

# The Character Curriculum

Flourishing for Life



<p><b>KS3 Virtue Toolkit</b> L2 – What is the ‘good life’?</p>	<p><b>Learning objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand Aristotle’s conception of a ‘good life’.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key vocabulary:</b> Good life, wealth, power, fame, purpose, character, virtue, emulate</p> <p><b>Key virtues:</b> <b>Curiosity, critical thinking</b></p>
<p><b>Resources:</b> PowerPoint presentation Resource sheet Song lyrics</p>		
<p><b>Key questions:</b></p> <p>What does the ‘good life’ look like for you?</p> <p>What are common ideas of the ‘good life’?</p> <p>How might your idea of the ‘good life’/meaning of life affect how you act?</p> <p>What did Aristotle believe about the purpose of life? Do you agree?</p> <p>What does the word ‘character’ mean?</p> <p>What are the traits of a good character?</p>	<p><b>Learning activities:</b></p> <p><b>Starter:</b></p> <p>Ask students a series of questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is a ‘good life’?</li> <li>- What makes you happy?</li> <li>- What is the main aim of life?</li> <li>- What do people live for?</li> </ul> <p>Take class feedback and discuss the issues. Ask students to describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Someone from their lives who they think lives a good life</li> <li>- What things about that person do they like?</li> <li>- Which features of their life would they like to emulate?</li> </ul> <p>Students discuss in pairs or small groups and feedback to the class.</p> <p><b>Activity 1:</b> Journal entry</p> <p>Students write a journal entry answering the questions above and describing the kind of person that they would like to become.</p>	

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<p>Does everyone agree on the traits which make up a good character?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Which values would they emphasise?</li><li>- Why are these the most important?</li></ul>
<p>Is it possible to develop virtues?</p>	<p><b>Activity 2:</b> The meaning of life</p> <p>Use the different philosophies about the meaning of life to have a discussion with students.</p>
<p>How can we develop virtues?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Which of the definitions do they most relate to?</li><li>- Do they think any are preferable to living a well-lived life? Why?</li></ul>
	<p>They can attach the names (hedonism, materialism, nihilism...)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How will this affect how people live their lives?</li><li>- How will it affect the choices that they make?</li></ul>
	<p>For example, if the purpose of our lives is to get rich, what choices might someone make?</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What type of person might they become?</li><li>- Are there any examples of the 'good life' not covered here? What might they be?</li></ul>
	<p>Discuss with students Aristotle's view on the 'good life'.</p>
	<p>Aristotle has his own views on this very question. Here are his thoughts on some of the various kinds of life on offer:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>To the life organised around the pursuit of pleasure (Hedonism):</b> Aristotle queries: But, does this sort of life really give full exercise to all of our distinctively human capacities? What about the role of reason, or thinking?</li><li>- <b>To the life organised around the pursuit of wealth and accumulation of things (Materialism):</b> Aristotle queries: But for what purpose? Surely the purpose that you want money for is what you really want? Do you want it for security, for power, or to buy the things that give you pleasure? Or something else?</li><li>- <b>To the life shaped around the quest for status and respect (Egoism):</b> Aristotle queries: But by whom do you want to be respected, and why is their view so important to you? And what will become of your life, when the very people who now give you applause, go on to condemn you – people, after all, are fickle, are they not...? And what will you do to persuade others to give you this applause or honour – you must rely upon them giving it, and those that give it, can just as easily take it away...What are the sorts of things that you wish to be respected for? Are they the sorts of things that are really worthwhile?</li></ul>

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- **To the life organised around how to live out morally virtuous activities (Eudaimonia):** Virtue ethics is person- rather than action-based: it looks at the virtue or moral character of the person carrying out an action, rather than at ethical duties and rules, or the consequences of particular actions. Virtue ethics not only deals with the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of individual actions, it provides guidance as to the sorts of characteristics and behaviours a good person will seek to achieve.

### Activity 3: Video

Watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra1Dmz-5HjU&t=248s> [available 05/20] ('What is a good life? – Crash Course Philosophy).

- Is this a helpful overview of the different positions?
- What do you think of Aristotle's idea of 'eudaimonia' (happiness/flourishing)?

### Activity 4: Songs

In 1965 Lennon and McCartney wrote a song called 'In My Life', performed by The Beatles. Listen to the song – how does their song answer the question 'what is the good life?'

How does Frank Sinatra answer the same question in his song, 'My Way'?

Compare the content of these two songs with each other. Who came closer to setting out the most attractive version of the 'good life' on this evidence, The Beatles or Frank Sinatra? What would Aristotle make of:

- The Beatles' 'In My Life'?
- Frank Sinatra's 'My Way'?
- Would either of these line up with his understanding of the 'good life'?

### Plenary:

Read Aristotle's definition of eudaimonia.

- Do you think it is possible to become more courageous, kind, generous, etc.?
- How do you think you can develop these virtues?