

Vegan Education in Schools

Case study of speciesism

Questioning meat - ethics, justice and the future

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 4: The hidden byproducts of the meat industry and their consequences

Overview: This lesson exposes how the animal agriculture industry profits from hidden byproducts, many of which are used in everyday items without consumer awareness. Students will examine the range of products derived from slaughtered animals, including leather, gelatin, blood meal and rendering products. The lesson will also explore the environmental and ethical implications of using animal byproducts and discuss alternatives that eliminate the need for animal exploitation.

Objective: Reveal how the meat industry profits from byproducts and how these products are hidden in everyday items, reinforcing why abolition is necessary to end all forms of animal exploitation.

Outcomes:

- Students will identify and analyse various animal byproducts used in food, cosmetics and industrial goods.
- Students will evaluate the environmental and ethical consequences of using animal-derived ingredients.
- Students will investigate alternatives to animal byproducts and their viability in a post-animal agriculture society.
- Students will develop strategies to educate others about the hidden presence of animal byproducts in consumer goods.

Materials:

- Videos:
 - [What's really in your food? The hidden animal ingredients](#) - BBC Earth Explore
 - [Surprising Animal and Insect Ingredients in Your Food!](#) - SimplifySphere
 - [6 Things You Use Every Day That are Made From Animals](#) - Animalist
- Articles:
 - [Animal-Derived Ingredients List](#) - PETA
 - [Animal-derived ingredients list](#) - Animal Liberation

- [How animal byproducts are hidden in everyday items](#) - Four Paws
- [Animal Rendering](#) - Animal Place
- Case studies:
 - Leather and its connection to the meat industry - [Leather Is a Coproduct - Not a Byproduct](#) - PETA
 - Video - [This Is Where Gelatin Comes From](#) - Mercy for Animals
 - [Rendering investigation](#) - Last Chance For Animals
- Handouts:
 - Infographic on animal byproducts and their hidden presence in everyday items
 - List of vegan and synthetic alternatives to animal byproducts

Lesson steps:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Ask students: “Do you think you consume animal products outside of food?”
- Discuss common misconceptions about where animal ingredients are found.
- Introduce the concept of rendering and how the meat industry profits from every body part.

2. The role of the 'rendering' industry (20 minutes):

- Read articles about rendering ([Animal Rendering](#), [Rendering investigation](#))
- Discuss how the meat industry profits from body parts that are not sold as meat.
- Explore how rendering plants process bones, blood and fat into other products.

3. Common animal byproducts and where they are found (20 minutes):

- Present a breakdown of common animal byproducts, including gelatin, bone char, lanolin and carmine.
- Show an infographic highlighting where these ingredients are used (e.g., food, shampoo, medicine, paint, tyres).
- Discuss how companies obscure the origins of these ingredients through misleading labelling.

4. Environmental impact of byproducts (15 minutes):

- Explain how the production of leather, gelatin and rendered products contributes to pollution and deforestation.
- Compare the sustainability of synthetic vs animal-derived materials.
- Case study: The toxic waste produced by tanneries and its effect on local communities.

5. Ethical concerns of animal byproducts (15 minutes):

- Discuss how using byproducts perpetuates the demand for slaughter.
- Examine consumer complicity in unknowingly supporting animal industries.
- Debate whether industries that claim to use “waste products” are still accountable for animal exploitation.

6. Exploring alternatives (15 minutes):

- Introduce vegan and synthetic alternatives to leather, gelatin and other animal byproducts.
- Showcase studies of companies moving away from animal-based ingredients.
- Discuss how public awareness campaigns have pushed brands to adopt vegan alternatives.

7. Class discussion and reflection (10 minutes):

- Ask students: “How can we reduce our reliance on animal byproducts?”
- Discuss how companies should be held accountable for their sourcing of ingredients.
- Brainstorm ways to educate the public on avoiding hidden animal products.

Homework:

- Write a 500-word essay on how animal byproducts support the meat industry and why abolishing it is the only ethical solution.
- Research a company that has replaced animal-derived ingredients with vegan alternatives and analyse its impact.
- Identify and list at least five everyday items that contain animal byproducts and suggest vegan alternatives.

Differentiation:

- Provide a simplified list of animal byproducts for students needing additional support.
- Allow students to create a visual infographic instead of writing an essay.
- Encourage advanced students to research legislative efforts to ban certain animal byproducts.
- Use guided discussion questions to help students struggling with complex ethical debates.

Assessment criteria:

- Participation in discussions and ability to articulate the hidden presence of animal byproducts.
- Depth of research and analysis in homework assignments.
- Engagement with solutions for eliminating animal byproducts from consumer goods.
- Critical thinking demonstrated in class debates and presentations.