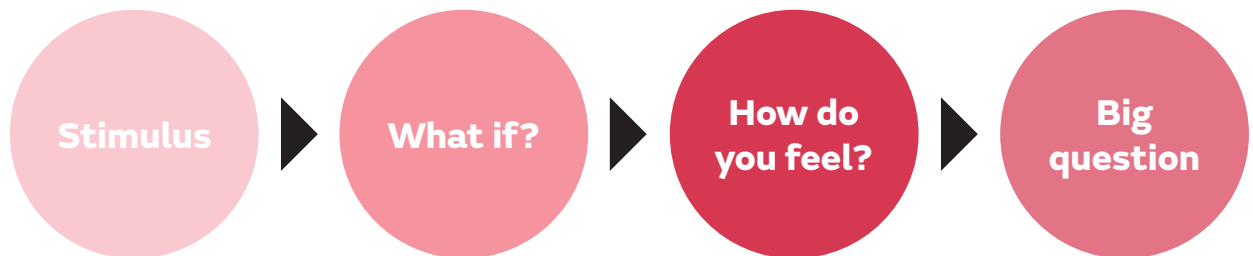
United Nations 2021 World Philosophy Day

### Structure of a P4C lesson

A suggested format might be to use the What if? And How do you feel? questions as starter questions before showing the stimulus.



Alternatively, you could start with the stimulus before asking the questions the 'What if?' and 'How do you feel?' questions



The discussion around the 'big ideas' question can be guided by using the suggested facilitation questions below.

#### Facilitation questions

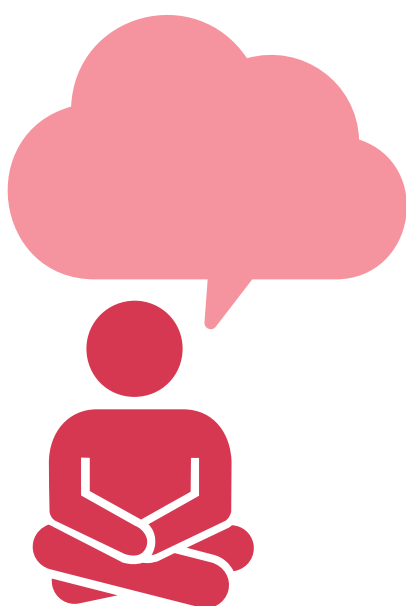
Using these facilitation questions will encourage young people to build on from each other's responses during the 'big ideas' question discussion. The questions can be adapted to best meet the need and level of the group.

- How does this question connect to the stimulus? Is there an assumption in the question?
- Where do you stand with this question? Do you agree, or disagree? What are your reasons?
- Can you explain this some more? Is this fact or opinion? How do you know this is true?
- Is this view universal? Would everyone think this? Is there another point of view?
- What do you understand by the concepts in the question? What is their meaning?
- Are there any more examples from real life - beyond the stimulus?



- Why is this question important? What new questions are you thinking about now?
- Has anyone changed their mind about their answer to this question after listening to others?
- What words, vocabulary could you use to express yourself?

These questions can be asked, encouraging the group to use these questions themselves so the session becomes more self-facilitated and can be carried out in smaller groups.



### Tips for delivery

- Allow 20-30 minutes to deliver a P4C lesson
- To encourage teamwork and collaboration, you could ask young people to discuss each question in small groups before feeding back to the whole class
- Young people can respond to the suggested 'big ideas' question through whole class discussion or in small groups
- The What if? questions could be used as a home learning activity, giving the group more time to think about the question and gather ideas from family/friends prior to the lesson
- At the end of the session, you might want to give feedback to the group you're working with: what could they improve in their next P4C lesson?