

Vegan Education in Schools

Ethics course

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 3: The role of veganism in ending animal exploitation:

Why incremental welfare reforms are inadequate and how abolitionist veganism rejects all forms of animal use.

Overview:

This lesson explores the principles of abolitionist veganism, focusing on its critique of incremental welfare reforms and its advocacy for the complete cessation of animal exploitation. Students will critically examine the limitations of welfare reforms and understand why abolitionist veganism calls for the immediate end of all forms of animal use.

Objectives:

- Understand the core principles of abolitionist veganism.
- Analyse the shortcomings of incremental animal welfare reforms.
- Evaluate ethical and practical arguments favouring abolition over regulation.
- Develop skills to articulate and defend the abolitionist perspective.

Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the fundamental principles of abolitionist veganism.
- Critically assess the effectiveness of welfare reforms in reducing animal exploitation.
- Articulate reasoned arguments supporting the abolitionist approach.
- Engage in informed discussions about ethical strategies in animal advocacy.

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Printed copies of selected readings
- Access to a computer and projector for video presentations
- Internet access for online resources

Lesson steps:

Introduction to abolitionist veganism:

- Begin with a brief overview of veganism and its various interpretations.
- Introduce abolitionist veganism as a perspective that seeks to end all forms of animal exploitation, rejecting incremental welfare reforms.
- Show the video [He Was an Anti-Racist Vegan Radical... in 1738](#) to provide historical context on early abolitionist values and animal advocacy.

Discussion on incremental welfare reforms:

- Define incremental welfare reforms and provide examples, such as larger cages, “humane” labels, ban live export campaign, or banning some farming tools.
- Facilitate a class discussion on whether these reforms truly reduce harm or maintain systems of exploitation.
- Show the documentary [Live and Let Live](#), which follows six people who gave up animal use and reflect on vegan ethics.

Critique of welfare reforms:

- Explore how welfare reforms often shift public attention away from the injustice of using animals at all.
- Discuss how they might comfort consumers instead of challenging speciesism.
- Screen [Life According to Ohad](#), a deeply personal documentary about an abolitionist vegan trying to live his values in a non-vegan world.

Exploring the abolitionist stance:

- Examine the ethical foundations of abolitionist veganism, such as the rights of sentient beings and the rejection of property status for animals.
- Invite students to reflect on whether they see animal use as something that can be improved or something that must end.
- Show excerpts from [Peaceable Kingdom: The Journey Home](#), which documents the transformation of former animal farmers into ethical vegans.

Case studies and real-world applications:

- Review examples of popular welfare reforms (e.g., cage-free eggs, RSPCA-approved meat) and discuss whether they reduce demand for animal-free alternatives.
- Contrast these with campaigns by abolitionist organisations like [Animal Liberation](#) and [Anonymous for the Voiceless](#), who promote total animal liberation and vegan education.

Interactive debate:

- Divide students into teams to debate: “**Is it more effective to reform animal industries or to reject them altogether?**”
- Encourage respectful dialogue supported by examples from videos, readings, and personal values.

Conclusion and reflection:

- Summarise the arguments made on both sides.
- Ask students to share how the lesson has impacted their understanding of animal rights and vegan advocacy.

Homework:

- Write a reflective essay titled “**The Role of Abolitionist Veganism in Ending Animal Exploitation**”, drawing from lesson resources and personal opinion.
- Optional: Include a call to action or a creative piece (poem, short story, visual art) expressing abolitionist values.

Differentiation:

- Provide vocabulary support or simplified summaries for students who need extra scaffolding.
- Offer enriched material (e.g. philosophy readings, current news articles) for advanced learners.
- Allow students to choose the medium for their final reflection: essay, presentation, artwork, or video blog.

Assessment criteria:

- **Understanding of concepts:** Demonstrates grasp of abolitionist and welfarist approaches.
- **Critical thinking:** Analyses and questions ethical frameworks in animal rights.
- **Communication:** Expresses ideas clearly, respectfully, and persuasively.
- **Engagement:** Participates actively in discussion, debate, and self-reflection.