

# Freedom Toolkit

## CONTENTS

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**Q1:** WHAT ARE CONCEPTS?

**Q2:** WHAT ARE 'BIG IDEAS'?

**Q3:** WHAT IS CONTESTABLE ABOUT THIS CONCEPT?

**Q4:** WHAT ARE CONCEPT GAMES, AND HOW DO WE PLAY THEM?

**Q5:** WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO PLAY CONCEPT GAMES?

- Category Cards
- Concept Cards
- Scenario Cards
- Image Cards
- Meme Cards

**Q6:** WHAT ARE DISCUSSION PLANS, AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

- Sample discussion plans

**Q7:** WHAT FURTHER LINKS AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

- Picture Story Books
- Links
- IAPC References



# Freedom Toolkit



## Q1: WHAT ARE CONCEPTS?

Concepts are the mental or cognitive tools we use to classify and order our experiences in and of the world

Concepts are always abstractions constructed by thinking beings – like us – but some concepts are more abstract than others. For example, we can imagine a child deriving the concept dog from numerous instances of four-legged creatures that she encounters in her daily experience, together with appropriate reinforcement from someone already familiar with this concept. This is, in part, a process of trial and error – excluding other four-legged creatures that miaow instead of bark, for example. Still, this concept is an abstraction because I can pat my dog but I cannot pat – i.e. interact physically with – my concept or idea of a dog.

Other concepts – including those, like good, bad, right(s), wrong, responsibility, freedom, justice, that are central in the field of Ethics – are more abstract still, in that it is more difficult to describe or imagine precisely what kinds of items in the world fall under them. There are two different points to notice here; First, even if there were complete agreement as to what such concepts mean, the words which stand for them function more like adjectives or adverbs than nouns. I can observe, hear, pat, play with and smell cats and dogs, but – so it seems – I can only observe, witness or perform actions – or, perhaps, people – that are good, bad, responsible, free, etc.

Secondly – and this point is acknowledged in the Ethical Capability Curriculum – there rarely is complete agreement as to what such concepts mean. What counts as right or wrong, or free or just is often quite contestable or controversial, both in general terms – precisely what the words “right,” “wrong” and “free” mean – and in specific instances – whether or not a particular action or person, state, regime, etc. is actually right, good or free. Of course being contestable does not imply that the meanings of these words is actually contested. All too often, we simply assume that when we use them, those around us will mean the same thing by them as we do (even if we don’t quite know what we do mean!). Such assumptions can lead to unnecessary misunderstandings and even disagreements. Trying to be clear about what certain terms or concepts actually mean is a key part of thinking and inquiry in ethics.

## Q2: WHAT ARE 'BIG IDEAS'?

Philosophical concepts, which we call Big Ideas, are distinguished by having the following three characteristics:

1. **Common:** The concept is shared by everybody. It is a word commonly used by students (depending on their age).
2. **Central:** The concept is important to use in how we live our lives and understand the world around us. In an ethical context, concepts like *Right and Wrong* are very important, as are many others such as *fair, justice, duty, freedom*.
3. **Contestable:** The concept will arouse argument and disagreements. Students may hold different understandings of what the concept means, and how it can be used in varied situations. This is how some concepts can rely on necessary conditions.



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## Q3: WHAT IS CONTESTABLE ABOUT THIS CONCEPT?

### CONTESTABILITY OF FREEDOM

*Freedom* is a contested term that is frequently used in many different contexts and situations, and in a variety of frameworks and discourses including political, but also psychological, moral, metaphysical. And the adjective “free” is familiar to most children at a young age. *Freedom* is also important or central to many aspects of our own lives – even those who are fortunate to live in what we might casually describe as a “free country” – including the transitions that we all go through as we grow up (e.g. adolescents seeking freedom from parental authority). Finally, *freedom* is a contestable concept, partly because its meaning changes from one context to another, but also because even when the context is specified, there will often be room for considerable disagreement about what freedom actually means in that context.

Superficially, it might seem that freedom is simply the absence of varying types of constraints (freedom from), which might be physical (laws) or social (rules, regulations, obligations). I am free to kiss my own elbow in the sense that society does not prohibit it, but I am not physically free to do so, because of my bodily limitations. Conversely, students are usually not free to leave the school grounds in the middle of the day even though they are not physically constrained from doing so. But such a minimalist or negative conception does not capture all that is worthwhile about freedom; it also implies that we are never free, because we are always constrained by laws or rules of one sort or another. It fails to acknowledge that one of life’s goals – for which education plays a key role – is to become free in the sense that we are able to make and act on choices or plans for a better future, etc. Merely having desires or goals is not freedom; we need to be able to achieve them. Thinking about freedom in terms of being able to achieve what we want to do seems more constructive and forward-looking than sticking to the idea that freedom is simply the absence of constraints. Still, in whatever context this concept arises, students should be encouraged to work out for themselves – and for one another – which interpretations of freedom matter most to them, based on thinking carefully about what they have read or experienced.

One problem which has puzzled thinkers for thousands of years concerns an apparent clash between being free – in the sense of free to choose what to do or to do what one wants to do – and being part of a world in which everything – including us! – is determined (i.e. governed or controlled) by laws. In this case, such laws would be natural laws, not the ones society makes for its citizens. Intuitively, I am free to stop typing this right now, stand up and stretch; but how could such a spontaneous action be caused by anything outside of myself? In philosophical terms, this is the problem of Freedom versus Determinism. One way of dealing with it is to challenge the presumption that my free choices and decisions do not have causes and effects. Compare my choosing to stand up with a form of obsessive-compulsive behaviour which compels me to do so for no apparent reason. Which of these events would we describe as (more) free?



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## STORY

### 'The Dog and the Wolf' From Aesop's fables The Harvard Classics, 1909-14.

A GAUNT Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by.

"Ah, Cousin," said the Dog. "I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?" <sup>1</sup>

"I would have no objection," said the Wolf, "if I could only get a place." <sup>2</sup>

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the Dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work." <sup>3</sup>

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about. <sup>4</sup>

"Oh, it is nothing," said the Dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it." <sup>5</sup>

"Is that all?" said the Wolf. "Then good-bye to you, Master Dog."

"BETTER STARVE FREE THAN BE A FAT SLAVE."

In the story above, for instance, the wolf seems to suggest a bold claim about the concept of freedom: that it is better to be free and starving than enslaved and well fed. However, in response, someone might state that freedom is impossible without having one's basic needs for food met. This would be a conceptual statement because it does not rely solely upon information or facts but asks us to generalise when we consider the meaning of the term freedom. To examine this conceptual statement, we would need to define, or redefine, freedom.



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## Q4: WHAT ARE CONCEPT GAMES, AND HOW DO WE PLAY THEM?

How To Play A Basic Concept Game - A standard procedure. There are lots of variations!

### 1. CONTESTED CONCEPT

Decide on your contested concept, For example: **Freedom**

### 2. SET-UP

Set up the room so you have an area on the floor with a label indicating what each area represents. Often A4 cards are made with the category title. You can also use a hoola hoop to place the cards in.

For example:



The students should sit in a circle around the categories. It is important that every student can see each person in the group, as well as the three categories.

### 3. PROCEDURE

#### Part 1:

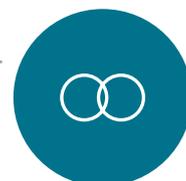
Begin by getting the students to write a **DEFINITION** of the contested concept.

*By thinking about a definition of a term, the students will have to consider a range of scenarios that relate to that concept. Often they will find it challenging to write a definition that fits with every scenario.*

- In small groups or individuals, students write down their definition of the concept
- As a class read out each definition and begin to write a **CRITERIA LIST** for that term
- If there are points in your criteria list that clash with one another, discuss to come to a resolution
- It is quite normal for your definition to change and evolve throughout the course of a lesson

#### Part 2:

- Get the students to return to their groups
- Each group is given a set of **EXAMPLES**. These may be words, pictures or scenarios.
- Students examine the examples one at a time, and decide which hoop they will place each example.
- An example cannot be placed without students identifying the **REASONS** they are placing it there.
- Nominate a scribe to keep a running list of these reasons.



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## Part 3:

- As a class come together go through each example
- Discuss any examples that are contested
- It is useful to write the students ideas on the board. This is important to give them a sense of purpose and progress
- While you are organising the reasons:
  - Eliminate repetitions
  - Identify contradictions
  - Seek out any necessary conditions (if appropriate)
  - Introduce the idea of sufficient conditions

## Part 4:

- Students revisit their original definition and edit as necessary
- Come together as a class and students share their new definitions
- Select 3 most comprehensive definitions

## Part 5:

- Always leave time at the end of your lesson for **REFLECTION**
- Students can reflect on what they have learned, clarified or discovered so far
- They can also reflect on their own thinking and contribution to the class

## Tips:

- Always ensure the students give reasons for their choices.
- Challenge the students to think of counter-examples that could show how an idea is incorrect.
- Try to combine multiple ideas into one unified concept, or show there are several different concepts in play.
- Write down student questions on the board. This provides a starting board for your next lesson.



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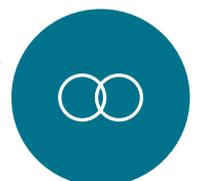
## Q5: WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO PLAY CONCEPT GAMES?

CATEGORY CARDS FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

**FREE**

**?**

**NOT FREE**



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CONCEPT CARDS FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

<b>How you move</b>	<b>Who your friends are</b>
<b>Who you meet with</b>	<b>What you eat</b>
<b>What you say</b>	<b>Where in the world you travel</b>
<b>How you express yourself</b>	<b>What you wear</b>
<b>Your opinions</b>	<b>access to information</b>
<b>What you believe</b>	<b>Where in the world you live</b>
<b>Who you hang out with</b>	<b>Whether you get married</b>
<b>Who you marry</b>	<b>What you read</b>



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## SCENARIO EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

Choosing whether to eat McDonalds or Hungry Jacks	Speaking or moving involuntarily (without wishing or intending to) for example in one's sleep or due to a seizure or condition
Writing racist views that stereotype another culture on Facebook and Twitter	Having input into or getting to choose one's punishment
Encouraging another person, or whole group of people, to commit a crime by speaking passionately about the need to stand up for freedom of expression at a protest rally	Spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to clone a beloved pet that has died
Being forced by the army to remain at home in your house for weeks on end because it is too dangerous outside	Having access to uncensored (up to date and not edited without acknowledgement or blocked) news journalism on the internet



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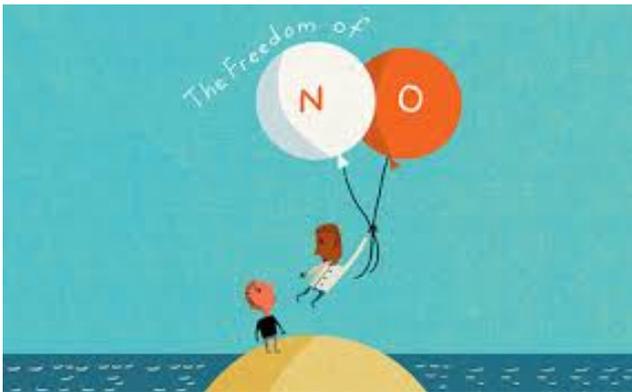
## SCENARIO EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME:

<p>Choosing whether to spend your last dollar on food or life-saving medical care</p>	<p>Being forced to stay in hospital if you are judged not well enough to leave even if you want to</p>
<p>Having your online activities tracked by advertisers so they can target advertisements to you directly</p>	<p>Having human rights recognized and protected by your government even in situations of war or emergency</p>



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## PICTURE EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME



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## PICTURE EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME



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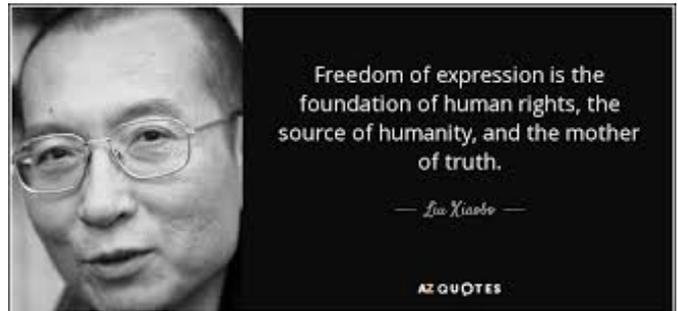
## MEME EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME



### Releasing Medical Record Information

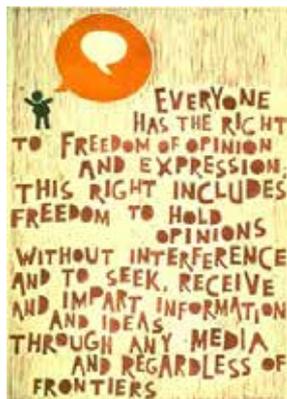
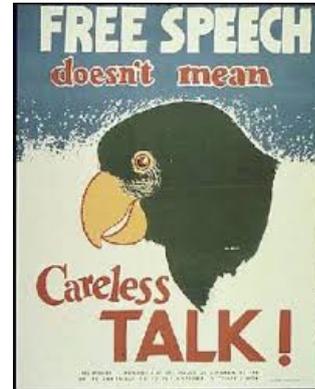
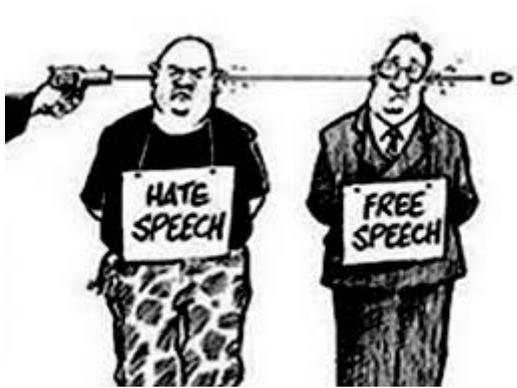
- Requests must be made in writing for release of records.
- Patients must sign an authorization for release of medical records.
- Patients can revoke previously signed authorizations for release of records.
- Release only records that are specified on the request.

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## PICTURE EXAMPLES FOR A CONCEPT GAME



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## Q6: WHAT ARE DISCUSSION PLANS AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

Following the structure of many of the discussion plans devised by Lipman and his colleagues in the p4c teacher resource manuals, the following questions reflect the shift from more “concrete” to more “abstract” thinking in relation to the concept of fairness.

In thinking about concepts and their meanings, students are encouraged to offer their own thoughts and opinions in response to questions or comments made by others. However, discussion is transformed into *inquiry* when and only when participants engage in such procedures as:

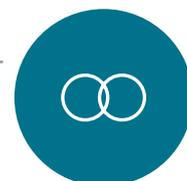
- Providing reasons and/or evidence (including examples and counter-examples) for their views;
- Building on one another’s ideas in the interest of developing a deeper understanding of the issues;
- Balancing a sense of passion for or commitment to their own ideas with an open-mindedness that allows them to rethink issues and change their minds when it is appropriate to do so;
- Showing a commitment to getting to the truth of things while being aware of questions and issues that remain unresolved.

One of the teacher’s key roles in guiding discussion and inquiry is to encourage all students to participate without fear of being judged as *wrong* or *stupid*, while modelling and encouraging the sense that good thinking matters whereas sloppy or careless thinking is to be avoided where possible. The point of working as a *community* of inquiry is to develop an understanding that the *ups* and *downs* that will inevitably occur over time (a breakthrough “Aha!” moment, or a discouraging dead-end, for example) are owned by the community as a whole – and, thereby, by each and every member – and not simply by individuals who have no connection with one another.

## DISCUSSION PLANS FOR FREEDOM

### 1) QUESTIONS

1. Is it possible that everyone could be free (or live freely)? What does this even mean?
2. Does freedom for some always mean a lack of freedom for others?
3. Would we be free if no one told us how to live?
4. Would we be free if we made up our own rules and lived by them?
5. Would we be free if we chose to accept the rules and laws of society that restrict our freedom?
6. If I think I am free, am I free?
7. Am I free to set my own rules about how to live my life (e.g. what time I go to bed and get up, how often I clean my room, what I eat, what I do with my smartphone, who my friends are, what I study at school or even if I go to school, etc.)? Should I be free to set these rules (or, perhaps, to have no such rules)?
8. Am I free to break the law or even a school rule if I didn’t agree with it?



# Freedom Toolkit



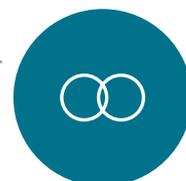
## 1) CLAIMS

Each student receives a card. One at a time, each student lays down a card on the floor.

- a) if it matches a claim student places card beside the match it beside it
- b) if is different to every claim so far placed on the floor, student places their card on its own
- c) if it contradicts a claim student places it at right angles

Each decision must be justified. Each decision may be challenged.

1. Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but having the right to do what we ought!
2. Freedom is being you without anyone's permission...
3. Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes  
– Mahatma Gandhi
4. Better to die fighting for freedom than be a prisoner all days of your life.
5. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves- Abraham Lincoln
6. Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better.
7. Freedom is never given; it is won.
8. True independence and freedom can only exist in doing what's right!
9. Freedom is that instance between when someone tells you to do something and when you decide how to respond.
10. Freedom lies in being Bold – Robert Frost
11. Freedom is the right to question and change the established way of doing things.
12. Freedom is not the liberty to do whatever one likes, but the power of doing whatever ought to be done...
13. In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess.
14. Freedom is just Chaos, with better lighting.
15. There can be no real freedom without the freedom to fail.
16. Freedom is the power to live as one wish.



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## Q7: WHAT FURTHER LINKS AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

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### PICTURE STORY BOOKS

#### **Dreams of Freedom**

This book is an inspiring collation of the powerful words of Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Anne Frank and Malala Yousafzai among many others. OXFAM

#### **Long Walk To Freedom**

By: Chris Van Wyk, Nelson Mandela, Paddy Bouma (Illustrator)

#### **A Walk in the Bush**

By Gwyn Perkins

#### **FREEDOM Short Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Amnesty International**

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom of expression is the right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers

#### **Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt**

by Deborah Hopkinson

An inspiring story about a young girl with hope, dreams, and a talent for sewing. Clara is driven by her desire to be reunited with her mother, who lives on another plantation, and lets her creativity create a freedom map that her master would never suspect. This story is beautifully inspiring and a great way for young kids to learn about the Underground Railroad.

#### **If You Lived When There Was Slavery in America**

by Anne Kamma

It's hard to imagine and even harder to explain to your kids. This book answers many questions that kids might have about slavery. Where did they come from? What did they do? Where did they live? Did they go to school? This book highlights important aspects of this time in American history that the textbook tends to leave out.

#### **Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman**

by Dorothy Sterling

This chapter book highlights the life and true story of the brave woman who crossed the Mason-Dixon Line 19 times to lead slaves to freedom. Though it may be a little longer than your kids' usual read, this book is enriched with tons of history.

#### **Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad**

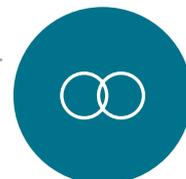
by Ellen Levine

The true story of a little boy who grows up a slave and dreams of freedom, until one day he takes matters into his own hands. Introduce your kids to the boy without a birthday and watch as their eyes open to history.

#### **Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom**

Carole Boston Weatherford

A kid-friendly book about the woman who earned the name Moses by leading people to freedom. A powerful message with wonderful illustrations that make it easier for your little ones to follow along.



# Freedom Toolkit



## Follow the Drinking Gourd

by Jeanette Winter

After learning a song about the drinking gourd (the Big Dipper), some slaves make their escape to freedom by following the song's directions. This book has bright illustrations and a story that will keep your kids interested. The picture book format makes it an easy read to educate your kiddos on an important topic. |

## Under the Quilt of Night

by Deborah Hopkinson

The sequel to *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, this book tells the story of a runaway slave girl who finds her way to freedom with the help of a quilt hanging outside a house. With the help of her family and other people she meets along the way, this brave young girl leads her family to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

## The Storyteller's Beads

by Jane Kurtz

This is a beautifully written story about two Ethiopian girls from very different backgrounds: Rahel is blind and from the Beta-Israel (Jewish) community; Sahay is an orphan and from the Kemant (Christian) community. The girls overcome their prejudices and learn to love and trust each other during their dangerous and difficult journey across Ethiopia and the Sudan.

## Black Radishes

by Susan Lynn Meyer

Gustave and his family are French Jews, living in Paris in 1940, until they are forced to flee to the unoccupied zone. With the help of the French Resistance and some black radishes that the German soldiers particularly enjoy, Gustave and his family eventually manage to escape to America. This book is best suited for middle grade readers, ages 10 and up.

## The Legend of Freedom Hill

by Linda Jacobs Altman

This award-winning historical fiction book follows two friends work together to earn the money to free the mother of one of the girls from a slave trader.

## Mrs. Kaputnik's Pool Hall and Matzo Ball Emporium

by Rona Arato

Ruth Kapustin and her children are living hand-to-mouth in a tiny Russian village as Papa Kapustin chases his fortune in America. When a mysterious peddler's egg hatches into a fire-breathing dragon their luck begins to change. The symbolism of Passover and freedom are major underlying themes: the family leaves the shtetl (small Jewish village) on Passover eve to journey to America where they can finally live freely.

### LINKS

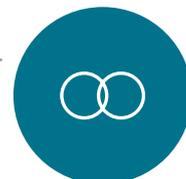
UNESCO Series on internet freedom

<https://en.unesco.org/unesco-series-on-internet-freedom>

### IAPC RESOURCES



Education  
and Training



# Freedom Toolkit



Lipman, M. and Sharp, A. (1977). *Ethical inquiry Instructional Manual to Accompany LISA*. 2nd ed. Upper Montclair, N.J.: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College  
ISBN-13: 978-0916834210

Lisa, a classmate of Harry Stottlemeier, experiences a range of physical, aesthetic and ethical awakenings as she puzzles over issues of animal rights, sexism, racism, justice, divorce and death with her classmates. As Lisa and her friends begin to recognize the ethical dimensions of their experience, they delve into the philosophical concepts as the right, the fair, the good, perfection, and naturalism. Lisa's struggles with identity and thinking for oneself leads her to recognize her interdependence with others and with nature. This novel explores the complexity of ethical concerns and the multiple capacities involved in making sound ethical judgments.

Grade Range: 7-12. Target Grades: 7-8



Discussion Plan: What does the word “freedom” mean .....	Page 63
Exercise: Fatalism .....	Page 142
Leading Idea No. 5: Determinism, Exercise: Determinism .....	Page 143
Leading Idea No. 6: Are we free .....	Page 144
Discussion Plan: What does the word “freedom” mean .....	Page 145
Exercise: Meaning of the word “free” .....	Page 146
Exercise: Freedom, Discussion Plan: Free Will .....	Page 147



# Freedom Toolkit



Lipman, M. and Sharp, A. (1980). *Social Inquiry: Instruction Manual to Accompany Mark*. 1st ed. Upper Montclair, N.J.: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College.  
ISBN-13: 978-0916834135

This instructional manual aims to support students' thinking skill development through the conceptual foundations of the social sciences. The various exercises and discussion plans aim to identify issues within the social sciences and expose to students to conflicting concepts at the heart of each issue. These various topics fit well within a social studies curriculum unit.



Leading Idea 6: What is it to be free?, Exercise: What is the free world? .....	Page 27
Exercise: Meanings of the word "free" .....	Page 28
Application Exercise: "Free", Discussion Plan: What does it mean to be free? .....	Page 29
Exercise: What is freedom? .....	Page 30
Leading Idea 1: Definitions of freedom .....	Page 319
Exercise: Two senses of freedom .....	Page 320
Leading Idea 2: Four possible combinations of freedom .....	Page 321
Leading Idea 4: Freedom as carrying out one's desires, Discussion Plan: Carrying out one's desires .....	Page 326
Leading Idea 5: How far can society go in interfering with the freedom of the individual? .....	Page 327
Exercise: Freedom, public opinion and the mass media .....	Page 329
Discussion plan: To what extent can society invade the freedom of the individual? .....	Page 331
Exercise: Rights not mentioned in the Bill of Rights .....	Page 366 Cont.
Exercise: Rights not mentioned in the Bill of Rights .....	Page 367
Leading Idea 14: Justice as providing the conditions of freedom .....	Page 388
Discussion Plan: Justice as the conditions of freedom .....	Page 389

