

Vegan Education in Schools

Ethics course

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 4: Common myths about veganism: Debunking excuses like ‘humane slaughter’, ‘necessary for survival’, and ‘personal choice’.

Lesson overview:

This lesson critically examines prevalent myths surrounding veganism, focusing on misconceptions such as ‘humane slaughter’, the belief that consuming animal products is ‘necessary for survival’, and the notion that eating and using animals is merely a ‘personal choice’. By exploring these topics, students will gain a deeper understanding of abolitionist veganism, which advocates for the complete cessation of animal exploitation without compromise.

Objectives:

- Understand and articulate the core principles of abolitionist veganism
- Identify and critically analyse prevalent myths about veganism
- Evaluate and debunk arguments supporting ‘humane slaughter’, the necessity of animal products for survival, and the idea that consuming animals is purely a personal decision
- Develop skills to effectively communicate and defend the abolitionist vegan perspective

Outcomes:

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

- Explain the fundamental tenets of abolitionist veganism
- Debunk common misconceptions about veganism using evidence-based arguments
- Critically assess the ethical implications of ‘humane slaughter’ and the purported necessity of animal products
- Engage in informed discussions about the moral considerations of using animals for food

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 (with timings):

Introduction to common myths about veganism: (5 minutes)

- Brief overview of veganism and abolitionism
- Introduce the three myths: 'humane slaughter', 'necessary for survival', and 'personal choice'
- Emphasise that the lesson will be framed from an abolitionist vegan perspective

Debunking the myth of 'humane slaughter': (12-15 minutes)

- Define the term and discuss how it is used in marketing and public discourse
- Screen [Meet Your Meat](#) (12 minutes)
- Optionally include or reference:
 - ['Is HUMANE slaughter a myth?'](#) (4 mins)
 - ['Why Humane Meat Is a Myth' - TEDx](#) (10 mins - excerpt only if short on time)
- Facilitate 3-5 minute discussion about what students saw and whether they believe slaughter can ever be humane

Challenging the belief that animal products are 'necessary for survival': (8-10 minutes)

- Brief overview of human nutrition from a plant-based perspective
- Address myths around protein, B12, calcium, and iron
- Refer to the article [10 Myths About Veganism - INHABITAT](#)
- Encourage students to write down one nutritional myth they've heard and debunk it in pairs

Examining the notion of eating and using animals as a 'personal choice': (7-10 minutes)

- Explore the ethical implications of individual actions that impose harm on others
- Show or summarise key points from ['Speciesism, Capitalism, and the Misrepresentation of Animals' - Lisa Barca](#)
- Lead a structured discussion or mini debate on whether eating animals is really just a personal decision

Case studies and real-world applications: (5 minutes)

- Review labelling terms like 'humane', 'cage-free', 'RSPCA Approved'
- Read excerpts from ['Humane Meat' Is a Myth - PETA](#)
- Introduce the work of:
 - [Animal Liberation](#)
 - [Vegan Australia](#)
 - [International Vegan Association](#)

Interactive group activity: (10 minutes)

- Divide students into three groups; assign each group a myth
- Groups prepare a 2-minute summary to debunk their myth using evidence from the lesson
- Each group presents to the class; allow 1-2 follow-up questions per group

Conclusion and reflection: (3-5 minutes)

- Review the key lessons: animal use is not humane, necessary, or just a personal choice
- Ask students to share something new they learned or a perspective that changed
- Encourage students to continue exploring abolitionist perspectives outside of class

Homework:

- Write a reflective essay on one of the myths discussed
- Include at least two lesson sources and one independent source
- Create a list of other common myths
- Optional: Create a poster, infographic, or video version of your response

Differentiation:

- Provide sentence starters, vocabulary lists, or guided questions
- Allow different project formats (oral, written, visual)
- Share bonus content for advanced students:
 - [Abolitionist Veganism - HowDoIgoVegan](#)
 - [Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach](#)

Assessment criteria:

- **Understanding of concepts:** Student demonstrates a solid understanding of the abolitionist vegan framework
- **Critical thinking:** Student can identify flaws in common arguments and challenge them logically
- **Communication:** Student expresses ideas clearly in discussion and/or writing
- **Engagement:** Student participates in group work, debate, and shows curiosity