

Try out this simple Wonder Ponder workshop

Look! Ask! Think!

This is a very simple step-by-step observation, questioning and thinking routine. Depending on how long you have, you can do all steps, or skip some of the steps (1, 2 and 4 on their own can be a great little activity).

Take this scene from *Cruelty Bites* (there are 14 scenes in total).



'Take me with you!'

Step 1. OBSERVE VERY, VERY CAREFULLY

Observe the scene very, very carefully and try to provide the most complete description possible of what you see.

At this stage, we want to be objective, "clinical" almost. As if we were taking down an inventory. Make sure you don't miss a single detail.

A collective inventory will amazingly always contain more elements than an individual inventory!

Step 2. SPOT THE WEIRDNESS

When you look at the scene, what strikes you as weird or amazing or surprising?

In this step, try to express it as a statement such as "I find xxx weird/amazing/surprising/ and try to explain why exactly you find each thing surprising.

Step 3. IMAGINE THE STORY.

Now to try to come up with different possible interpretations and hypotheses for the scene.

What world do you think this is? What might be the explanation or story behind the scene? What do you imagine?

After your first hypothesis, try to imagine a completely different interpretation or explanation of what you see. How many different explanations you can come up with?

Step 4. ASK AWAY!

Look at the scene again and ask as many questions as you can think of about what you see. First, try asking questions about this particular scene and the particular characters and world portrayed in the scene.

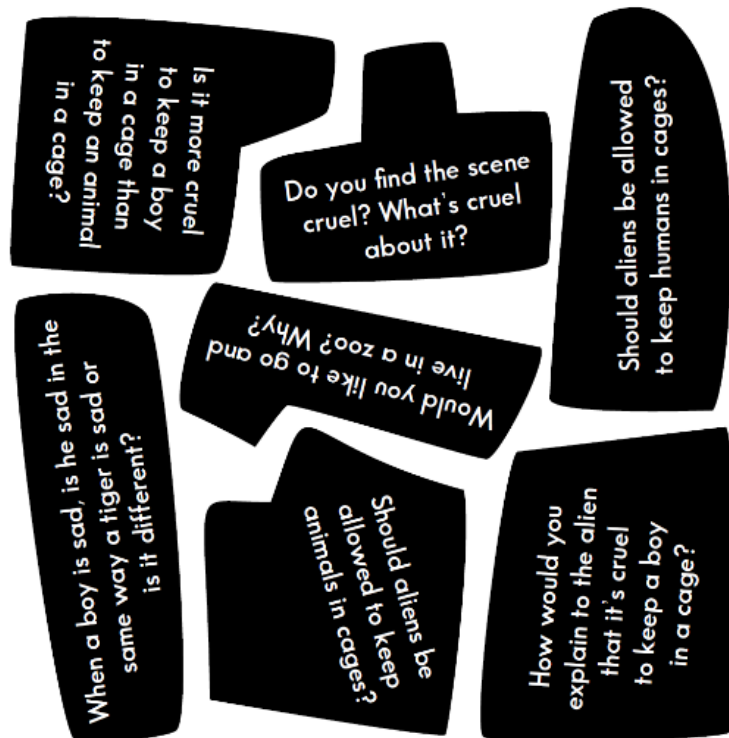
Then, you can also try asking questions about the real world that this scene might make you think of.

The aim is to think of as many questions as possible and collect them. Find a way of writing them all down. This can be done on a blackboard or on a large sheet of paper or in any other way you can think of. Try not to write them out like a list. A “cloud” or “map” is better.

When you have collected as many questions as possible, step back and take another look.

Now imagine you are not a human being, but an alien looking at the scene. Would you add any further questions from your new alien’s point of view?

Now take a look at these questions about the same scene. Are there any that you had already thought of? Do you find any of them particularly interesting? Add them to your map.





Step 5. Thinking and dialogue.

Choose one question or two or three interrelated questions that are particularly “juicy” or difficult to answer and which you think will lead to the most interesting dialogue. If you are in a classroom session, this choice can either be up to the teacher, or you can take a vote.

When you have decided, try to explore the question and its possible answers from as many points of view as possible. The goal should not be to reach a consensus, or for one side to “win”. Most of these “juicy” -often philosophical- questions do not have a correct or incorrect answer, but it is possible to come up with more or less carefully thought-out answers. One of the ways of coming up with a carefully thought-out answer or group of potential answers is by sharing the question with other people and listening to what they have to say, being prepared to change your mind when someone makes a good point you hadn’t thought of or asking for clarification to better understand other people’s points.

A good way of keeping track of what’s being said is to record some of the main points or words on a blackboard or large sheet of paper. It helps us keep all the dialogue in our minds while we are talking and to go back to relevant and interesting points that we have mentioned before.

It also gives us a sort of map of our dialogue and collective exploration.

Step 6. Thinking about thinking.

Questions for wondering and pondering about the visual philosophy experience.

- How have you enjoyed doing visual philosophy? Why?
- What did you find surprising about the experience?
- Did anyone express an idea or thought that you had never thought of before yourself?
- Did you change your mind about anything at any point during the process?
- Why do you think the process was divided into steps? How is it different to explore things step-by-step than to explore it all at once?
- Are there any questions that have stayed in your mind to wonder and ponder about some other time?

Optional add-on

Write an interesting story based on the scene and send it to info@wonderponderonline.com. We love collecting them and sharing them!

Check out these [free Wonder Ponder downloadable resources in English](#)

ELLEN DUTHIE

Ellen Duthie is the founder of the Wonder Ponder project of philosophy and literature for children, established in Spain in 2014. She is the author of the series of Visual Philosophy for all ages (*Cruelty Bites, I, Person, Whatever You Want* and *Pinch Me!*) with illustrations by Daniela Martagón, the Wonder Ponder mini series of stop-and-look books for babies and toddlers (*Niño huevo perro hueso - Boy Egg Dog Bone-* and *Niña Gato Agua Pato -Girl Cat Splash! Duck-*) also with illustrations by Martagón, and *Hay alguien ahí? Preguntario interplanetario para terrícolas inteligentes? -Is There Anybody Out There? Interplanetary Questionary for Intelligent Earthlings-* (with illustrations by Studio Patten). Her latest book, *Un par de ojos nuevos -A New Pair of Eyes*, is a theatre play of sorts, illustrated by Javier Sáez Castán and Manuel Marsol. Her books have been published in Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Brasil, Italy, Germany and South Korea.

Ellen was born in the very south of Spain, in Cádiz, in 1974, to British parents. She went to school in Spain and then to university in Scotland. She now lives in Madrid, with her partner and son, doing lots of different things including writing, translating, teaching and training teachers, as well as organising and directing the annual International Philosophy, Literature, Art and Childhood Course (FLAI) in the stunningly beautiful mediaeval village of Albarracín (Teruel, Spain).