

DYING TO ASK!

VITAL IDEAS FOR THINKING ABOUT MORTAL QUESTIONS

A booklet from the great beyond written by Anna Juan Cantavella and Ellen Duthie. With illustrations by Loreta Lion

HOW CAN WE TELL IF A DEAD PERSON IS REALLY DEAD?

IS IT INTERESTING TO DIE?

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DIE OF A BROKEN HEART?

WOULD IT BE BORING TO LIVE FOREVER?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



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Visual Philosophy for All Ages
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DYING TO ASK! is an international project where Wonder Ponder invites people aged 6 to 12 to ask interesting questions about death and to talk, draw or write about them. It is part of our research for a book we want to publish in 2023.

After reading, drawing, talking, writing and playing with this booklet, on the last page you have space to write down the questions about death you are really dying to find an answer to (you might also think of some good questions about life —go ahead and include them too!). When you are ready, take a picture of the last page and send it to us at wonderpondermortalquestions@gmail.com.

MORTAL QUESTIONS FROM LIVING CHILDREN LIKE YOU

Read these questions we have received from living children like you. Do you have any favourites? Mark two or three you find particularly interesting, clever or funny. What is it about these questions that you like?

When you are in a tomb, is it scary?

If everyone thinks you are dead, but you are not really dead, will you die in the cemetery?

Can you die while you are speaking?

Is death a dream?

When I'm asleep, am I alive or dead?

Is Hell real?

If I die, who will get to keep all my stuff?

When someone you love dies, how long are you sad for?

When you are dead, do you miss your loved ones?

When you are dead, can you think?

Is there any fate worse than death?

How long does it take for our body to decompose after dying?

Where do the dead go?

Why don't skeletons have any flesh on them?



Why do we have to die?

Do our dead grandparents have feelings?

How can we tell if a dead person is really dead?

How do you know if you are actually dead or if it's just that your body is not working?

When someone dies, does all their body die suddenly?

Is it interesting to die?

Will I still like pizza when I'm dead?

What would happen to the body of an astronaut if they died in space?



Look at all these deadly words. Can you think of any other interesting words related to death? Write them in the empty boxes!

mind/body celebration disease

[empty box] corpse [empty box]

lifeless cemetery old age DEADLY WORDS mummy fear

reincarnation predator soul pandemic nothing [empty box] accident

resuscitate moribund nothing mourning pain

pain spirit inheritance afterlife will end

extinction irreversible decomposition



WHAT ARE YOU DYING TO KNOW ABOUT DEATH?



Write your very own mortal questions here. You might get some inspiration by looking and thinking about the deadly words above.



WOULD YOU RATHER.... BRING BACK FROM THE DEAD YOUR GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER OR A CAVE WOMAN?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE!



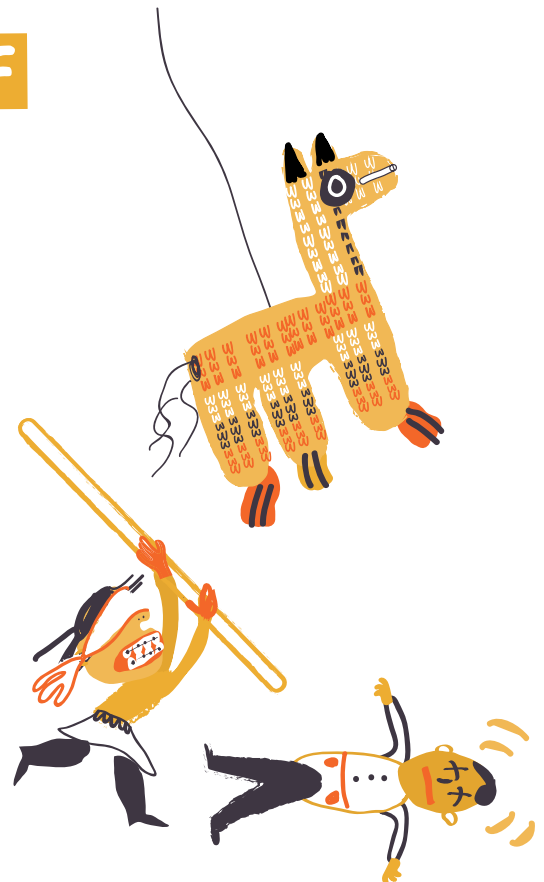
WOULD YOU RATHER...

- ... be immortal or not?
- ... be cremated, be buried or be mummified?
- ... die yourself or for someone you love to die?
- ... die by accident without being aware that you are about to die or know in advance that you are going to die?
- ... be a mortician, a forensic doctor or a palliative care doctor?
- ... stay around as a ghost or disappear for ever?

Over to you! Make up your own WOULD YOU RATHER question to ask your friends. You can make it funny, hard, absurd or even dead serious. Just make it a good one!

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. You are more likely to die at a party than going skydiving ~~TF~~ **F**
2. Every day around 150,000 people die in the world. **TF**
3. Every minute about 300,000 cells in our body die. **TF**
4. Hair and nails keep growing after death. **TF**
5. Walt Disney's body is frozen, waiting for someone to discover how to bring frozen bodies back to life. **TF**
6. In France you can marry your dead fiancé or fiancée. **TF**
7. Women have a greater life expectancy than men, except in high mountain areas where life expectancy is very slightly higher for men than for women. **TF**
8. The Malagasy people in Madagascar have a funerary tradition where they exhume their dead every seven years and sit them down at the table for a meal, dance with them and make them look nice before burying them again. **TF**
9. A body decomposes much faster in water than in earth. **TF**
10. There is a woman living on the Japanese island of Kyushu who is 152 years old and still works at her family's noodle store. **TF**



[Solutions on the last page].

MORTAL INTERVIEWS

PEOPLE SAY I AM A TOUGH BONE TO CHEW, BUT DEEP DOWN I'M A BIG SOFTIE. SO WHAT MORTAL QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?



These two characters are veritable experts in all matters mortal, each of them in their own way. The skeleton has been dead for hundreds of years, whereas the vampire has been alive for hundreds of years. What would you ask them? Think of the experience of each of them and what you'd like to know. Write each of your questions next to the character you think would be most likely to be able to answer your question. Make sure you word them clearly so they can understand.



WE VAMPIRES ARE IMMORTAL. ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THAT YOU'D LIKE ME TO SINK MY TEETH INTO?



THE PERFECT SEND-OFF

In recent months, because of the pandemic, funerals (when allowed), have been smaller affairs than families might have liked. Many of us may have imagined how we would have liked to say goodbye properly, or how we'd like our own funeral to be when the time comes. What music would we like? Would we rather it be a celebration of the life of the person who has died or an occasion to share our sadness with other people who also knew them? Could it be both?

In some countries, funerals are celebrated with joyful music, whereas in other countries, funerals are more sombre affairs. Some traditions have frowned upon the very idea of crying at a funeral, whereas others went to the effort of paying crying mourners to attend funerals. In Ireland and Scotland it is a tradition to hold wakes (funeral parties), and in Ghana, some people like to build colourful, extravagantly shaped coffins representing the dead person's passions (guitars, boats, flowers, cars, and even mobile phones!).



If you could design the perfect send-off, how would you do it? Would it be the same for everyone or would it change depending on the person? What about a pet? How would you design the perfect send-off for a pet? Draw or write about your idea of a perfect send-off.



MORTAL LANGUAGE

EXPRESSIONS TO DIE FOR

- to take a last bow
- to pop one's clogs
- to kick the bucket
- to fall off the toilet
- to be brown bread (UK, rhyming slang)
- to check out

IN OTHER LANGUAGES

- to go to the other neighbourhood (in Spanish: *irse al otro barrio*)
- to swallow one's birth certificate (French: *avalir son acte de naissance*)
- to bite the grass (in German: *ins Gras beißen*)
- to become a Buddha (in Japanese: *hotoke ni naru* - 仏になる).



The Academy of Mortal Language has given you a mission: you have been chosen to create a new expression for saying someone has died. Think about it and then share your creation here:

DEAD SERIOUS IDIOMS:

Can you match the first and second halves of these deadly idioms? What do they mean?

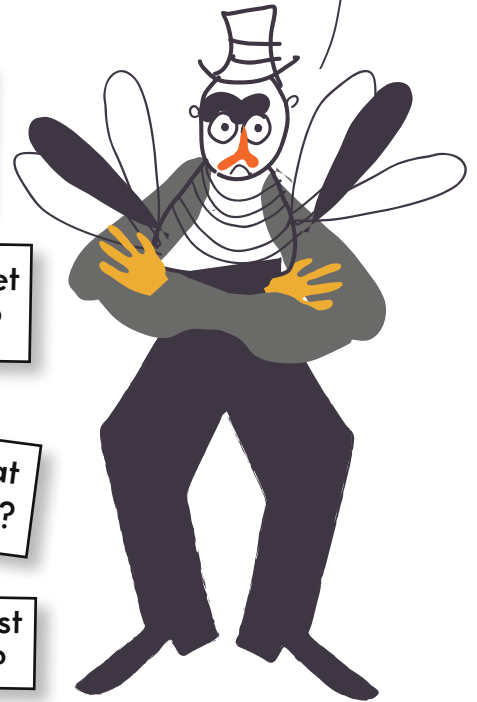
- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| To look | my dead body. |
| To do | as a dodo. |
| To play | a dead horse. |
| To be sick | something to death. |
| To be dying | dead. |
| Till death | like death warmed up. |
| Over | someone dead. |
| To be dead | to death of something. |
| To flog | do us part. |
| To cut | to go. |



IS YOUR LIFE MORE MEANINGFUL THAN THE LIFE OF A FLY?

A page brimming with questions to read, think about and talk about.

I CAN GET AN AWFUL LOT DONE IN 25 DAYS, YOU KNOW?



What ten things would you like to do before you die?

What is the meaning of life for a fly? What about for a pine tree?

What is the meaning of life for a pet dog? What about for a wild dog?



What are some of the things that bring most meaning to your life?

Is the life of an important scientist more meaningful than mine or than yours?

What are the nicest things about life?

Are the things that make life meaningful for you the same for everyone?

If humans never died, would our life have more or less meaning than it does now?

Are there some things that bring meaning to everyone's life?

Are some lives more meaningful than others? What lives? And why?



Has the pandemic changed the meaning of life in any way?

Would the meaning of life change if humans only lived for 30 years? What about if we lived more than 300 years?

Would the meaning of your life change if you knew when you were going to die?

How would you like to be remembered in the future?



MY BEST MORTAL QUESTIONS

Look at all the questions you've written in this booklet and choose the very best: the most interesting questions, those you're really dying to find an answer to. Copy them below.

If you are working on paper, please take a picture of this page and send it to wonderpondermortalquestions@gmail.com.

If you are working on a computer, save this document (make sure you save changes) and send it to wonderpondermortalquestions@gmail.com.

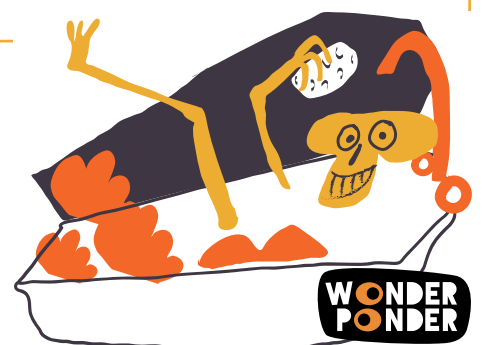
Don't forget to include your name, the town and country where you are writing from, and your age.

ONE OF YOUR QUESTIONS MIGHT END UP IN A WONDER PONDER BOOK!

YOUR NAME: _____

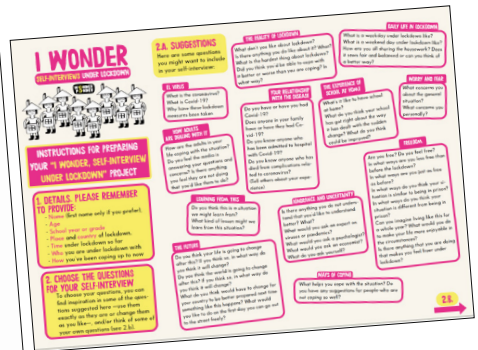
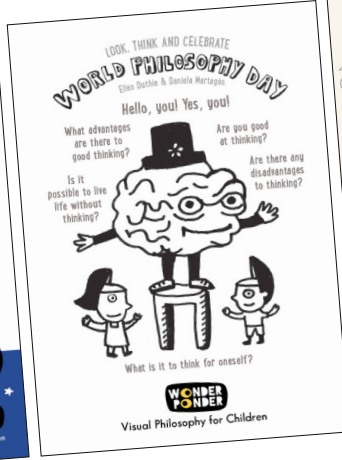
PLACE (TOWN AND COUNTRY): _____

AGE: _____

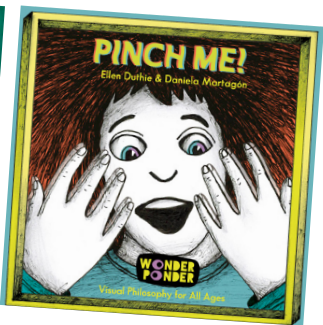
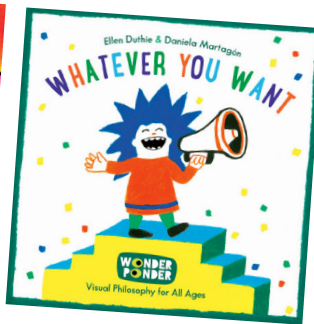


THESE MORTAL PAGES ARE ONE OF WONDER PONDER'S FREE, DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLETS

Do you know our other free downloadable booklets?



And our Visual Philosophy for All Ages boxes?



Wonder Ponder's Visual Philosophy for All Ages series introduces readers to philosophy's big questions playfully and appealingly. Wonder Ponder boxes are designed for children (and adults!) to look at, read and think about by themselves or with others, in educational, play or family settings.

Also available in English and Catalan. Cruelty Bites is available in German (published by Mortiz Verlag) and Korean (published by Marubol). I, Person is available in Korean (Marubol).



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Solutions "True or False?"
1-T; 2-T; 3-T; 4-F; 5-F; 6-T; 7-F; 8-T;
9-T; 10-F

Solutions "Dead serious idioms": "To look like death warmed up"; "To do something to death"; "To play dead"; "To be sick to death of something"; "Till death do us part"; "Over my dead body"; "To be dead as a doad"; "To hog a dead horse"; "To cut someone dead".

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