

# Making Judgements: Is it True?



**Fourth Grade, Fifth Grade**

by Meena Srinivasan

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In this lesson, students will engage in inquiry, a powerful mindfulness practice to work with judgements about oneself and others.

## Learning Objectives

Students will be able to investigate their thinking and practice inquiry to recognize and understand judgements.

## Materials and preparation

- Class set of the [Comic Books: Using Inquiry](#) worksheet (and completed worksheet to use as an example)
- Markers or colored pencils

## Key terms

- inquiry

## Attachments

- Comic Book: Using Inquiry (PDF)

## Introduction (15 minutes)

- Ask students to come together in a circle, either seated in chairs or on the floor.
- Ask students to come into mindful bodies, and to take a few deep breaths into their bellies. Ask them to envision a frog's throat as they puff their bellies, just like a frog's throat may be puffed out.
- Guide them to breathe naturally and notice their breath at one point as they breathe. Perhaps they can focus on feeling the breath in their nose, throat, or belly.
- As the students hold their attention at one point, mention to them that it is normal if their minds wander. If this happens, ask students to slowly bring their attention back to their breath.
- Tell students that when they notice a thought, they can label it in their mind as "thinking...thinking..." Then, they should gently come back to the feeling of their breath.
- Pause so students can practice mindfulness.
- After 2-3 minutes, guide students to take one more full breath into their belly. As they breathe out, ask them to slowly open their eyes.
- Ask students, "What did you notice? How did you feel?"
- Ask students to raise their hands if they noticed thoughts. Ask them to raise their hands if they were able to label their thoughts as "thinking...thinking..."
- Explain to the class that when we practice mindfulness, we can bring space between us and our thoughts.
- Ask the class, "What helped bring space between you and your thoughts in the session? Focusing on the breath? Labeling thoughts?"
- Explain to them that another way to create space around thoughts and beliefs is through inquiry.
- Ask the class, "Are all of your thoughts true?" Explain that our thoughts are often incorrect.
- Remind students that mindfulness and inquiry can help us watch our thoughts. Instead of getting caught up in an untrue story, and we can inquire about the thoughts.
- Write the word "inquiry" on the board, and ask the class what they think it means.
- Guide them to look at the root word "inquire." Have students reflect on what they think this means.
- Write the following definition for **inquiry** on the board: "To ask questions or investigate."

## Explicit Instruction/Teacher modeling (5 minutes)

- Ask the class, "Does anyone have an idea of what questions we can ask ourselves when we look at a repetitive thought, such as 'She is so rude,' or 'He is disrespectful and has no idea what he is doing'?"
- Share that we can check to see if what we are thinking is a fact or some kind of judgment by asking ourselves, "Is this true?"
- Write on the board the title: "Using Inquiry with Thoughts" and underneath that write the question "Is it true?"

## Guided Practice (5 minutes)

- Give the class an example from your own life, or use the following example: "Let's say I was riding my bike, and a person driving pulled out in front of me. I had to press on the brakes so I would not get hit. In my mind I noticed thoughts saying 'This person does not know what they are doing. They are horrible! They are an inconsiderate and rude person.'"
- Ask the class, "What is the first question I could ask myself when looking at this thought?" (Is it true?)
- Explain to the class that the next question you could ask yourself is, "How do I know this is true?"
- Walk your students through every part of the example scenario using the question "How do I know this is true?" After repeatedly asking this question, students will begin to see how the statements are not entirely true.
- Ask the class, "Can we think about the circumstances that driver was in? Sure, they should have been driving more carefully, but what if they were rushing to the hospital? We just don't have all the facts to say that this person is inconsiderate and rude at all times."
- Explain that all day, you could be thinking that the driver is inconsiderate and rude.
- Ask the class, "How do you think I would feel if I thought this all day long?" If need be, guide them to the words angry, tense, and frustrated.
- Ask, "Do you think I want to feel this way all day?" Say, "No, of course I don't want to be angry and frustrated all day."
- On the board, write the following statement: "They are so rude."
- Using this statement, walk through the following questions: "Is it true? How do you know it is true?" As you work through these questions, you could ask the class, "Do I actually know this person? Do I know what they experienced before they pulled out in their car? Maybe they had a sick child that they were bringing to the hospital."
- Explain that if we can understand the unknown information and many different perspectives in a situation, we don't have to get caught up in our thoughts.
- Share the "Man on the Subway" story: "One Sunday morning I was on a subway in New York. People were sitting quietly—some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene. Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. That instant, the whole climate changed. The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing. It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive as to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt like was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, 'Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you could control them a little more?' The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, 'Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either.' Can you imagine what I felt at that moment? My paradigm shifted. Suddenly I saw things differently, and because I saw differently, I thought differently, I felt differently, I behaved differently. My irritation vanished. I didn't have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behavior; my heart was filled with the man's pain. Feelings of sympathy and compassion flowed freely. 'Your wife just died? Oh, I'm so sorry! Can you tell me about it? What can I do to help?' Everything changed in an instant." (Source: Steven Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*)
- Ask students to share their reflections about the "Man on the Subway" story.
- Explain to the class that they will be working on their own to create a comic book story, where someone in the story uses mindfulness and the questions "Is it true?" and "How do you know it is true?" to look at

and investigate their thoughts after someone did something to upset them.

- Show a sample of the worksheet, and read your comic book to the class. Remind students that they must include a beginning, middle, and end, and they should answer the two questions in their comic books.

### **Independent working time (25 minutes)**

- Ask students if they have any questions.
- Dismiss students back to their seats, and distribute the Comic Books: Using Inquiry worksheets. Allow students to complete their comic books.

### **Differentiation**

**Enrichment:** Ask students to use the two questions (Is it true? How do you know it is true?) to create a skit about inquiry. Have them videotape their skit to share with the class.

**Support:** Provide pictures on the Comic Books: Using Inquiry worksheet, so that students can fill in the dialogue. You may also allow a group of students to work together and create one comic. (Each student can be responsible for one frame in the comic.)

### **Assessment (5 minutes)**

- Observe students during the independent work time.
- Collect comic books to assess students' understanding of how to use the two questions to investigate their thoughts and practice compassion.

### **Review and closing (5 minutes)**

- After all students have completed their worksheets, bring them back to a circle.
- Pair up students to share their comic books with each other.
- Afterwards, bring all students back together in a circle. Ask if anyone would like to share their story with the whole group.
- Ask the class, "How can using inquiry with thoughts help us in relationships and communication?"

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Comic Book: Using Inquiry

**Directions:** Come up with a comic/graphic story where the main character faces a challenging situation, notices their thoughts, and uses the following two questions to investigate their beliefs and thoughts:

- Is it true?
- How do we know it is true?

Use the template below to draw pictures of each of the events that happen in your story. Make sure to include the thoughts of the character (use thought bubbles!) and how they use the two questions for investigation. Afterwards, color in your pictures to bring your comic book to life!

TITLE:

