

# THINKING TIME - THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN APPROACH

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### WHAT IS 'THINKING TIME'?

**'Thinking Time' is one of the four strands of the Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY) curriculum. This strand is a philosophical approach to primary education which combines child-led (philosophy with children) and teacher-led (philosophy for children) pedagogies.**

It seeks to develop children's thinking, emotional and deliberative skills and to facilitate their understanding of both their own ideas and those of others. In this strand, there is an emphasis on critical thinking, as well as on wellbeing, developing the cognitive and affective dimensions of children's learning simultaneously.

The objective of the philosophy for children approach is the development of critical understanding in children through philosophical dialogue. The 'Thinking time' strand aims to enable children to develop a deeper understanding of their own perspective and their ability to enter into dialogue with other children, to cultivate debate and the capacity to argue respectfully.

This support material offers practical advice for teachers in planning for and supporting philosophy **for** children (P4C) approaches in the 'Thinking Time' strand.



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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### THE PRINCIPLES OF P4C

Here are some of the principles that underlie philosophy for children. These principles may assist you in developing good practices to help children become thoughtful, curious and reasonable.

- Good thinking is learned from dialogue with others, and children need to take part in dialogues that provide examples and models of good thinking.
- The wellspring of knowledge and intellectual excitement is questioning.
- Claims should be tested in argument. Argument is seen not as a quarrel but as a collaborative search for the best answer to a question.
- To think well is to be creative as well as critical. Creative thinkers make connections, speculate and explore alternatives.
- Good thinking depends on attitudes as well as abilities. Children should be encouraged to be reasonable in the fullest sense of the word.
- People make sense of the world through a web of concepts. We should talk with children about significant concepts.
- It is good for children and adults to talk together about philosophical questions.

(The P4C Cooperative, 2017)



### CREATING A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

A Community of Inquiry may be defined as a collaborative and reflective approach to discussion, built up over time with the same group of learners.

The community of inquiry is not a mere exchange of opinions where anything goes. On the contrary, it is a context for discussion wherein people are challenged to justify their opinions regularly. The community of inquiry contrasts with classroom debate, with its emphasis on winning the argument rather than understanding the issues in question or the beliefs of other participants (The P4C Cooperative, 2017).

When setting up your classroom, it is important for the children to sit in a circle or horseshoe, not only as an aid to good listening but also to indicate that everybody's participation is equally valued. Before beginning the first 'Thinking Time' session, the group should spend time deciding a set of guidelines for good discussion. These can be developed over time as groups gain experience. You might find the support material 'The Learning Environment for GMGY' useful in establishing rules for respectful dialogue.

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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### THE FOUR THINKING C'S

'Thinking Time' uses a shared language to describe different skills and dispositions that underpin philosophical inquiry-based learning. Caring, Collaborative, Creative and Critical Thinking are commonly referred to when practitioners are building a community and helping to develop philosophical skills. Table 1 is a composition of different aspects of The Four Thinking C's that have been identified and refined through practice. The Four Thinking C's form a very useful framework for metacognitive reflection of the social and philosophical skills, attitudes and dispositions necessary for a well functioning community of philosophical inquirers.

It is worth taking time to explore the scaffolding provided by the Four Thinking C's in relation to the Learning Outcomes of the 'Thinking Time' strand of the GMGY! Curriculum, as well as the Learning Outcomes of the other three strands. The focus on skills allows a broad range of potential content and helps to demonstrate why 'Thinking Time' can be taught either as a stand-alone area of the curriculum, or it can be incorporated into the three other strands of GMGY.

Critical, Creative, Collaborative and Caring Thinking are tricky concepts for very young learners. Exploring these concepts as part of 'Thinking Time' is a really useful exercise to help children develop their understanding.

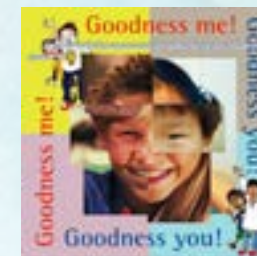


Table 1. The Four Thinking C's

Caring Thinking	Collaborative Thinking	Creative Thinking	Critical Thinking
Engaging with and reflecting on the stimulus	Supporting and encouraging attitude	Giving an alternative perspective or idea	Giving reasons
Being respectful to the speaker	Building on someone else's thoughts	Identifying implications and consequences	Questioning evidence and looking for assumptions
Taking an interest in others' thoughts and experiences	Offering a summary of a line of inquiry	Giving an example connected to the world	Drawing distinctions and identifying criteria
Explaining clearly	Disagreeing respectfully	Asking a good question	Asking for evidence or examples
Open to changing their thinking / behaviour	Engaged with setting and reviewing community customs and rules	Making clear connections to and comparisons with other peoples' ideas	Evaluating reasons

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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY



## A TEN-STEP PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

Children will work towards a ten-step philosophical inquiry gradually. It is not recommended to start with a full ten-step inquiry if children are new to 'Thinking Time'. The progression of 'Thinking Time' is explored later in this support material. You might like to prepare children for engaging in a ten-step inquiry by playing thinking games with your class or introducing shorter 'Thinking Time' sessions when exploring picture books. A list of thinking games and other resources to get you started are available on the teacher section of the [GMGY website](#). It is strongly recommended that you plan your ten-step inquiry in advance. This will offer you an opportunity to consider issues that may arise during the inquiry. Planning templates are available [here](#). Table 2 below outlines the structure of a ten-step philosophical inquiry.

Table 2. How to structure a ten-step philosophical inquiry

Inquiry Element	Activity
1. Warm-Up	Warm-up games allow children to enter into philosophical thinking and prepare for the session ahead. A selection of warm-up games are available on the teacher section of the <a href="#">GMGY website</a> .
2. Introduce the Stimulus	<p>Inquiry works best when dialogue is focused on a shared stimulus. Here are some suggestions to get you started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading stories, poems, news items or dialogues.</li><li>• Looking at images, watching short films or listening to music.</li><li>• Reflecting on artefacts.</li></ul> <p>Teachers should spend some time considering what concepts might arise from the chosen stimulus and how best to prepare for dialogue around those concepts. Suggested stimuli for each class level are available on the teacher section of the <a href="#">GMGY website</a>.</p>
3. Private Reflection	Give children some time to reflect in silence on the stimulus. Ask them to reflect on the 'big ideas' or 'burning questions' that struck them when interacting with the stimulus.
4. Question Creation	Children work in small groups to create a question based on the stimulus. During this stage of the inquiry, the teacher should circulate to each group and scaffold children's question creation. Children may initially tend towards literal questions. However, the teacher should encourage the creation of philosophical questions. If children find this stage challenging, you might find 'The Question Quadrant' helpful to support children's learning.

# THINKING TIME - THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN APPROACH

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY



Inquiry Element	Activity
5. Question airing	A nominated speaker from each group shares the group's question with the class. The teacher should write the questions on the board or a flipchart. For the purpose of assessment, it is a good idea to keep a note of questions discussed during a 'Thinking Time' inquiry.
6. Question choosing	The class choose a question from the board / flipchart through voting. This step should model the democratic process for the children. Here are some ideas for how to run a class vote; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blind vote – close your eyes / hands behind your back</li><li>• Open vote – hands up</li><li>• Single vote – one vote per person</li><li>• Multi-vote – rank the questions from 1st to last</li><li>• Voting with objects – place a sticker beside the question you want</li><li>• Persuasive voting – give a reason for your vote</li><li>• Mentimeter - voting using technology</li></ul>
7. First thoughts	Children pass a talking object around the circle and offer their first thoughts on the question. A child may choose not to speak and pass on the object. You might like to use the 'First Thoughts' template to support children's thinking.
8. Enquiry	Encourage children to refer to what they have heard already and; build on a point made, ask for clarification, point out possible consequences, or offer an alternative viewpoint. The 'Procedural Question Stems' resource may assist you in supporting children's thinking.
9. Last words	The talking object is passed around the circle for the last time and children are asked to give their final thoughts. Some may have changed their thinking and others may not. Once again, it is ok for someone not to speak.
10. Review and evaluation	Ask the class to reflect and consider if, as a community, they demonstrated critical, caring, creative and collaborative thinking. You may find one of the reflection templates in the teacher section of the GMGY website useful.

# THINKING TIME - THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN APPROACH

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### THINKING TIME IN THE INFANT CLASSES

When introducing 'Thinking Time' to young children, it is recommended to begin with simple activities that allow a focus on the skills, language and dispositions they will need for future philosophical inquiries. Sara Stanley refers to 'philosophical play' (Stanley, 2012) when she discusses her work with this age group, and it is a helpful perspective. In the table below, some games and tools have been identified, which will be particularly effective when working towards the skills of the associated Learning Outcome.

Table 3. Stimuli for Stage 1

Stage 1 Element	Learning Outcome	Games / Tools
Thinking and Asking Questions	Develop respectful agreeing, disagreeing and questioning skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would you rather...?</li><li>• What if?</li><li>• Mini-Mes</li></ul>
Emotions and Wellbeing	Develop an awareness of the importance of emotional expression for themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blob trees</li><li>• Making Connections</li></ul>
The Big Questions	Create new and imaginative ideas and questions based on events relevant to their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapted question quadrant</li><li>• Classroom displays/ visual thinking</li><li>• The question snake</li></ul>

Additional information about these games and tools is available here.



# THINKING TIME - THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN APPROACH

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### THINKING TIME IN FIRST AND SECOND CLASS

In first and second class children will be able to begin to use the ten-step inquiry, outlined earlier, and develop a greater understanding of the 4 Thinking C's (Caring, Collaborative, Creative, Critical). In the table below, some games and tools have been identified, which will be particularly effective when working towards the skills of the associated Learning Outcome.

Table 4. Stimuli for Stage 2

Stage 2 Element	Learning Outcome	Games / Tools
Thinking and Asking Questions	Explore different types of questions, formulate questions based on a variety of stimuli and discuss possible answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Question Quadrant</li> <li>• 8 Way Thinking</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> </ul>
The Big Questions	Become aware of their personal characteristics in building and maintaining positive self-worth and self-esteem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring and Collaborative Thinking</li> <li>• Blob Trees</li> <li>• Philosophy Journal</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• Austin's Butterfly</li> </ul>



The Big Questions	Think imaginatively and critically in response to stories, images and other stimuli.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• What If?</li> <li>• Concept Line</li> <li>• Agree/Disagree Line</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> </ul>
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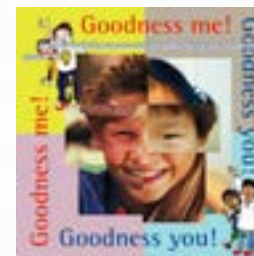
Additional information about these games and tools is available [here](#).

You might find the following video by Professor Thomas Wartenberg useful when considering how to approach 'Thinking Time' with children in first and second class:

- [Video - Professor Thomas Wartenberg - Picture Book Philosophy](#)

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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY



## THINKING TIME IN THIRD AND FOURTH CLASS

In third and fourth class, children will be able to use the full ten-step philosophical inquiry, outlined earlier. These ten-step inquiries allow children to familiarise themselves with the skills, attitudes and dispositions represented by the Four Thinking C's.

Every curriculum area can be enriched by applying the occasional thinking tool. A ten-minute concept stretcher or agree/disagree line in a lesson will not only allow higher-order thinking but will reinforce the habits and customs of good learning and enable engagement with the Four Thinking C's in a broader context.

In Table 5, some Tools and Game have been identified, which will be particularly effective when working towards the skills of the associated Learning Outcome.

Table 5. Stimuli for Stage 3

Stage 3 Element	Learning Outcome	Games / Tools
Thinking and Asking Questions	Respond respectfully to alternative perspectives and justify their responses using logical reasoning and debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Agree/Disagree Line</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> </ul>

Emotions and Wellbeing	Develop an appreciation of their wellbeing and examine personal characteristics that influence their wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring and Collaborative Thinking</li> <li>• Blob Trees</li> <li>• Philosophy Journal</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> </ul>
The Big Questions	Think critically and imaginatively in response to questions, debates and ideas they encounter in philosophical fables and stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• Always, Sometimes, Never</li> <li>• Concept Stretcher</li> <li>• 'Some' Concept Line</li> <li>• Venn Diagrams</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> <li>• Mantle of the Expert</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> </ul>

Additional information about these games and tools is available [here](#).

You may find the following video from Gallions School in Newham in London useful when considering how to approach 'Thinking Time' with children in third and fourth class:

- Video - P4C enquiry Gallions School



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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY

### THINKING TIME IN FIFTH AND SIXTH CLASS

In fifth and sixth class, children will be able to use the full ten-step philosophical inquiry. In the table below, some tools and games have been identified, which will be particularly effective when working towards the skills of the associated Learning Outcome.

Table 6. Stimuli for Stage 3

Stage 3 Element	Learning Outcome	Games / Tools
Thinking and Asking Questions	Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own arguments in discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> </ul>
Emotions and Wellbeing	Critically evaluate the effects of external influences on wellbeing and examine the importance of nurturing resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Thinking Cs</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• PMI</li> <li>• Philosophy Journal</li> </ul>



The Big Questions	Think critically and imaginatively about questions, stories, debates and ideas from the classical philosophical tradition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Full Fat 10 Step P4C Inquiry</li> <li>• Concept Stretcher</li> <li>• Concept Line</li> <li>• Venn Diagrams</li> <li>• Classroom Display's/ Visible Thinking</li> <li>• Mantle of the Expert</li> </ul>
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Additional information about these games and tools is available [here](#).

You may find the following video from Rokeby Secondary School, London useful when considering how to approach 'Thinking Time' with children in fifth and sixth class.

- [Video - The Extra Mile](#)

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## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY



## INCLUSION AND 'THINKING TIME'

The focus of 'Thinking Time' is the skills, attitudes and dispositions associated with thinking and learning. As a result of this focus, every child begins where they are. The ten-step inquiry structure contains personal, open and guided inquiry opportunities for learners and requires classmates to collaborate and support one another as they critically engage with stimulus material.

For those children who struggle with literacy, the dialogic structure is intrinsically inclusive, and there are a myriad of ways to help support the needs of different learners. The Four C's give a reasonable and rational set of skills and attitudes to work towards. The descriptors can be adapted and added to depending on the nature of the group.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you are interested in finding out more about philosophy for and with children, the following resources may be useful for you.

- Book - Philosophy for Global Learning Tried and Tested Stimuli
- Stimulus - What makes me me? (Video)
- Video - Did Mr Fox really deserve being called fantastic?
- Video - Coleridge Primary School's P4C
- Video - Philosophy Club: Teaching primary school children to argue
- Video - The Naughtybot: Philosophical inquiry with primary school children
- Video - The Spaceship of Theseus: Philosophical inquiry with primary children
- Webinar - Inquiry-Based Learning - Professor Kathy Short
- Website - The Philosophy Man
- Website - SAPHIRE Philosophy for Children, Colleges, Communities

**All of the templates, games, tools and resources mentioned in this support material are available on the teacher section of the GMGY webpage [here](#).**

# THINKING TIME - THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN APPROACH

## SUPPORT MATERIALS - GMGY



### **Bibliography**

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