

A Moral Zoo?

Teacher Resource

VCE Philosophy
 Unit 2 | Area of Study 1 & 3
 Questions of value: Ethics and moral philosophy

Introduction

A Moral Zoo? is a unique opportunity for students to explore ethics and moral philosophy by questioning the existence of Zoos in the 21st century. The Philosophy program offers rich discussion on current Zoo dilemmas and the pressing moral challenges of our time.

- Students are invited to join Zoo educators in a discussion based workshop focusing on ethics and a contemporary question, **“Is it ethical to have Zoos in the 21st century?”**
- Robust discussion and debate is encouraged through the analysis of a Zoo based Ethical dilemma. Students critically reflect on their own thinking and that of others while delving into ethical decision making, whilst exploring ideas, moral standpoints and modern views about captive animals.
- In our historic orangutan exhibit, students consider the history of the Zoo through the eyes of the animals that lived here. Zoo educators challenge students with questions touching on morality and moral choice, the justification for having animals in Zoos and conflicting viewpoints.
- Students are accompanied to the present day Orangutan Sanctuary where they extend their thinking by comparing past and present strategies for the promotion of health and welfare of orangutans, as well as the conservation efforts being made to save this species. Students are prompted to apply skills of reasoning to their arguments in order to develop a sophisticated and coherent worldview.

Curriculum Links

VCE Philosophy VCAA Outcomes	Area of Study	Learning Intentions
Unit 2: Questions of value	Area study 1: Ethics and moral philosophy	Students should be able to analyse problems in ethics and moral theory and related contemporary debates, evaluate viewpoints and arguments in response to these problems, and discuss the interplay between philosophical thinking and contemporary ethical and moral debates.
Unit 2: Questions of value	Area of study 3: Techniques of reasoning	Students should be able to apply methods of philosophical inquiry to the analysis of philosophical viewpoints and arguments, including those in value theory.



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Onsite Activities

The program consists of two Zoo Educator led sessions and time to explore the Zoo. The Zoo Educator will lead activities and discussion at two locations – Digest Ed and the Orang-utan Sanctuary. Students will need to consider the big question prior to the excursion, “*Is it ethical to have Zoos in the 21st century?*”

Pre-Excursion Resources

It is recommended that you prepare students for the topics integral to the program; is it right or wrong to have a Zoo? Is it moral to have animals in captivity? Are animals at Melbourne Zoo treated ethically?

Students are encouraged to read and discuss the article “*Habitat or Humbug,*” as well as read a variety of media articles/podcasts and consider the points raised:

<https://www.animalsaustralia.org/features/things-we-need-to-stop-telling-ourselves-about-zoos.php>

<https://www.zoo.org.au/news/five-facts-about-good-zoos>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/23/sanctuaries-or-showbiz-zoos-struggle-to-balance-conservation-and-entertainment>

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/the-ethical-history-of-zoos/6869776>

Students can also be directed to the research section of the Zoos Victoria webpage for insight into ways the Zoo is improving animal care as well as current conservation projects:

<https://www.zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction/research>

Checklist

- Read through articles and encourage students to question, summarise and critically reflect on points raised.
- Ensure that students have read and understood the “Habitat or Humbug” article
- Ensure students consider their own arguments and come prepared to discuss these and develop them further.
- Consider how this can be assessed and prepare students in advance with clear intentions.
- Students need to bring writing materials to the excursion.

Post-Excursion Activities

Post-excursion Assessment - Philosophical Essay

Students can complete a philosophical essay using carefully reasoned arguments formulated through the articles and excursion, and reference one of the normative ethical theories. For example, utilitarianism, deontological ethics and virtue ethics.

Support students by referring them to, ‘**How to Write a Philosophy Essay**’ from the student textbook. (VCE Philosophy: Units 1 & 2. Page 577-579)

Also included in the resources below:

- **Rubric** derived from VCAA for the Unit 3&4 philosophy exam (guide only)
- Guiding **Question** for their philosophical essay:

Q. Are zoos ethical in the twenty-first century? Critically discuss with reference to at least one of the theories we have studied in this Topic (On Right and Wrong).

PHILOSOPHY ESSAY RUBRIC

Student essays will be assessed against the following criteria:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

(Knowledge and understanding of philosophical concepts, viewpoints, arguments and debates relevant to the topic)

- *To what extent did the student demonstrate knowledge of philosophical viewpoints and debates?*
- *How well did the student understand and explain philosophical arguments and concepts?*

0	The student has not reached level 1
1	The student demonstrated a superficial knowledge of philosophical issues. The student displayed only limited understanding of the concepts used.
2	The student displayed some knowledge of philosophical issues and there was a basic understanding of the concepts used.
3	The student demonstrated knowledge of philosophical issues, and concepts were generally understood.
4	The student demonstrated a secure knowledge of this material. Philosophical arguments and concepts were largely understood.
5	The student demonstrated knowledge that was comprehensive and in-depth and was used incisively to support arguments. Philosophical arguments and concepts were fully understood.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

(Critical evaluation of ideas and arguments relevant to the topic)

- *Did the student evaluate the merits and limitations of selected arguments?*
- *How relevant was the evaluation?*
- *To what extent did the student express a relevant, personal response?*

0	The student has not reached level 1.
1	The student developed ideas and arguments in a basic way but there was little or no evaluation.
2	The student developed some ideas and arguments but the development was simple or was asserted without support or reference. There may have been some basic evaluation of the ideas and arguments that were relevant to the selected topic.
3	The student developed ideas and arguments in a sound way and there was a consistent attempt to evaluate them, even if this was not fully developed.
4	The student developed ideas and arguments from a consistently held perspective. Evaluation of the ideas and arguments was appropriate, thoughtful and convincing.
5	The student developed focused and critical ideas and arguments from a consistently held and well justified perspective relevant to the topic. Evaluation of the ideas and arguments was compelling or subtle, with strong evidence of personal reflection.

SELECTION AND USE OF RELEVANT MATERIAL

(Selection and use of relevant material and appropriate examples to support the response)

- *To what extent did the student provide relevant supporting material?*
- *To what extent did the student provide appropriate examples?*

0	The student has not reached level 1.
1	The students included little, if any, philosophical support material.
2	The student made use of some supporting material and examples that were not always relevant or appropriate.
3	The student made some use of relevant supporting material and examples.
4	The student selected philosophical material and examples that were mostly relevant.
5	The student made astute selections of philosophical material and examples.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESPONSE

(Development of a coherent and well-reasoned response that addresses the specific demands of the topic)

- *How well has the student understood the specific demands of the question?*
- *How relevant was the argument or discussion to the demands of the question?*
- *Was the argument or discussion coherent and was it developed in a meaningful way?*
- *To what extent did the student provide appropriate examples to support their line of reasoning?*

0	The student has not reached level 1.
1	The student showed little awareness of the specific demands of the question and identified relevant material in a limited way. The discussion was generally undeveloped and often irrelevant to the line of argument. There was little analysis and few or no examples were given.
2	The student showed some awareness of the specific demands of the question and identified and analysed some relevant material. There was some development of arguments but they were not always focused or coherently expressed. Some appropriate examples were used.
3	The student showed understanding of the specific demands of the question and identified material that was nearly always relevant, but it was not always clear how it was being used to support the student's contention in a meaningful way. There was a sound analysis of this material. Examples were appropriate and gave support to the argument.
4	The student showed a clear understanding of the specific demands of the question by identifying relevant material and analysing it in a thoughtful way. Arguments linked together and were largely coherently developed in support of the student's contention. Examples directly supported the overall argument in a persuasive manner. Some counter-arguments were presented.
5	The student showed a full understanding of the specific demands of the question by identifying material that was always relevant. The implications of this material were drawn out in a detailed analysis that provided coherent and meaningful development of the response. Examples were well chosen and compelling in their support of the argument. Counter-arguments were presented in a convincing way.

EXPRESSION

(Use of clear and precise language appropriate to philosophy)

- *Did the student present the argument in an organised way?*
- *How clear and precise was the language used by the student?*
- *To what extent was the language appropriate to philosophy?*

0	The student has not reached level 1.
1	The student expressed some basic ideas but it was not always clear what the argument is trying to convey. The use of language was not appropriate to philosophy.
2	The student presented some ideas in an organised manner. There was some clarity of expression, but the argument could not always be followed. The use of language was not always appropriate to philosophy.
3	The student presented ideas in an organised way and the development of the argument could be followed easily. The use of language was appropriate to philosophy.
4	The student expressed ideas in a clear and coherent way and insights were clearly articulated. The use of language was effective and appropriate to philosophy.
5	The student presented ideas in a coherent and incisive way, insights were clearly articulated and the argument was focused and sustained. The use of language was precise and fully appropriate to philosophy.

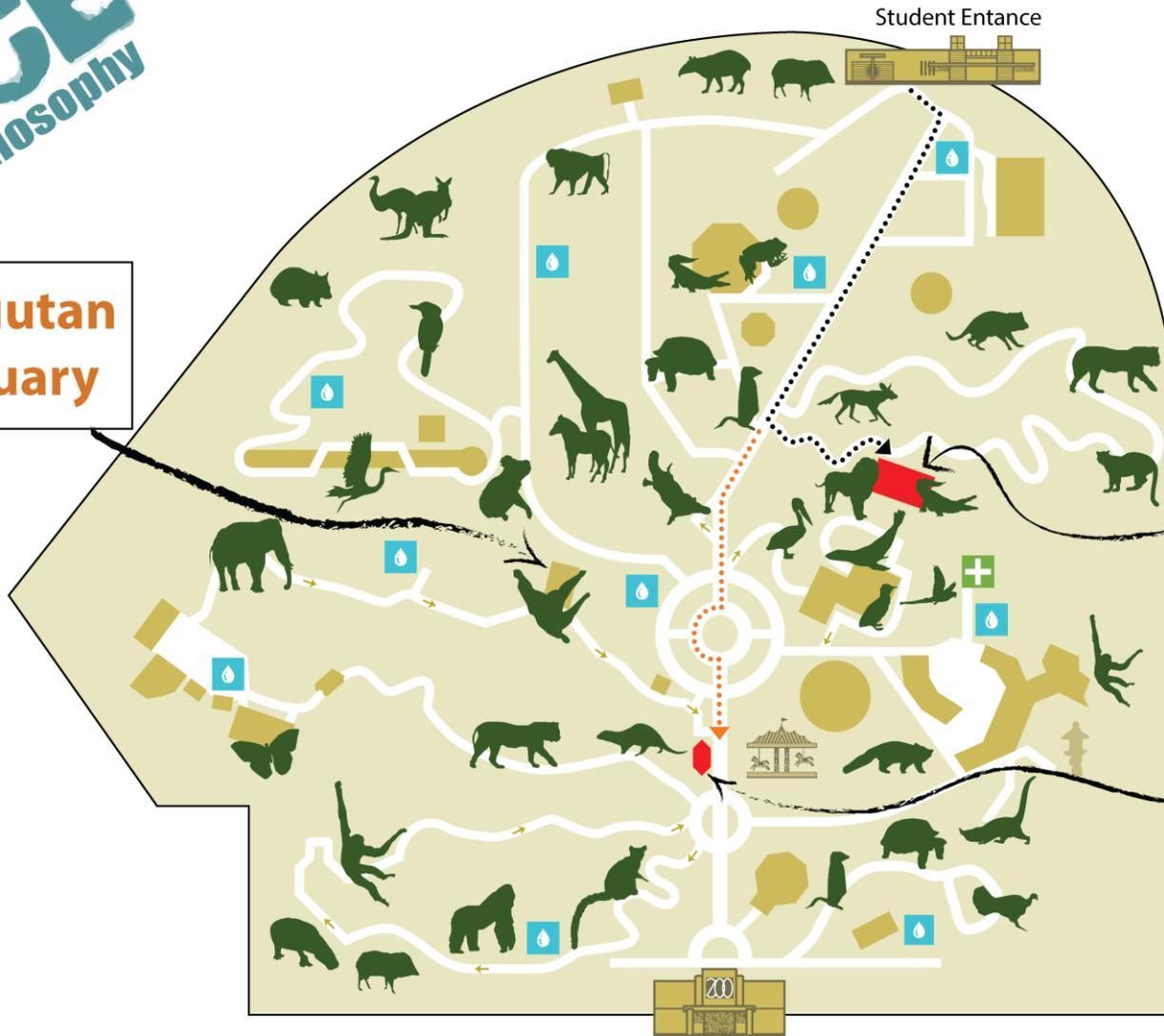
GRADE

A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	E+	E	UG
25-24	23-22	21-20	19-18	17-16	15-14	13-12	11-10	9-8	7-6	5-0

VCE Philosophy Map



Orangutan Sanctuary



Meeting Point One
Digest Ed

Meeting Point Two
Heritage Enclosure



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