



Philosophical Enquiry for EYFS – KS1

Careful with that Cutlass!

Are swords always dangerous? Are toys always safe?

<p>Philosophical Content</p>	<p>Possible Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety/Danger, Care/Carelessness Risk/Harm, Real/Pretend, Sensible/ Silly, Children, Adults, Play, Toys <p>Example Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the (toy) sword dangerous? • What makes something dangerous or safe? • Who decides if something is dangerous or safe? Adults? Children? • What would make the sword more or less dangerous? • What would make the sword more or less safe? • Is danger bad? Is safety good? • Are swords <i>always</i> dangerous? Are toys <i>always</i> safe? • What about toy swords? • Can people (like pirates) be dangerous? • If you are careful with dangerous things, does that make them safe? • If you are careless with safe things, does that make them dangerous? • Is the sword real or pretend? • Are all toys pretend? • Can children play with 'real' things? • Should children be allowed to play with swords? • Is it okay to be silly with toys? Do you have to be sensible with swords? <p>Advanced questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is dangerousness (or safety) a property of the sword like sharpness or silverness? • Where is the danger (or safety)? Is it in the sword? In the person? In the circumstances? • Can anything be completely safe? • Can anything be completely dangerous?
<p>Philosophical Method</p>	<p>Thinking Moves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PICTURE what you might do with a toy sword. VARY the example, instead of a sword, what about other toys, books, or objects WEIGH up the danger in each example, KEYWORD, ideas have we explored? <p>Facilitation Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-in-role (as a pirate) Always/Sometimes/Never**
<p>Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toy cutlass or sword and pirate costume for teacher, plus several other examples of objects given to children e.g. books, cutlery, medicine etc. • Circle of chairs, passing Pom-pom, flip chart / white board, pens

1. PREPARATION		5 min
Introductions	Only if necessary, introduce everyone.	
Ethos	<p>Where needed, recap enquiry rules and conventions. For very young children, it helps to focus on a few simple rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the ideas that are shared • Think carefully about what you hear • Share your ideas when it is your turn 	
2. STIMULUS		5 min
Presentation of Stimulus	<p>Teacher-in-Role: Careful with that Cutlass!</p> <p>Dressed as a pirate, introduce yourself as ‘Captain Cautious’, the most careful pirate in the Irish Sea. Show the children your cutlass and explain that you are not afraid to use your sword if anyone ever tried to ambush your crew! But most of the time you are a peace-loving pirate, and you get terribly worried that all of the swords, daggers and cannons on pirate ships, could cause nasty accidents. Unlike many pirates, you are a very cautious captain.</p> <p>Pass the toy cutlass around the circle. As you do say ‘careful with that cutlass! It <i>might be</i> dangerous’. Encourage the children to pass the sword round as ‘safely’ as possible. Make this as silly as you like.</p>	
3. QUESTION(S)		5 min
Prepared Question	<p>Ask: Is the sword dangerous?</p> <p>Give the children a few seconds of silence to think.</p>	
4. DIALOGUE		10 min
First Thoughts	Ask the children to share their response with a partner. Invite some feedback and be prepared for a lot of children to argue that the toy sword is not dangerous. Many will consider this obvious.	
Stirring things up	<p>If you get both yeses and noes, you can facilitate a dialogue drawing on responses from either side and encourage those children who disagree with each other, to try and change the other person’s mind.</p> <p>However, if most children say no (as is most likely), you need some counter examples.</p> <p>The children may be able to do this themselves and if so, this is always preferable. Explain that Captain Cautious has a very vivid imagination and she is always thinking of how things could go wrong. Ask them if they can imagine one way that the toy sword could end up being dangerous. For example, what if someone poked themselves in the eye? Or ate it? Or tripped over it?</p>	

	Only if they can't think of any examples, should you offer your own.	
Getting Focused	After considering these examples, ask: Is the sword dangerous? You might find it useful to offer the classification schema: Always dangerous, Sometimes dangerous or Never dangerous	
Digging Deeper	Consider the same question with a range of other objects commonly given to children. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutlery • Medicine • A teddy • A book 	
Final Push	With an older or more experienced group, perhaps consider moving on to a more challenging question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can anything be completely safe? • Can anything be completely dangerous? 	
Last Thoughts	End the enquiry in role. Give each child an opportunity to speak to Captain Cutlass, who asks them: <i>Can I keep my Crew safe?</i>	
5. REFLECTION		5 min
Reflection on the content	KEYWORD: What big ideas did think about today? E.g. Danger, Toys, Pretending	
Reflection on the method	Review the rules asking: Did we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the ideas that were shared? • Think carefully about what we heard? • Share our own ideas when it was our turn? 	

* This is the metacognitive language of *Thinking Moves A-Z* by Dialogue Works. For more info see <https://dialogueworks.co.uk/thinking-moves/> or ask us about our accredited Thinking Moves Training.

** A list of this language for facilitation accompanies these resources.

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