

Disagreeing Well - RE and PSHE

Aim:

To explore different ways of understanding and knowing (cf. *Theme 2: Beliefs 1*)

Activity description

Using techniques and examples from philosophy, pupils will explore different ways of knowing and learning more about the world around us.

Starter activity:

Ask students to explain how they know the table they are sitting at is real – what information do they have that tells them it is there and not an illusion? (e.g. their senses, previous experience, information from figures of authority, such as teachers, etc.)

Ask students to explain how they know that beauty is real – can they use the same evidence to show that beauty has existence and isn't an illusion?

Provide a series of [optical illusions](#) – ask students if they can always trust their senses

You could introduce [Plato's Allegory of the Cave](#) to explore this further; note that the key feature of this story is that it is the job of the philosopher to make the effort to try and see things differently; to test different ways of understanding and knowing about the world.

Main activity:

Introduce the key terms: **reason** and **experience**

- **Reason** = the power of the mind to think, understand and form judgements logically
- **Experience** = practical contact with and observation of facts and events; uses the senses to engage with the world around us

Consider whether the following are true statements:

- Tomorrow, the sun will rise.
- The England Women's football team will win the next World Cup
- This table exists.
- This school is a good school.

Say whether your answer is based on **reason**, **experience** or a combination of both.

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Extension activity:

Look at the film/audio clips or script of *Our Place*. Consider how the three main characters might respond to the statement below:

"Religion is a good thing."

How might the characters use **reason** and **experience** to help them respond to this statement?

Time required:

60 minutes

Materials required:

Paper, pens, access to the internet, access to film/audio clips and script of *Our Place*.

Additional resources:

[How Can We Know the World Exists? \(BBC Teach\)](#)

[Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education RE Concept Maps](#)

[National Association of Teachers of RE \(NATRE\)](#)

[RE:Online](#)

[RE:quest \(Christianity only\)](#)

