



animals,  
climate and  
civic education

**Training for teachers**  
**Module 2**  
**Animal ethics and self-reflection**

# Imprint

Authors of original German text: Mensch Tier Bildung e.V. with input from the project partners

Editor of original German text: Ann-Marie Orf

Translated into English using machine translation tool DeepL.com, reworked by Rhiannon Westphal

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## Module 2: Animal ethics and self-reflection

**Total duration: 4 hours, 15 min.**

**Learning objectives for the module:**

1. Participants understand different ethical positions in relation to animals (especially animal welfare, animal rights and animal liberation)
2. Participants reflect on their own point of view
3. Participants understand and reflect on background conditions and causes for the current treatment of animals and various approaches to solutions
4. Participants reflect on what needs to change, what societal changes are needed for that, and what they can personally change.
5. Participants know methods they can use in lessons on this topic

All materials for this module are available at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/alice-modul-2-en>

### Part 1: What do we mean by ethics and animal ethics?

#### Learning objectives

- Participants have an overview of the various areas of human activity that impact on animals
- Participants have a common understanding of the terms ethics, morality and animal ethics

#### Time

20 minutes

#### Materials

- Presentation "What do we mean by ethics and animal ethics?" with script
- Presentation "Historical-ethical consideration of human-animal relationships" with script

## Description

### 1. Collect areas of human activity with an impact on animals - 10 minutes

The participants think of areas of human activity that have an impact on animals. They have two minutes to think on their own, then the suggestions are collected on the whiteboard and categorised.

Possible categorisation:

- Food production
- Animal testing
- Fur farming
- Circus and zoo
- Keeping pets
- Effects on wild animals (e.g. hunting, species protection)

The facilitator then explains that animal ethics covers all these areas.

### 2. Question and answer session followed by a short presentation "What do we mean by ethics and animal ethics?" - 5 minutes

In this presentation, the two terms ethics and animal ethics are explained. At the beginning of the presentation, the participants have two minutes to discuss in pairs what they understand by the term ethics. They then share their answers. The slides are then used to create a common understanding of the term ethics and, in contrast, the term morality and the term animal ethics.

### 3. Short presentation on the historical and ethical consideration of human-animal relationships - 5 minutes

A short presentation will give participants an overview of the historical-ethical consideration of human-animal relationships. It will become clear that over the course of time, many people have wondered what we can and cannot do with animals.

## Part 2: Spectrum line on animal ethics positions

### Learning objectives

- Participants are aware of their own position
- Participants understand different positions within the field of animal ethics (especially anthropocentrism, animal welfare, animal rights and animal liberation)

## Time

30 minutes

## Materials

- Sufficient space in the room
- Presentation with statements
- Statements printed out on DIN A4 sheets
- 1 slip of paper labelled "I agree" and 1 slip of paper labelled "I disagree"
- Handouts with animal ethics positions, brief explanations and various statements - 1 per person

## Description

### 1. Spectrum line on different animal ethics positions - 20 minutes

The facilitator notes that ethics is a matter of personal conviction and that this method, as well as the rest of the day, may lead to different opinions among the participants. It is very important that all perspectives are treated with respect and taken seriously. An open and respectful discussion culture is therefore important.

During the method it is also likely that participants will recognise contradictions in their own positions. The facilitator notes that our moral intuitions are often not entirely consistent and that the rest of the day provides space to reflect on these possible contradictions.

The tables and chairs in the room are moved aside to make room. (Two pieces of paper marked 'I agree' and 'I disagree' are taped to the floor at two opposite points in the room. The following statements are read out in random order, without revealing the position associated with them. Not all statements need to be read, but statements from all four approaches should be included. Participants can position themselves on the spectrum between the two pieces of paper to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the statement. After each statement, the participants are asked if any of them would like to explain their position in order to open a discussion in the group.

Anthropocentrism:

- We have no moral responsibility for animals. If they are not other people's property, we can do what we like with them.
- Animals are not rational and cannot speak, so we don't need to take them into account.

Animal welfare:

- Animals should be able to be kept in zoos and aquariums as long as they are treated appropriately and with respect.
- It is acceptable to use animals in medical research if it can improve people's lives.
- No pain, suffering or harm should be inflicted on animals without good reason.

Animal rights:

- It is wrong to use animals for human purposes such as food, clothing or entertainment.
- Animals have a right to life and physical integrity.
- Animals should not be regarded as property, but as living beings with rights of their own.

Animal liberation:

- All forms of animal use and domestication should be abolished.
- All animals should be able to live their lives freely and independently of human interference.
- Many animals are oppressed and exploited as a result of the political and economic conditions of a capitalist economic system.

## 2. Allocation of the statements to the different animal ethics positions - 10 minutes

The four positions are written on the board and introduced with the following descriptions:

- **Anthropocentrism:** This position holds that animals, because of their lack of rationality, do not belong to the moral community and are therefore subordinate to human interests. Proponents of this view argue that ethical rights and duties exist only among rational beings, i.e. humans. According to this view, it is justified to instrumentalise animals for human purposes. They do not deserve consideration for their own sake.
- **Animal welfare:** This position calls for better or 'species-appropriate' animal agriculture, but does not fundamentally oppose the use and killing of animals in agriculture, animal testing, sport or zoos. The animal welfare movement therefore aims to achieve improvements and reforms in animal husbandry, for example through changes in legislation.
- **Animal rights:** This position calls for moral equality between humans and animals. Animals should also have fundamental rights to life and physical integrity. This means a particularly strong protection of the individual, i.e. each individual animal, which cannot simply be abolished in favour of human interests. The animal rights movement therefore calls for the abolition of animal agriculture and other forms of animal use that run counter to their own needs.
- **Animal liberation:** This position views the use of animals as part of a social system of oppression, discrimination and exploitation within a capitalist economic order. It largely agrees with the animal rights position, but calls for more far-reaching social, political and economic changes.

The printouts of the different statements that were read out during the spectrum line are then given to the participants. They think about which position the statement belongs to and put it on the board accordingly. The statements for each position are then read out. If necessary, statements can be repositioned.

**Note:** The animal liberation position goes beyond the animal rights position, but includes a large part of the demands that are also formulated by animal rights activists. It is not wrong, therefore, to attribute statements to animal liberation that are also attributed to the animal rights position.

Finally, participants are given handouts with an overview of the animal ethics positions, including a brief explanation and the corresponding statements.

## Part 3: Text work on different animal ethics positions

### Learning objective

- Participants deepen their understanding of different animal ethics positions (especially animal welfare, animal rights and animal liberation)

### Time

60 minutes

### Materials

- Flipchart paper and pens for small groups
- Instructions - 1 per group
- Three texts on animal welfare, animal rights and animal liberation from: "Zivilgesellschaftliches Engagement für Tiere. Different approaches", chapter by Friederike Schmitz in the volume *Haben Tiere Rechte? Aspekte und Dimensionen der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung*, edited by Elke Diehl and Jens Tuider, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2019.

### Description

#### 1. Reading the text - 10 minutes

The participants are divided into small groups. Each small group is given one of three texts of two to two and a half pages each. Participants read their texts alone first.

#### 2. Working out the key points - 20 minutes

In small groups, the participants work out the key points of the texts and then discuss as a group what they find convincing and what they do not find convincing.

#### 3. Presenting the key points - 20 minutes

The groups then present the key points of their texts to each other so that all participants gain a deeper understanding of the three approaches.

#### 4. Discussion - 10 minutes

Finally, the group discusses which approach they find most convincing.

## Part 4: Reflection

### Learning objective

- Participants reflect on their own point of view

### Time

20 minutes

### Materials

- None

### Description

#### 1. Reflection in pairs - 10 minutes

The participants discuss in pairs to what extent they recognise themselves in the three approaches. The facilitator points back to the opinion stream and encourages them to talk about the extent to which their attitude corresponds with the various animal ethics approaches.

#### 2. Go-round - 10 minutes

In the whole group, participants are given the opportunity to ask questions and share what has been new to them up to this point and what has given them food for thought.

## Part 5: Role play

### Learning objective

- Participants understand and reflect on the background conditions and causes for the current treatment of animals and different approaches to solutions

### Time

60 minutes

### Materials

- Instructions - 1 per group
- Role cards for the different groups
- Signs with role names
- Optional: Juggling ball



## Description

### 1. Preparation and familiarisation with the roles - 20 minutes

First, it is explained that the background to the situation of animals in agriculture and possible solutions will now be analysed in a role play. The focus on animals in agriculture is also explained: Module 1 was about the living conditions of bovines and dairy farming in particular. Now the focus is on the social and political background to these living conditions, who is responsible for them and who can make a difference.

Seven groups are formed for this purpose. Each group is assigned one of seven social actors (farmer, dairy company, supermarket, consumer, government, animal welfare organisation, animal rights group). Each group is given role cards for their respective position with common arguments.

The groups have 15 minutes to read through and discuss the role cards. Participants should also look for their own arguments/facts that are relevant to their role. They can think about this together and research it online.

### 2. Role play - 25 minutes

Then everyone comes together in the big group, but the small groups sit next to each other and have a sign in front of them with the name of their role, so it is clear who is playing which role. The large group now discusses why animal agriculture is the way it is, who could do something to change it, and what each role thinks about the issue. The discussion starts with the following questions: What are the causes of the poor conditions in the farming of bovines? Who is responsible? Who can change the situation?

During the role play, it is important that participants do not simply read out their views, but explain them in their own words. If the discussion gets bogged down before all groups have taken an active part, individual arguments addressed to a previously silent group can be taken up. It is also important that participants speak as experts and try to listen to each other and work towards a solution. If participants frequently interrupt each other, a juggling ball can be used. The person who is speaking then throws the ball to the person who wants to speak next, when they have finished their thought.

### 3. Debrief - 15 minutes

After 15 minutes, the game ends and a reflective discussion begins. The facilitator asks the participants which arguments were easier to defend and which were not so easy. Discuss whether new perspectives have emerged as to why individual stakeholders act as they do.

It is emphasised that the conditions in animal agriculture are a structural problem and that no one is solely responsible, neither farmers, nor politicians, nor other stakeholders. The facilitator asks what would be needed to change this situation and what demands could lead to change.

Optionally, participants spend 5 minutes discussing if and how they would use this method in class.

**Variation 1:** The participants work out the arguments and the position of their role completely independently in their small group. This can be done by researching on the internet or through newspaper articles and other sources of information. This option requires more preparation time.

**Variation 2:** The following procedure can be used to record the arguments from the discussion: In the preparation phase, the groups write down their arguments in keywords on a facilitation card. During the role play, the participants pay attention to whether further arguments come up that they have not yet discussed in the preparation. They also write these down in keywords on a facilitation card. In the debriefing session, the participants stick the moderation cards with the arguments on the whiteboard to create an overview. Allow 10 minutes extra for this option.

## Part 6: Ideas for action

### Learning objective

- Participants reflect on what needs to change, what societal changes are needed, and what they can personally change.

### Time

35 minutes

### Materials

- Instructions - 1 per group
- Flipchart paper
- Pens

### Description

#### 1. Individual work - 10 minutes

The participants are seated at a table in groups of four. A large sheet of paper or flipchart paper is placed on the table. First, the participants work individually to think about the following questions

- Should something change? If so, what? What social changes are needed? What can I/we contribute to these changes (on a personal, professional and social level)?

The participants design (write or draw) a corner of the page with their ideas.

#### 2. Sharing in small groups - 15 minutes

In groups of four, the participants share their ideas and discuss them on the basis of the questions above.

#### 3. Whole group discussion - 10 minutes

The groups report back to the whole group some of the ideas they have discussed.

## Part 7: Application in the classroom

### Learning objective

- Participants consider how they can use the methods and content of the module to create lessons on this topic

### Time

20 minutes

### Materials

- Instructions - 1 per group

### Description

#### 1. Small group sharing - 15 minutes

In small groups, the participants reflect on the content of the module. They exchange ideas on how to use the methods presented in their teaching. They can discuss which content and methods of the module are appropriate for which age group and how they can be adapted to different levels of ability.

#### 2. Whole group discussion - 5 minutes

Ideas are shared in the whole group.

## Part 8: Conclusion and feedback

### Learning objective

- Participants reflect on the module and give feedback

### Time

10 minutes

### Materials

- None

### Description

The facilitator summarises the different parts of the module and opens the feedback session by asking what the participants liked and disliked, what they took away from this module and how they felt after the module.

All links in files belonging to module 2 were last checked on 15/03/2024.