



LESSON 1: AN INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS



Age: Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 3

Duration: 60 to 120 minutes

Resources: An inquiry into animal experiments presentation
Polling cards (x2 per student)
Stakeholder cards



View/download film &
other resources

Overview: Students take part in a mock independent inquiry on behalf of the government. They play the role of different stakeholders to investigate the scientific arguments in favour of and against animal experiments. Students will use their critical thinking, literacy and presentation skills to debate this topic respectfully.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The process of discovery and development of new medicines
Working scientifically: appreciating the power and limitations of science and considering ethical issues which may arise; explaining everyday and technological applications of science; evaluating associated personal, social, economic and environmental implications; and making decisions based on the evaluation of evidence and arguments

STARTER

Students discuss each statement on slide 1 and decide whether they agree or disagree. Encourage them to think about and explain their reasoning.

Introduce the two research approaches: animal models and humane research and how the two scientists would have different opinions about animal experiments.

Suggested follow-up questions:

- Why might the two scientists have different opinions? (They have different experiences, different knowledge, they may be biased)
- How does question 3 differ from 1 and 2? (It is subjective rather than objective - explain that this lesson will deal only with the objective questions)

Vote 1:

- Introduce the question of “Should we continue to fund animal experiments to find treatments for human disease?”
- Students cast their initial votes using the ballot cards or alternatively you can label three containers with ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘not sure’ and give each student a marble to place in one of the buckets.
- Count up the votes and announce the result to the class.

MAIN

Give each student a stakeholder card (print from slides 4 to 9 of the 'An inquiry into animal experiments' presentation).

Students sit with other students who have the same stakeholder card. They will assume the role of their stakeholder, no matter what their own personal beliefs are. Allow a few minutes for each student to read the arguments on their stakeholder card and write down any other arguments they think their stakeholder could make. If time allows, they could research on the internet (or this could be set as a homework in preparation for the lesson). Make it clear to them that they are arguing from their stakeholder's position, not their own!

They will be presented with three pieces of evidence. After each piece of evidence, give them time to discuss with their stakeholder group and the opportunity to respond.

Prompts for discussion after each piece of evidence:

- What was the most important message from the evidence we just saw?
- Was there anything in this evidence that you disagreed with?
- Was this evidence biased or unbiased?
- Was there anything in this evidence which surprised you?
- Do animal experiments cause suffering to animals?
- Are animal experiments necessary to find treatments for human diseases?

Evidence A:

The Future of Science film from Animal Aid explores the work of four scientists using humane research methods to research causes and treatments for human disease.

Evidence B:

This 4 minutes clip from *Animal Experiments: pain, production and playing god* from The Guardian features an interview with a scientist who conducts animal experiments. She lays out the arguments used to defend and justify animal experiments.

Evidence C:

UK government statistics on scientific procedures involving living animals which shows the number, severity and species of animals used.

PLENARY

Vote 2:

Students cast their votes again in light of the evidence that has been presented during the inquiry. Encourage them to discuss with a partner their reason for changing or not changing their answers.

Count up the votes and announce the outcome of the inquiry. Did anybody change their mind? Why? Why not? Is anybody more confident or less confident in their beliefs now? What might they do with what they've learned?

Direct students to www.animalaid.org.uk to learn more.

