



DECISION-MAKING AND KNOWLEDGE

Learning about how to get to know the world through the eyes of your mind of Immanuel Kant

Learning Objectives	The primary learning objective of this lesson plan is to acquire some basic knowledge of philosophy and specifically of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Students will gain insight into how knowledge is acquired and the power each person gains through new knowledge when making daily decisions.
Subjects	Social sciences, Philosophy, Psychology.
Recommended Age (10-12 or 12-14)	12-14 years old
Number of students involved	Maximum 25 youths, divided into groups (3-4 students per group).
Duration	90 minutes
Skills Developed	Critical thinking, moral reasoning, logic
Material Needed	Pencils, markers, whiteboard
Inclusion Best Practices	It is important to note that this lesson plan will discuss some sensitive topics, such as reflection on the value of life and the importance of thinking about decisions on everyday issues or future goals. It is therefore essential that students feel comfortable and safe to share their opinions as well as concerns. For younger students, you could use drawings to help them express their opinions and thoughts by drawing.



Instructions for implementing the lesson plan

This lesson plan aims to introduce students to the knowledge, perception and senses of Emmanuel Kant's philosophical work and how human beings and animals differ based on it.

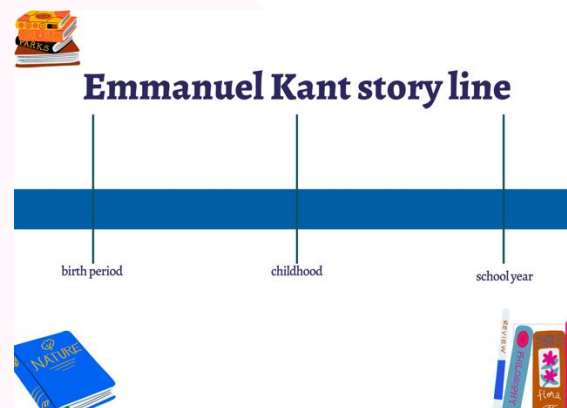
The goal of this lesson plan is to help students strengthen their social skills and understand the importance of thinking logically and having enough knowledge on a topic before engaging in decision-making. This lesson plan utilizes philosopher Emmanuel Kant's approach to the behaviour of people towards each other, which is affected by the way people think and the decisions they make based on the knowledge they have.

Step 1: Introduction to the philosophical topic (15 minutes)

In the first step, you should ask your students to discuss the definition of a philosopher. What do they think a philosopher does? To make this more visual, write the name of the philosopher Emmanuel Kant in the centre, on a whiteboard and ask your students to write their opinion and thoughts on the whiteboard as well.

Then, you should share some information about Kant with your students. You could also ask them to read the e-books and narrative stories on Kant, developed by the Little Philosophers EU project to find some basic information on his life and philosophical work on their own.

You can access these elements [here](#). Finally, you can ask your students to create a horizontal line on the life and philosophy of Emmanuel Kant. Example:



Students can use Canva to create visuals on the life and work of Kant. Link to Canva: [here](#).

Before moving to the next activity, you should ask a few questions to your students:

- How did the childhood of Kant, influence his philosophy?
- Do you find any similarities between yourselves and some of their classmates?



- Why do you think people form their own opinions on different topics?

Through these questions, students will understand that each person is different and they will discuss how the childhood of a person can define who they are and how they develop as they grow older.

Step 2: Students make their own golden rules (15 minutes)

At this stage, you can introduce the 'Golden Rules' game to your students. In this game, students are called to create their own golden rules based on their characters, their daily life and their knowledge of what is right and what is wrong.

Each student should write 2 to 3 golden rules and then they should share these rules with the rest of the classroom. To inspire your students you can share a few, simple golden rules as an example:

- You should not eat more than 1 dessert/sweet/candy per week as they are bad for your health.
- Avoid spending too much time on the TV.
- Sleep early so you are not tired during school.
- If it's cold outside, wear a jacket or a coat.

These simple golden rules are basically information that students often hear from their parents or their teachers. Sometimes, even if they don't like these 'rules' they know that it is for their own health and safety.

Before proceeding to the next activity, you should write the following quote to the whiteboard:

“All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason” (Emmanuel Kant).

Step 3: Discussion on breaking the golden rules (30 minutes)

At this stage, students will discuss breaking the golden rules they have created before. During the group discussion students will also discuss Kant's quote on knowledge; what are the senses, what is understanding; and, what is reasoning.

In the beginning, the quote might seem too abstract and difficult for the students to explain. To help students understand this quote you should use their golden rules as an example.

Taking the golden rule “You should not eat more than 1 dessert/sweet/candy per week as they are bad for your health” for instance. The students should discuss what will happen if they eat many sweets. For example, they might start feeling unwell or have



a stomach ache. Once they feel unwell, their senses would immediately alert them that they should stop eating. As a result, they will understand that eating many sweets can have negative consequences on their health. Finally, they gain the knowledge that they should not eat many sweets at once.

Step 4: Understanding the importance of reasoning (30 minutes)

Once students familiarise themselves with the notion of knowledge, they should discuss the importance of reasoning. In most cases, a person reaches a conclusion based on a series of logical claims. But what happens with animals?

To really understand the importance of logic and reasoning in their daily activities and decision-making, students should compare their reactions to the reaction of animals.

At this stage, you should divide students into groups (3-4 students per group) and give them two empty A4 papers. On the one paper they should write 'Humans' and on the other 'Animals'.

Then you should ask them to write the understanding and behaviours of humans and animals on different premises. For example:

- Premise 1: There is a ball in the middle of the class. What would a human do? What would an animal do?
- Premise 2: There is milk on the floor. What would a human do? What would an animal do?

Some of the things that students might discuss based on these examples include:

- Premise 1: A human will wonder how the ball appeared in the classroom. Who is the owner of the ball? Should the students play with the ball? They might ask their teacher for permission etc. An animal on the other hand will start playing with the ball, without any further considerations.
- Premise 2: The students will think about cleaning the floor. They might try to find out if the milk is leaking from one of their classmates' bags and potentially use a glass to pour the remaining milk so it doesn't leak. An animal on the other hand would simply drink the milk from the floor.

This group discussion helps students understand that although humans try to find the reasoning behind different situations, animals rely on their senses without trying to understand a situation further.



References:

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