

Philosophy for Children Alberta

Senior High School Learning Outcomes

GRADES
10 11 12

Overview

The Alberta Education curriculum requires students to develop specific critical thinking skills within each subject area and competence in generalizing beyond the specifics of the classroom. Students are also expected to share ideas constructively and collaborate to solve problems. The focus of each novel in this series—reasoning in ethics (*Lisa*), reasoning in language arts (*Suki*), and reasoning in social studies (*Mark*)—will challenge students to reflect deeply and critically on their own thoughts, values, and behaviours. The formation of a community of inquiry benefits students in this grade range by challenging them to clearly articulate the complex range of ideas that the novels will bring to their attention.



LISA is the story of a school year in the life of a young girl and her classmates, a year studded with physical, aesthetic and ethical awakenings. Various events in these young people's lives prompt them to puzzle over such issues as animal rights, sexism, racism, justice, divorce and death. All of them struggle with issues of identity and thinking for oneself - philosophical issues of perennial concern to adolescents. As they begin to recognize the ethical dimensions of their experience, Lisa and her friends puzzle over such philosophical concepts as the right, the fair, the good, perfection, and naturalism. In so doing, they become aware of their interdependence with one another and with nature, and begin to appreciate the complexity of ethical concerns and the multiple capacities involved in making sound ethical judgments.

Grade Range: 7-10; **Target Grades: 7-8**



SUKI is the story of a coming together of two worldviews: one that focuses on the poetry of things and one that focuses on the logic of things. Suki, a young adolescent, loves poetry and its world of metaphor. Her friend Harry hates literature class and the idea of writing poetry frightens him. Their worldviews begin to converge as the two come to see logic and poetry as two ways of finding meaning in life experience, though not before they have confronted a number of problems of language, knowledge and aesthetics. As Suki, Harry and their classmates work through the obstacles they encounter in creative writing, they construct new understandings of concepts like friendship, freedom, integrity, adventure, experience, originality, harmony, form, balance, personhood and meaning. And as they begin to express their insights in creative productions, the students come to realize that these concepts are equally relevant to their most important creative project: living well.

Grade Range: 8-11; **Target Grades: 9-10**



MARK is arrested at the scene of a high school vandalism. He claims he is a “victim of society.” But what is society? What forces hold it together or work to pull it apart? These are questions to which Mark and his classmates address themselves. What they seek are ways of evaluating social institutions, rules and values, so as to determine how well society is able to live up to the ideals which, at one time or another, have been set for it. They pay particular attention to the nature of law and crime, tradition, bureaucracy, and to the problems of authority, responsibility and force. But the most important considerations they take up have to do with democracy, freedom and justice.

Grade Range: 9-12; **Target Grades: 11-12**

Alberta Learning Outcomes

Sample P4C Curriculum Connections

Subject Areas

English Language Arts

Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- *Mark* presents relevant issues like freedom, democracy, force, and the law in a way that engages students intellectually and emotionally.

Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication

- A major theme in *Suki* is writing as a form of artistic self-expression, prompting the question, “What makes a piece of writing good?”

Respect, support and collaborate with others

- *Lisa* exposes students to different styles of thinking which they must examine as a group in a constructive fashion.

Science & Mathematics

Analyzing & Interpreting

- *Suki* exposes the complex interaction of personal opinion, belief, experience, perspective and evidence when reaching conclusions.

Communication & Teamwork

- The community of inquiry models an ideal investigative community.
- *Lisa* places special emphasis on the value of collaborative reasoning.

Statistics & Probability

- *Mark* raises social justice issues that should be used as prompts to encourage meaningful data collection and statistical analysis by students.

Social Studies

Values & Attitudes

- Our relationships to animals, authority, and our own selves are recurring themes in *Lisa*.
- *Mark* explores the ways we reinforce or undermine social institutions.

Knowledge & Understanding

- World views, national differences, cultural knowledge and critical assessments of their justifications are discussed in *Lisa*, *Suki*, and *Mark*.
- A major theme in *Suki* is reconciling aesthetic reasoning with logical reasoning.

Information & Communication Technology

Communicating, Inquiring, and Problem Solving

- Each novel presents the students with a opportunity to practice and evaluate a variety of methods for investigating difficult questions.

Processes for Productivity

- A system for organizing discussion and investigation is modelled and practiced in every Philosophy Session through the community of inquiry.

Health & Life Skills

Relationship Choices

- *Mark* presents many opportunities to examine love and heartbreak.
- *Lisa* contrasts both reciprocal and non-reciprocal relationships.

Life Learning Choices

- The novels present realistic life choices, creating a natural opportunity for discussions related to effective and practical decision making.

Ethics

Values of Different Cultural Groups

- *Suki* explicitly presents geographic and intergenerational divides amongst the characters to prompt related discussions.

Decision Making Skills

- Personal moral choices, challenges in making them, and consequences of making them are explored in detail throughout *Lisa*.

Responsibility to Community

- *Mark* continually returns to such important community relevant ideas as obligations, responsibilities, rights and privileges.

