



## The Philosophy Shop: Ideas, activities and questions to get people, young and old, thinking philosophically

By Peter Worley



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Imagine a one-stop shop stacked to the rafters with everything you could ever want to tap into young people's natural curiosity and get them thinking deeply. Well, this is it! Edited by professional philosopher Peter Worley from The Philosophy Shop and with a foreword by Ian Gilbert, this book is jam-packed with ideas, stimuli, thought experiments, activities, short stories, pictures and questions to get young people thinking philosophically. Primarily aimed at teachers to use as a stimuli for philosophical enquiries in the classroom or even as starter activities to get them thinking from the off, it can also be used by parents for some great family thinking or indeed anyone fed up of being told what to think (or urged not to think) and who wants a real neurological workout. The proceeds of the book are going towards The Philosophy Foundation charity.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

The Philosophy Shop won the Education Resources Award for Best Educational Book in 2012.  
Won the New England Book Festival 2012 Winner for Compilations/Anthologies category.  
Finalist for ForeWord Review Book of the Year 2012 Awards.

Reviewed by Deborah Perron Tollefsen, Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis.

I used The Philosophy Shop with my third graders this spring and it worked really well. Third graders do well with exercises that involve tactile elements and this book offers a number of these. A very, very, nice collection that I found easy to use. I could flip through it and find a juicy philosophy bite with which to tempt their curious minds.

Reviewed by Ian Tustin, lead teacher of religion and philosophy, Wadham School.

Very impressed, I've just started a philosophy based scheme of learning for my year nines next year, and this book will be a massive part of that. The 'works well with' suggestions for each exercise make translating the ideas in the book into a well structured sequence of lessons a joy. I completely agree that introducing core philosophical issues to students with a 'hook' that grabs them is the best way to approach the subject. I do the same with my A level groups and it entuses them to approach the core issue in creative ways. You then get a second bout of learning when they compare their own approach to those of famous philosophers. A very practical tool for RE teachers.

Reviewed by Jules Evans, author of Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Situations.

The Philosophy Shop is on a mission to bring philosophy into our schools. This book brilliantly shows how accessible philosophy is, and how fun and mind-expanding it can be, for any ages.

Reviewed by Nigel Warburton, The Open University

'This book should get anyone thinking.'

Reviewed by John T Morris BA(Hons),MEd,MPhil,CertEd Director JTM Educational Consultants.

This book is a timely and welcome text for teachers, in order to gain the added skills and understanding of moving learners forward, from passive receivers of information, to active engagement in learning, discovery and collaborative thinking. It is essential reading for schools that want to move teaching and learning to 'outstanding' and improve the questioning skills for staff and students.

Reviewed by Anthony Seldon, Master of Wellington College and author of many books.

Schools in Britain, and indeed the world over, are being subordinated to a central diktat, which values the passing of exams above any other benefit. International studies which rank schools, such as PISA, encourage governments to subordinate everything to the optimisation of performance in these international tests. Learning becomes a sequence of "teaching for the test", with rote-learning replacing genuine open-ended learning. The schools become like factories, and teachers become operatives, encouraging their students along a conveyor belt. The "Philosophy Shop" is a much needed corrective, because at its heart it is encouraging young people to think, and to think independently of exams. The book wants to see thinking for

thinking's sake, the development of the intellect for the sheer love of learning, and the formation of enquiring minds which want to probe and are unwilling to accept authority unless grounded on good argument. This is dangerous stuff, and is likely to get the purveyors of the material locked up by the Department for Education. The book is conceived by the Philosophy Foundation, whose aim is to bring the study of philosophy to communities beyond universities, and in particular to introduce it to disadvantaged school students. It believes that the teaching of philosophy at early ages helps develop autonomy and creative thinking, rational reasoning skills amongst children and adults, and will help them to become better thinkers and contributors for the rest of their lives.

The book eschews the traditional approach of philosophy, which is to be instructive, and to lay out in great swathes of text received views on a whole range of philosophical problems. Rather, the inspiration is the philosophical approach of Plato as mediated through Socrates. The book is full of questions, which uses the prompts of a story, or occasionally a poem or activity. The book is divided into four sections, following a methodology that the book's editor, Peter Worley, first heard used by A C Grayling: "Metaphysics or What There Is", "Epistemology or What Can Be Known About What There Is", "Value or What Matters in What There Is" and "Language and Meaning or What Can be Said About What There Is". A typical story, and one of my favourites, is "The Butterfly Dream", which comes in section two on epistemology, and is inspired by Chuang Tsu's dreaming he was a butterfly, but when awaking asking himself whether he was in reality a butterfly dreaming now that he was a man. The guided questions begin with "How would he [Chuang Tsu] be able to tell?", and finishes with a more abstract "Is a butterfly free when it is blown about by the wind?" As a head of a secondary school, I welcome this book, and would hope that it will be used widely in schools, families and elsewhere. It is so much more conducive to stimulating thought than the pedestrian philosophical training I received at Oxford in the 1970s as part of "PPE". I went up to university with my head buzzing with the kind of questions which fill the pages of "The Philosophy Shop". Within four or five weeks, my enthusiasm for the subject had been drummed out of me by dull teachers teaching philosophy in a dull way. The philosophy component of the first year consisted merely of reading Bertrand Russell's Problems of Philosophy and J S Mill's Utilitarianism. After a year of my philosophical interests being sucked dry, I gave up the subject, to my enduring regret. "The Philosophy Shop" will have the opposite effect on young people, and I applaud the thinking behind encouraging young people as early as possible to think philosophically. My worry is that the education system in Britain is so fixated on exams that there will be little time available, money or indeed incentive to give the approach of this book, and others championing the teaching of philosophy in schools, the fair wind that they merit.

Reviewed by Karen Taylor, Head Teacher Update.

This book provides a treasure trove of ideas to develop children's thinking in the concepts of philosophy from as young as five, along with the opportunity to "advance" thinking for the more able children.

Each chapter provides a story, poem or activity which leads to a start question and then you are guided through further questions which allow the children to work through the concept until they reach central questions including existence, belief, truth and happiness.

A personal favourite is the humorous A Hole Load of Nothing involving an owl who was afraid of a dark hole because it was full of "Nothing" – a great opportunity to discuss fear along with the possibility of being afraid of nothing for young children. A particular strength of the book is the opportunity to record your own questions during personal thought or the discussion, and the section "works well with" which provides linked discussions.

It is a great introductory book for anybody who is interested in developing an opportunity for children to talk or think without there being a "right or wrong" answer.

Reviewed by Ulrike Thomas, Learning and Teaching Update, Issue 63 April 2013.

We may have entered the era of ebooks, but in my opinion there is still nothing nicer than a high quality hardback book. The Philosophy Shop is one such book - it's high in quality not only in design but also, and

more importantly, in terms of its content. The title refers to the fact that it is intended as a 'shop' (and no ordinary one at that) made up of 'shelf upon shelf of philosophical ideas, thoughts, puzzles and problems made accessible and enjoyable'. It is designed for groups, the lone reader, for teachers - in fact, for anyone who is interested in thinking, problem-solving and conversation. The stimuli are made up of stories, poems and thought experiments which address themes such as 'existence', 'personal identity', 'freedom' and 'knowledge'. Each stimulus is followed by a 'start question' which is designed to take participants 'straight to the problem' and then continues with 'questions to take you further', ie questions into the problem. Space is also provided for you to add your own questions (if you don't mind writing in a beautiful book), as well as further reading. I read and discussed the story of 'What Zeus does when he's bored' (which encourages you to examine the question of free will) to my 11-year-old son and couldn't believe it when he carried on the conversation the next day! This book can provide ideas for whole lessons, assemblies or conversations around the dinner table. The added bonus is that it will look great on your bookshelf.

Reviewed by Sirku Nikamaa-Linder, Educator and Lecturer in Finland.

The winner of the Educational Book of the Year, the 2013 Education Resources Award, The Philosophy Shop, is an outstanding resource, which provides active engagement instead of passive receipt of information. It can be used in various subjects on all levels for development of thinking- and interaction skills and for development of reasoning and language skills.

This book is a one-stop shop for all teachers who want to engage their children, improve interaction in class and encourage students to reflect and also to express their thoughts.

The philosophical exercises are constructed in a way that puts the student in a key role, while the teacher acts as a facilitator and a guide. It is important that the teachers refrains from revealing his or her own thinking as it is likely that the students then would repeat the teacher's view or create variations of it.

The book consists of a large number of exercises, which start with with narrative or a literary context in which the philosophical idea or problem is presented. The introduction can be a poem, an image, an activity, a short story, a thought experiment or a scenario. This "frame" contextualizes the problem and motivates the participants to solve the problem. Problem solving, thinking and reasoning begins with the 'Start Question', which is linked to the frame. The start question is the "You are here"- arrow on a map: This central and explicit question is something the participants are trying to answer.

After the initial discussion the book offers Questions to Take you Further, which are carefully chosen to lead the participants deeper into the problem or the puzzle in such a way that they do not get lost. The Philosophy Shop also encourages participants to ask their own questions and seek answers to them in their discussion groups.

Teachers who have not conducted philosophical discussions in class are well supported and guided. There is a quick guide to running a Philosophical Enquiry and references to further reading.

Many of these activities and discussions work well as a warm up or as an extra activity in many subject areas.

## From the Inside Flap

Imagine that one day, as you pass a familiar row of shops, your eye catches sight of a shop you've not seen before. In fact, you're quite sure it simply wasn't there yesterday! You investigate further and discover that the shop is no ordinary shop. Inside is shelf upon shelf of philosophical ideas, thoughts, puzzles and problems made accessible and enjoyable by having been wrapped up in stories, poems, activities and thought-experiments to tickle and tantalise the mind into thoughtfulness and wakefulness.

Start Question: Would you go into The Philosophy Shop?

Questions to take you further:

What have you got to lose by taking the time to think?

What have you got to gain by taking the time to think?

What is thinking? (Central Question)

Is it good to think?

Works well with:

Groups: in classrooms or colleges, reading/discussion groups etc.

Lone readers: on journeys, on the bedside table, next to the loo!

Source: Socrates in the marketplace of Athens.

Philosophy: Plato's Apology and The Republic book 1.

This book is suitable for adults and children.

From the Back Cover

A veritable emporium of philosophical puzzles and challenges to develop thinking in and out of the classroom.

Imagine a one-stop shop stacked to the rafters with everything you could ever want, to enable you to tap into young people's natural curiosity and get them thinking deeply. Well, this is it! Edited by philosophy in schools expert, Peter Worley and with contributions from philosophers from around the world, *The Philosophy Shop* is jam-packed with ideas to get anyone thinking philosophically. For use in the classroom, at after school clubs, in philosophy departments and philosophy groups or even for the lone reader, this book will appeal to anyone who likes to think. Take it on journeys and dip in; use it as a classroom starter activity, or for a full philosophical enquiry – it could even be used to steer pub, dinner party or family discussions away from the same old topics.

The proceeds of the book are going towards The Philosophy Foundation, a charity bringing philosophy to schools and communities.

Peter Worley leads The Philosophy Foundation in its mission to transform thinking in education. He lives and works in South East London with his wife Emma and their daughter Katie.

"The Philosophy Shop is on a mission to bring philosophy into our schools. This book brilliantly shows how accessible philosophy is, and how fun and mind-expanding it can be, for any ages."

Jules Evans, author of *Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Situations*, co-organiser of the London Philosophy Club and policy director of the Centre for the History of the Emotions

"I've just started a philosophy-based scheme of learning for my year nines next year, and this book will be a massive part of that. The 'works well with' suggestions for each exercise make translating the ideas in the book into a well structured sequence of lessons a joy. I completely agree that introducing core philosophical issues to students with a 'hook' that grabs them is the best way to approach the subject. I do the same with my A level groups and it entuses them to approach the core issue in creative ways. A very practical tool for teachers."

Ian Tustin, lead teacher of religion and philosophy, Wadham School

"This book should get anyone thinking."

Nigel Warburton, The Open University

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### **Bruce England:**

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students since they're still students or that for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Only you can be answered for that query above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't to be compelled someone or something that they don't want do that. You must know how great along with important the book The Philosophy Shop: Ideas, activities and questions to get people, young and old, thinking philosophically. All type of book can you see on many sources. You can look for the internet methods or other social media.

#### **Brian Freeman:**

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#### **Cynthia Gomez:**

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#### **Frances Pierce:**

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