

Teachers' Notes: Personality Test – How Do You Think About Animals?

An opinion-forming exercise examining values - the use of animals for food

PSHE/Citizenship

Religious Studies

Geography

Science

English

Animal Science/Management

Age range (2 versions) < 5 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 adult

Version 1 ideal for sixth form and university as well as able younger students

Version 2 aimed at younger students and those with lower reading ages

Objectives:

- To introduce students quickly to a range of food ethics issues
- To help them investigate their own values
- To help them appreciate a range of other values and to respect the views of others
- To develop speaking, listening and decision-making skills
- To encourage respect for other viewpoints through more detailed analysis
- To encourage concern for the welfare of both people and animals and of the need to protect the environment

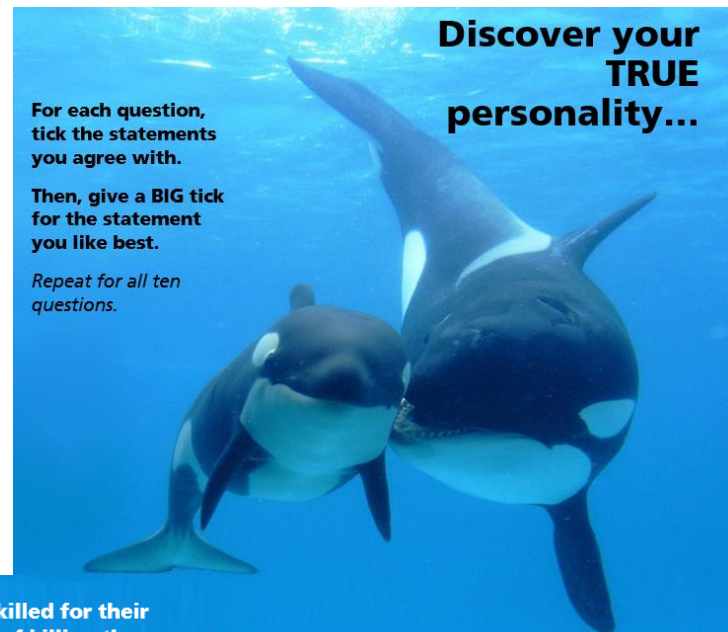
How the *Personality Test* works:

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

There are ten questions. The first is in the box below. Students have to decide which of four statements they most agree with.

These break down into four viewpoints:

- Animal Rights (a)
- Animal Welfare (b)
- Environmental / Sustainable Development (c)
- Anthropocentric / "Humans come first" (d)



Discover your TRUE personality...

For each question, tick the statements you agree with.

Then, give a **BIG** tick for the statement you like best.

Repeat for all ten questions.

1. Whales in the sea have declined because they have been killed for their meat and oil. Some species are close to extinction. Methods of killing them can cause great suffering. However, whaling is important in the traditions of some countries and also amongst Inuit communities.

- We have no right to exploit whales for our own gain. They are highly intelligent, sensitive creatures and we should leave them alone.
- 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.
- 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.
- Whales are a good source of food and oil and we must respect cultural traditions. Scientifically-controlled whaling should be allowed.

Running the *Personality Test*:

This is a great lesson starter. There is an extension activity, working out how the test works, for early finishers. Students who arrive late can get a result even if they only have time to answer some of the questions. There is a simpler version with a reading age of nine for younger students.

For each question, the students tick the statements they agree with but, most importantly, they then choose the one they most agree with and give it a big tick!

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!

At the end you can have an interactive session going over the results verbally. Alternatively, students can work out their results from the "Assessing your score" worksheet. **Emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer** to discourage a tendency amongst some audiences to belittle the views of others.

Compassion in World Farming has used the exercise on many occasions and found audiences in which each of the four positions pre-dominates. 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 positive about all four groups, concentrating on what each group specifically cares about – people, the environment and future generations, animal happiness and suffering, animal rights and freedoms.

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. People in all groups may be realists or idealists. Or a bit of both. The differences between the groups are primarily about values. What matters to them.

It is also good to point out that the test is of course an over-simplification. Most people care about people, animals and the environment. 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 and so on.

The exercise can raise further discussion points. How many people, for example, gave the same answer for questions 4 (eating meat) and 5 (eating dogs and cats)? How many gave the same also for 6 (eating fish)? 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. Many Hindus would avoid beef. Why do some people care more about mammals than they do about fish? Are people consistent? Should they be?

It is best used as an introduction to a session which includes a video and discussion (see lesson plan overleaf).

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 (*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. Discuss what the audience thinks each position represents? Go over the intended answers to this. Present each position positively (see opposite). (*5 minutes*.)
6. Optional further discussion, eg comparison of answers to Q 3, 5 and 6 above. Does it matter which kind of animal is involved (cattle vs dogs vs fish)? (*This can take any amount of time!*) This could also be done after watching the video.
7. Watch a video, eg *Farm Animals & Us* (17 minutes) for younger students, or *Farm Animals & Us 2* (25 minutes) for abler students aged 14 or over, followed by discussion.

Differentiation:

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 with any group for whom a lower reading age may be an advantage.

Follow-up activities:

Research one or more of the issues in more detail.

1. 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?
2. Devise questions which would separate views on other animal issues (eg animal experiments, circuses, zoos, pet keeping, hunting, shooting, fishing etc). Can you make each of the statements equally sympathetic?
3. Could similar "Personality Tests" be devised to analyse other ethical, political or theological issues?

Personality Test. Assessing Your Score

How we use animals for food

Four different philosophical positions

You may well have noticed how this works. The four kinds of statement (a,b,c & d) represent four different philosophical positions.

Working out your score

Count how many times you chose a), b), c) or d) as your first choice (ie the statement for which you gave the big tick).

The four positions are as follows:

- a) Animal Rights** position. Animals should have a right to life, freedom and happiness. We shouldn't kill them for food or imprison them in cages or pens.
- b) Animal Welfare** position. We shouldn't make animals suffer. If we eat animals, we must give them a good life and as kind a death as is possible.
- c) Environmental (conservationist / sustainable development)** position. We must preserve the earth's resources for future generations and prevent damage to the environment and wildlife.
- d) Anthropocentric ("humans come first")** position. Animals matter and we should avoid cruelty, but humans are more important. We need to look after people first.



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This is about values

The four positions represent four different philosophies which are described in more detail over the page.

There is no right or wrong answer. You will find people from all walks of life who believe in any of these. It is a matter of values.

The one you choose most often is likely to be the closest to your position, but you may agree with more than one of these. Most people care about humans, animals **and** the environment.

The four philosophies in more detail

a) **Animal Rights** position. Animals have a right to life, freedom and happiness.

This is based on human rights philosophy. All individuals matter equally, irrespective of race, creed or colour. Animal rights thinking extends this principle beyond the species barrier. We are animals ourselves. Therefore, if it is wrong to do something to a human, you shouldn't do it to an animal either.

Animal Rights people are against the exploitation of animals in general. This includes factory farming, long distance transport and inhumane slaughter. They also think it is wrong to kill animals for food and are likely to support vegetarian or vegan diets.

b) **Animal Welfare** position. Animals should live good lives free from suffering.

This is based on utilitarian philosophy as articulated by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. Animals share with us a capacity to suffer and also for positive feelings or happiness. The priority is to prevent suffering.

Animal welfarists are not necessarily opposed to the killing of animals, provided the animals lead a good life in a higher welfare system such as free-range or organic. Animal welfarists generally oppose factory farming, long distance transport and inhumane slaughter. They are likely to support free-range and organic farming systems which are designed to meet the welfare needs of farm animals.

c) **Environmental / conservationist / sustainable development** position. We don't inherit the earth, we borrow it from our children.

Conservationists are concerned about protecting the planet and its systems for future generations of people and/or wildlife. Unlike the previous positions, environmentalists may be less concerned about individual animals and more about the survival of species, diverse gene pools and habitats.

They are likely to encourage people to eat less meat so that more land can be left for wildlife. They are likely to support low input and organic farming systems which reduce or avoid the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which can damage biodiversity.

d) **Anthropocentric / "humans come first"** position. Humans are more important than animals.

Anthropocentrists see humans as the centre of the moral universe. They may oppose cruelty, but believe that where there is a conflict between the needs of humans and animals, humans come first. While there are humans suffering in the world, we should concentrate on them.

They may support intensive farming as a practical way of feeding people. They may also see higher welfare production such as free-range or organic as a good thing where it promotes the rural economy. They might support eating less meat if they see this as a better way of feeding the world.

These positions are not mutually exclusive. Most people care about humans, other animals **and** the environment.

There is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion will depend on your values.

