

Animal Rights Lesson Plan

Goal: Have students investigate where they draw the “lines” with animals; food, pets, entertainment, test subjects

I. **Activity:** Buffet/Pet Store

Materials: depictions (pictures or figurines?) of various animals (cow, sheep, pig, cat, dog, mouse, rabbit, guinea pig, duck), table

- Lay the figurines out on a table
- Tell the students they are at a buffet, they each need to pick at least one animal that they would eat
- Have the students right down/record which animal they chose to eat
- Put all the depictions back on the table
- Then tell the students they are at a pet store, they need to each pick at least one animal that they would keep as a pet
- Have the students write down which animal they would keep as a pet

Discussion:

- Which animal did you choose to eat and why?
 - Would you keep this animal as a pet?
- Which animal did you choose as a pet and why?
 - Would you eat this animal?

- What is the difference between the animal you would eat and the animal that you chose as a pet? Why is one something you’re ok with eating and the other not? Are there features that one has that the other doesn’t that make it worthy of eating/worthy of being a pet?

II. **Questions:** Which is right and which is wrong?

- Zoos?
- Circuses?
- Dog shows?
- Horse shows?
- Dog races?
- Horse races?
- Dog shows?
- Dog fights?
- Designer pets/ “pure-breeding”?
- Animal testing for medicine/vaccines?
- Animals in captivity for behavior observation/research?
- Animal testing for cosmetics?

- Keeping animals as pets?
- Emotional support animals?
- Guide animals/service animals (rescue, assisting disabled people)?

- If students feel strongly about certain one being right and one being wrong, ask them to build on their position

III. Discussion: Animals that are ok/traditional to eat in other countries that we don't eat here:

- Guinea Pig
- Horse
- Frogs
- Snails
- Dogs
- Whales
- Shark fin
- Balut (fetal duck)
- Pate (Fatty duck liver)--it's illegal in California!

Question: Which one of these would you be open to trying? Are you morally opposed to eating any of these, why?

(If they say they're ok with eating an animal or not due to the culture/society they live in, that's just ethical conventionalism! Does might make it right?)

IV. Products vs. Process?

- Many animal rights groups are pushing states to ban foods like pate and veal because the process of producing these products is “unethical”
- It’s the processing and not the animal itself that is unethical
- What is your stance? Should states ban veal and pate?
- Would you eat veal or pate?
- (If not, do you eat beef or duck/goose?)

V. Jurassic Park Section:

- Basic story: Humans use technology to bring back dinosaurs; dinosaurs create chaos
 - Is it ever humanity’s place to meddle with the natural world?
 - How do we imagine ethical(/morally justified) conservation efforts?
 - “Save the Turtles” – plastic straws actually do not commit the majority of harm to sea life, rather corporations do

VI. Closing

- In your philosophy journals, write down any notions about animal rights that have been challenged or affirmed. What made you hesitate or question your answers/assumptions?