

Circle of Viewpoints



The Routine

1. Brainstorm a list of difference perspectives.
2. Choose one perspective to explore, using these sentence-starters:
 - I am thinking of ... *the topic* ... from the viewpoint of ... *the viewpoint you've chosen*
 - I think ... *describe the topic from your viewpoint. Be an actor—take on the character of your viewpoint*
 - A question I have from this viewpoint is ... *ask a question from this viewpoint*

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students see and explore multiple perspectives. It helps them understand that different people can have different kinds of connections to the same thing, and that these different connections influence what people see and think.

Application: When and where can it be used?

The routine works well with topics and artworks that deal with complex issues. It also works well when students are having a hard time seeing other perspectives or when things seem like there are only two sides to an issue. The routine can be used to open discussions about dilemmas and other controversial issues.

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https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Circle%20of%20Viewpoints_0.pdf

Picture of Practice

I have used this routine in different curricular areas to explore different perspectives. In ‘The Firework Makers Daughter’ I used it to look at how the main characters feel about the Firework competition. Using ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’ as a stimulus, we have explored how the characters felt as they began to tour the chocolate factory and some of the children start to misbehave. I have used the routine for Religious Studies, exploring the different perspectives in the story ‘The Good Samaritan’.

Tips

- Start small - scaffold understanding by discussing and completing one perspective at a time.
- Allow lots of time for discussion.
- Think about the type of thinking you want to record and why you want to record it. – Assessment purposes, to plan next learning, gain a greater understanding of individuals’ thinking.
- Think about how you want to record the thinking – wheel, Post-It notes, teacher written overview.