

Vegan Education in Schools

Case study of speciesism

Questioning meat - ethics, justice and the future

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 1: The unethical treatment of animals in the meat industry

Overview: This lesson provides an in-depth examination of the systemic violation of the rights of animals within the meat industry. Students will explore the realities of slaughterhouse brutality, the conditions of both industrialised and 'free-range' animal agriculture, transportation horrors and the deception behind 'humane' labels. Through multimedia resources, discussions critical analysis, students will gain a deeper understanding of why animal agriculture must be abolished.

Objective: Expose the extreme suffering of the animals in the meat industry and the violation of their rights to life, body and freedom, reinforcing why all forms of animal use must be abolished.

Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe the brutal treatment of animals in the meat industry.
- Students will critically analyse the industry's deception in marketing humane labels.
- Students will understand the ethical arguments against animal agriculture and why abolition, not welfare, is necessary.
- Students will be able to articulate the physical and psychological suffering experienced by animals in slaughterhouses, industrialised and 'free-range' animal farms and during transportation.

Materials:

- Videos:
 - [RAW Footage of RSPCA Assured Slaughterhouses](#) - Animal Rising
 - [Widespread cruelty in Tasmanian slaughterhouses](#) - Animals Australia
 - [The Completely Illegal Slaughter Of Animals | Snowtown](#) - Farm Transparency Project
 - [Exposing Australia's live export shame | 7.30](#) - ABC News In-depth
 - [What REALLY happens on live export ships?](#) - Animals Australia

- Articles:
 - [Undercover investigations captured more animal suffering](#) - Animals Australia
 - [Intensive animal farming](#) - Wikipedia article
 - [Suffering of gassed pigs laid bare](#) - The Guardian
 - [Investigations expose horrors of global live export trade](#) - Animals Australia
- Case studies: Real-life accounts of slaughterhouse workers and undercover investigators:
 - **Video:** [Slaughterhouse workers confess on camera | Nowhere to Run](#) - Earthling Ed
 - **Article:** [Confessions of a slaughterhouse worker](#) - BBC
 - **Article:** [I Worked Undercover Inside a Slaughterhouse](#) - The Doe
 - Statistics on death rates during transport and failed stunning procedures - **Article:** [long distance transport and welfare of farm animals](#) - Handle With Care
- Handouts and extra videos: Ethical arguments for abolition versus welfare reforms -
 - Article: [Blurry Lines? Animal Welfare, Animal Rights, and Abolition](#) The Animal Turn
 - **Article:** [The Abolitionist Approach and Farm Sanctuary Discuss “Happy Meat,” Abolition, and Welfare Reform](#) - Animal Rights - The Abolitionist Approach
- List of deceptive terms used in humane washing -
 - **Article:** [Is Humane Washing of Meat and Poultry False Advertising?](#) - The Langel Firm
 - **Video:** [Greenwashing? It's time to talk about humane washing](#) - Earthling Ed
 - **Video:** [How the Meat Industry Uses 'Humane Washing' Terms](#) - Now This Impact

Lesson steps:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Ask students what they think happens in a slaughterhouse.
- Discuss common misconceptions about humane slaughter.
- Introduce the lesson's key focus: exposing the real suffering behind the industry's claims.

2. Slaughterhouse brutality (20 minutes):

- Show undercover footage from slaughterhouses ([RAW Footage of RSPCA Assured Slaughterhouses](#), [The Completely Illegal Slaughter Of Animals | Snowtown](#)).
- Explain the failures in stunning methods, which result in animals being skinned, boiled or dismembered alive.
- Discuss eyewitness testimonies from workers describing the horrors of the kill line. ([Slaughterhouse workers confess on camera | Nowhere to Run](#))

3. Industrialised and 'free-range' animal farming conditions (15 minutes): Article - [Intensive animal farming](#)

- Present statistics on intensive farming: overcrowding, disease psychological stress.
- Show images and discuss the confinement of pigs, chickens cows.
- Explain how animals develop injuries, infections mental distress due to unnatural conditions.
- Explain that in Australia the majority of farmed animals are in intensive production systems.
- Explain that rights violations experienced on small-scale animal farms are similar to intensive systems.

4. Transportation horror (15 minutes):

- Explain how animals endure long journeys without food, water or rest.
- Share case studies of animals who died from injuries, dehydration or heat stress during live transport.
- Discuss Australia's live export industry and the suffering it inflicts on animals ([Investigations expose horrors of global live export trade, What REALLY happens on live export ships?](#)).

5. Deception of humane labels (20 minutes):

- Compare industry marketing (pastoral farm images) with reality (industrialised and 'free-range' animal farms, slaughterhouses).
- Discuss phrases like "free-range", "grass-fed" and "humanely raised" and their misleading nature.
- Use case studies of companies caught misleading consumers.

6. Class discussion (10 minutes):

- Ask students how this new information changes their perspective.
- Discuss why abolition is necessary instead of small reforms.
- Brainstorm ways the public can fight back against humane-washing propaganda.

Homework:

- Write a short reflection (300-500 words) on how humane labels deceive consumers and why abolition is necessary instead of reforms.
- Research an alternative industry (e.g., vegan food production) and compare its ethical standards to animal agriculture.
- Find and bring an example of an advertisement from the meat industry that uses deceptive messaging.

Differentiation:

- For students who may struggle with graphic content, provide written testimonies instead of videos.
- Offer an option to read articles and summarise key points instead of watching footage.
- Encourage advanced students to research additional sources and prepare a short presentation on a related topic.
- Provide guided questions for students who need extra support in structuring their reflections.

Assessment criteria:

- Participation in discussions and ability to articulate key ethical concerns.
- Depth of analysis in the reflection piece, particularly in identifying industry deception.
- Engagement with research on alternative industries.
- Critical thinking demonstrated in homework assignments and class debates.