

The Path of Wisdom: Exploring Buddhist Beliefs

Learning objective: To understand the core teachings of Buddhism, including the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and to reflect on how these guide followers in daily life.

Join Ellie the elephant, who loves to study the history of ideas, on a journey of discovery. Your task is to match the 'Noble Truth' to its meaning, and then use your critical thinking skills to apply these teachings to modern-day scenarios. Finally, justify your reasoning in the 'Greater Depth' section.

Word bank: Dukkha · Tanha · Nirvana · Eightfold Path · Compassion · Mindfulness · Suffering · Craving

1. The First Noble Truth states that 'Dukkha' (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) is a part of life. Explain why a Buddhist might believe that experiencing sadness is a natural part of the human journey rather than something to be avoided at all costs. (2 marks)

2. The Second Noble Truth identifies 'Tanha' (craving) as a cause of suffering. Compare and contrast the act of 'needing' something (like food or shelter) versus 'craving' something (like a luxury item). How does this distinction change a person's perspective on happiness? (3 marks)

3. The Eightfold Path includes 'Right Speech' and 'Right Action'. If you were to implement these in your school, what might happen to the playground environment? Justify your answer. (3 marks)

4. A key Buddhist concept is that all things are connected. If an action you take affects someone on the other side of the world, how does this influence the way you spend your pocket money? (e.g., If you had £10 to spend, how might a Buddhist perspective affect your choice?) (2 marks)

5. Critique the idea of 'Mindfulness'. Why is being present in the moment considered a vital skill for both a student and a practitioner of Buddhism? (2 marks)

6. If someone achieved 'Nirvana' (the end of suffering and the cycle of rebirth), how would their behaviour towards others change? Describe the character traits they would display. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Wheel of Life' with eight spokes. In each spoke, illustrate one aspect of the Eightfold Path (such as Right Thought, Right Speech, or Right Livelihood) using symbols or scenes from your daily life.



Extension challenge: Design a 'Compassion Campaign' for your school. Write a short manifesto explaining how the Buddhist principle of 'Metta' (loving-kindness) can be used to resolve conflicts between friends. How would you measure the success of this campaign?