

# EPISTEMOLOGY LESSON PLAN

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## Preliminaries

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**Total Time:** 35 minutes

**Ages:** 6-7 years old (first graders)

**Materials for Students:** paper, crayons/markers

**Materials for Instructors:** *Frog and Toad Together*

**Learning Objectives:** Introduce students to the study of philosophy (to reinforce). Introduce students to the study of epistemology. Discuss how we form beliefs and how we justify them. Explore what it means for something to be “real.” Discuss how (or if) we can distinguish between dreams and reality.

## Introduction

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5 min

**Personal Introduction:** My name is Iman. My name is Monika. We are college students at Tufts University, and we study philosophy.

**Ask students what they remember about philosophy. Ask students to give examples of open and closed questions.**

**Introduction to Philosophy:** What is philosophy? (Write out the word on big paper.) Talk about the difference between closed questions (What time is it?) and open questions (What is time?). [Other examples: What is friendship? What is love? What is happiness?] Philosophers wrestle with open questions that have no settled answers. Philosophers have different opinions about how to answer these questions. They give *reasons* to support their points of view. Emphasize “I agree because...”/ “I disagree because...” language. Give example (using this language) or ask students to give example.

Anyone can be a philosopher! Today, we will be doing philosophy, and more specifically, epistemology.

**Introduction to Epistemology:** Epistemology is the study of how we know things and why we know them.

What is the difference between an opinion and knowledge? What does it mean to have knowledge? What does it mean for a belief to *not* be knowledge? How can we prove that we know things? What are some things that you *know*? [Challenge this knowledge; provide counterexamples.] What are some things that you don't know? What are some things that no one knows?

***Frog and Toad Together, "The Dream"***

**15 min**

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**Read "The Dream" in *Frog and Toad Together* (approx. 5 min). Follow with discussion.**

**Discussion Questions:** What happens in Toad's dream? What happened to Frog in Toad's dream? What things did Toad do in his dream that he couldn't do in real life? What/who is the "voice" that talks to Toad during his dream? Why does Toad get scared during his dream? What happens when Toad wakes up? How does Toad know that he's no longer dreaming? *Does Toad know that he's no longer dreaming?*

**Drawing Activity**

**15 min**

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**Have students draw one of their dreams (approx. 5-8 minutes). Follow with discussion.**

**Discussion Questions:** What happened in your dream? Can those things happen in real life? Is what happens in our dreams "real"? How do we know? How do we know when we're dreaming, and when we're not? How do you know that you're not dreaming right now?