

Teachers' Notes

Personality Test

A differentiated opinion-forming exercise for General Studies, PSHE & Citizenship, Religious Studies, Geography, Science and English.

People love doing personality tests! Actually, this is an exercise in analysing attitudes to animal issues.

Fig 1

1. The number of whales in the sea has been declining because they have been killed for their meat and oil. Some species are close to extinction.

- a) It is wrong to kill whales. They are highly intelligent and sensitive creatures. We have no right to exploit them for our own gain.
- b) The methods used to kill whales are often cruel. They should be left alone at least until more humane methods can be found of killing them.
- c) Whales should be left alone until their numbers have returned to normal. Then we should control the numbers killed so that whale populations do not drop again.
- d) Whales are a good source of food and oil and whaling is important in the traditions of some cultures. Scientifically-controlled whaling should be allowed.



HOW THE PERSONALITY TEST WORKS:

The first question is shown in Fig 1. Students have to choose which of four statements they most agree with.

With each question:

- the a) statement comes from an animal rights viewpoint. Animals should have the right to life, happiness and freedom.
- the b) statement comes from an animal welfare viewpoint. If we use animals, we must do so in a way which does not cause unnecessary suffering.
- The c) position argues for sustainable development. If people use animals, they must do so in a way that doesn't spoil the environment for future generations or squander the earth's resources.
- The d) position argues that animals matter, but human interests always come first.

Don't explain the principle in advance! It is, of course, inevitably an over-simplification. Many conservationists, for example, think that whales should be left alone rather than harvested sustainably. They may believe that sustainable exploitation, even if desirable, is not enforceable.

This exercise works at many levels. The simpler version has a reading age of nine, and can be used with a wide range of ages. The *Personality Test* is particularly effective at sixth-form and College level, but students of all ages will enjoy the exercise and learn from it.

It is best used as an introduction to a session which includes a video and discussion.

A DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITY:

There are two versions of the Personality Test, both of which cover the same issues.

Version 1 has a reading age of about 12. It will work well **with any age group with good reading skills**. It works particularly well with the sixth form (and, incidentally, with adult, college and university groups).

Version 2 has a reading age of about 9. Use with younger students, or for groups with lower reading ages.

A great lesson starter for students aged 9 to adult! A fun, yet thought-provoking exercise, which students will be happy to get going on as soon as they arrive.

Late arrivals who don't finish will still be able to get a result.

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POSSIBLE LESSON OUTLINE:

1. Hand out *Personality Test* and ask them to start. Instructions should be self-explanatory, but it doesn't matter too much how precisely they are followed. Encourage discussion, though people should fill in their own answers. (10-15 minutes)
2. Extension activity for early finishers (announce when the first have finished). You may have noticed a pattern to a), b), c) and d) statements. What does each have in common? What does each view represent? (No extra time allowance required)
3. When most or all have finished, ask them to work out which answer they have most commonly gone for. (It doesn't matter if some have not finished – their results will still be valid). (2 minutes)
4. Do a show of hands for each position (students should vote twice if two are equal). Does anyone feel no position is suitable? (2 minutes) Alternatively, hand out sheets which allow students to work out their own position.
5. Explain/discuss the viewpoints represented by each position (a-d). (5 minutes)
6. Optional further discussion, eg comparison of answers to q 3,5 and 6 discussed opposite. (This can take any amount of time!) This could also be done after watching the video.
7. Watch a video, eg CIWF's *Farm Animals & Us* or, for groups aged 14 and above, use *Farm Animals and Us 2*, pausing for discussion at appropriate points.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

- Research one or more of the issues in more detail. This could include an internet search. The CIWF booklet *Intensive Farming and the Welfare of Farm Animals* is likely to be useful here. All CIWF resources may be photocopied.
- Conduct a survey. Try out the questionnaire on a range of people. How do results vary with age, sex, occupation etc? Can you explain the results?
- Devise questions which would separate views on other animal issues (eg animal experiments, circuses, zoos, pet keeping, hunting, shooting, fishing etc). It is possible to make each of the statements equally sympathetic?
- Could similar "Personality Tests" be devised to analyse other ethical, political or theological issues.

FURTHER NOTES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

Conduct the exercise flexibly. Allow students to decide that no statement is appropriate for them, or two are equal. When they finish, they work out which answer they go for most often. Don't tell them how the exercise works in advance!

Emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer.

Compassion in World Farming staff have used the exercise on many occasions and found audiences in which each of the four positions pre-dominates. There are interesting variations with age and school/college type. It is important to emphasise that **all four positions are intellectually respectable**. You could almost certainly find several academic philosophers in each of the four categories. Be clear, if necessary, that it does not follow that "d) people" are uncaring or that "a) people" are in any way extreme or impractical. It is entirely a matter of opinion.

Compassion in World Farming is a farm animal welfare charity. Our concerns might be thought to be primarily in the "b-category." It is important to note, however, that much of the farm animal welfare message is favourably received by audiences of all four persuasions.

The exercise can raise further discussion points. How many people, for example, gave the same answer for questions 3 and 5? How many gave the same also for 6? Are these three really the same question? Or are there fundamental differences? To what extent are our answers culturally determined? Many Britons would be happy to eat beef, but not cat or dog. What line would you expect a member of the Hindu community to take? Why do some people care more about mammals than they do about fish? Are people consistent? Should they be?

Further questions relate to issues of realism and practicality. The questionnaire is principally designed to take "theoretical" positions, though people often take a compromise position. It may be worth asking people if they want to improve the lot of farm animals and the environment (and/or the lot of consumers, farmers and other interested groups), which issues would they concentrate on? Does this give the same answer (animal rights, animal welfare, conservationist or human orientated) as they got when filling in the questionnaire?