

How do we know what animals are thinking?

Philosophy Smash with Henry!

Activity Sheet: design your own experiment.

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Design your own experiment!

In a group, design an experiment to test what an animal is thinking. Your experiment should answer the questions below.

Remember to be creative! Some of the best animal experiments have been designed by philosophers, because they think outside the box!

Try to apply what you've learned from the video and the handout.

1) What is the animal you're testing on?

Is it a dog, a cat, a chimp? Some animals might be harder to test on, like octopuses, snakes, or bees, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try!

2) What are you trying to test?

For example, are you testing whether the animal can feel jealous? Or whether it can remember specific events like its breakfast? Whether it can feel pain, etc.?

3) What is your research question?

This should summarise the answers you gave to (1) and (2) in a punchy and clear way.

A good research question would be something like, for example: 'can a dog remember its breakfast?' 'could a snake ever know what I'm thinking?' 'can an octopus get bored?' 'Do cockroaches feel pain?'

4) How will your experiment work?

Outline step by step how your experiment works. This should include the equipment you would use, and what the animal is expected to do. Think also about what potential problems there might be with the experiment (for example, what if the animal misbehaves?). How are you going to get round these problems?