



Introductory note for parents and carers

Welcome to Primary Ethics Bites! This **Bite** takes around 15 minutes to complete, but you may find the ideas within are revisited in conversations around the dinner table for weeks to come.

This **Bite** is available in both audio and printed (PDF) formats. The same content is covered in each, so simply choose the option that best suits your student's learning environment. There's no need to read along or use the PDF as a worksheet if you choose to use the audio version.

If an adult is not available to assist, we recommend downloading the audio version as the stories and questions are read to the student for them. It's best if the recording can be paused during the 'thinking time' to allow the student to work through the questions at their own pace.

Bites for the K – 2 age group are designed for students to tackle individually, with one or more siblings or peers, and/or with the assistance of an adult. The adult's role is to read the stories and questions (if using the PDF), model genuine curiosity and to support the student to think for themselves.

Aim to be neutral when listening to the ideas expressed by your student and ask them to give the reasons behind their opinion rather than try to do the thinking and reasoning for them. Encourage the student to talk through their ideas by using expressions like 'Ok', 'Hmmm, I wonder...' and 'that's an interesting thought!'

There is often not a single right answer when it comes to ethical dilemmas. In that way, ethics is different to other lessons like maths. Instead, what ethical inquiry helps us do is to look at a situation or idea from different points of view, and to think about the reasons *behind* those points of view. When we do this, we think more deeply about our own views, discover new ideas, and build a deeper understanding of the considerations in each dilemma. We develop our skills in critical thinking and ethical reasoning and our ability to make well-thought-out decisions in a range of circumstances.

Should we blame the donkey?

Objectives/ethical concepts explored

- Considering the difference between meaning or intending to cause harm and causing harm 'accidentally' or without wanting to.
- Whether side effects, such as harmful side effects, sometimes result from our own carelessness or thoughtlessness.

Skills developed

- Listening
- Inferring
- Giving reasons

Essential questions

- Is it fair to punish someone if they caused harm accidentally?
- Is it fair to punish someone if it was an accident, but they should have been more careful or thoughtful?

In this topic we encourage students to think for themselves about the difference between meaning or intending to cause harm and causing harm accidentally. Are intentions the only things that count? Some philosophers argue they are. Other philosophers disagree, arguing that other factors – consequences for example – also need to be taken into account.

Bites are based on Primary Ethics lessons developed for use by trained adult volunteer facilitators in NSW public schools. Our lessons are based on philosophical ethics and use a 'community of inquiry' approach – the *asking power* of the group – to work together in discussion. The community of inquiry approach provides students with the opportunity to reflect on and form their own responses and consider the ideas of others in a safe and supportive environment.

You can read more about the community of inquiry approach here: <https://primaryethics.com.au/about-ethics-classes/what-happens-in-an-ethics-class/>

And watch this video for a great explanation of philosophical ethics: <https://vimeo.com/199903>