

Vegan Education in Schools

Case study of speciesism

Questioning pork - ethics, justice and the future

Years 7 to 12

Lesson 3: Growing up in confinement - The reality of pig farming in Australia

Overview: This lesson exposes the bleak realities faced by pigs as they grow up in a typical Australian pig farm. Students will investigate the daily life of pigs confined indoors, focusing on overcrowding, barren environments, lack of stimulation, deprivation of natural behaviours and the psychological and physical suffering that results. This lesson emphasises an abolitionist vegan framework and challenges the myth of “high welfare” farming.

Objectives:

- To reveal the conditions in the most common pig farming system in Australia
- To explore the emotional, psychological and physical impacts of confinement
- To challenge industry claims about welfare standards
- To empower students to critically analyse speciesist systems through an abolitionist vegan lens

Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Describe the standard conditions faced by pigs in Australian piggeries
- Identify the psychological and physical suffering caused by confinement
- Critique industry claims of “humane” or “high welfare” farming
- Apply an abolitionist vegan perspective to the issue of confinement

Materials:

- Video: "[120 Days inside one of Germany's largest pig farms](#)" (Animal Equality)
- Video: "[Van der Drift & Sons, Macorna | Vic Pigs 2025](#)" (Farm Transparency Project)
- Article: "[Pigs Suffering in Factory Farming](#)" (Four Paws)
- Whiteboard or digital board
- Student notebooks or digital devices

Lesson steps:

Introduction (10 minutes):

1. Begin by asking: "What do you think life is like for pigs after they survive early mutilations?"
2. Record student responses.
3. Explain that today's lesson will examine the reality of pigs growing up inside a typical Australian pig farm.

Activity 1: Witnessing confinement (20 minutes):

1. Watch "[120 Days inside one of Germany's largest pig farms](#)" (7 minutes).
2. Pause for short reflections midway.
3. Facilitate class discussion:
 - What emotions did you feel while watching?
 - What stood out about the conditions you saw?

Activity 2: Breaking the humane myth (20 minutes):

1. Watch [Van der Drift & Sons, Macorna | Vic Pigs 2025](#) (6 minutes).
2. Students discuss in pairs:
 - What language does the industry use to promote these farms?
 - Why are those claims misleading or false?

Activity 3: Deep dive analysis (25 minutes):

1. Read sections from "[Pigs Suffering in Factory Farming](#)" article.
2. Students work in small groups to answer:
 - What are pigs denied in Australian farms?
 - How do these conditions violate pigs' natural behaviours and needs?
 - How does speciesism allow society to accept this?
3. Groups present their findings.

Activity 4: Abolitionist visioning (10 minutes):

1. Students reflect individually:
 - What would life look like for pigs if humans stopped farming them?

2. Students write or draw their vision of a world where pigs are free.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

1. Recap key learning points.
2. Reinforce that the only ethical option is to stop using pigs entirely.
3. Preview next lesson on the horrors of slaughter.

Homework: Students write a 250-word reflection on why the notion of “humane” pig farming is fundamentally false and how they can challenge it when they encounter it in society.

Differentiation:

- Provide video transcripts or still images for students sensitive to video footage.
- Allow students to create a visual or artistic response instead of a written reflection.
- Offer extra readings or documentaries for students seeking deeper research.

Assessment criteria:

- Participation in discussions and group work
- Critical analysis of industry narratives
- Depth of reflection on the ethics of confinement
- Ability to apply an abolitionist vegan perspective clearly and consistently

