

Screaming into the Void

Existentialism

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Grade Level	12th Grade	**Time Frame**	180-210 minutes
Course	AP Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology	**Duration**	3-4 class periods

Essential Question

How do you find purpose and meaning in life? Does purpose give you motivation, or does motivation give you purpose?

Summary

This introductory philosophy lesson begins by introducing students to existentialism through artwork. Once they have a basic understanding of philosophical inquiry, which explores the issue of human existence, students will delve further into the key themes: Philosophy as a Way of Life, Anxiety and Authenticity, Freedom, Situatedness, Existence, Irrationality and Absurdity, and The Crowd. Additionally, students will learn about the leading existentialist philosophers, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. Next, students will have the opportunity to research modern art and media that exemplifies the idea of existentialism and also represents them and their goals at this point in their lives. Once they have identified a work of modern art, they will create a bento box explaining their rationale and share it with others in a small group.

Snapshot

Engage

Students will watch two clips from TV shows, The Good Place and Westworld, and make a prediction about the meaning of "existentialism."

Explore

Students will explore works of art using It's Optic-al.

Explain

Students will complete a Honeycomb Harvest with information about themes, philosophers and images.

Extend

Students will research examples of (modern) media that exemplifies existentialism to create a Bento Box.

Evaluate

Students will facilitate conversations about their Bento Box.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Sociology (9th through 12th grade))

PS.6.2: Analyze the biological and environmental influences on positive and negative emotion.

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Sociology (9th through 12th grade))

S.7.1: Distinguish between characteristics of a social problem as compared to an individual problem.

Attachments

- Honeycomb Harvest—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.docx
- Honeycomb Harvest—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.pdf
- Honeycomb Harvest—Screaming into the Void.docx
- Honeycomb Harvest—Screaming into the Void.pdf
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.docx
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.pdf
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void.docx
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Screaming into the Void.pptx
- Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.docx
- Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void - Spanish.pdf
- Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void.docx
- Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer—Screaming into the Void.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides - Screaming into the Void (attached)
- It’s OPTIC-al - Screaming into the Void (optional; attached; one per student)
- Honeycomb Harvest - Screaming into the Void (optional; attached; one per student)
- Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer - Screaming into the Void (attached; one per student)
- WiFi
- Individual Student Devices
- Pens or Pencils

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Before you begin the lesson, copy and cut out enough sets of **Honeycomb Harvest cards** for each group of student pairs. Print on heavier paper, such as card stock, and laminate the cards to ensure that they last longer than just this one lesson. Use envelopes or paper clips to organize the sets of cards.

Introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Display **slide 3** to share the essential question and **slide 4** to go over the lesson's learning objectives to the extent you feel necessary.

Share the following videos on **slide 5 and 6** with your students:

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=bbcAPxQ3YLA?si=1CS2SZ69vCnxC4rf

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=S94ETUiMZwQ

Display **slide 7** and distribute a sticky note to each student. Ask students: "If these two clips were all the information you have on existentialism, how would you define it?" Collect their sticky notes so that they can use them at the end of the lesson to reflect on their learning.

Explore

Display **slide 8** and share the instructional strategy It's OPTIC-AL with your students. Pass out the attached **It's OPTIC-al** handout or instruct your students to write "OPTIC" down the left side of their paper for each image they analyze.

Use **slides 9-15** to share each work of art with your class, making sure to provide adequate time to think about each image. After your students have analyzed an image, have them share their observations, impressions, interrelationships within the visuals, etc. with a partner or the class.

60 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 16.** Introduce students to the Honeycomb Harvest strategy. Group students in pairs and distribute the attached **Honeycomb Harvest cards** to them. If students need scaffolded instructions, use **slides 17-18** to share an example. **Slide 19** is a repeat of the instructions to have displayed for your students as they are working. During this time, monitor and ask probing questions to help them determine why they chose these connections. **Slides 20-46** are provided to facilitate a share out with the entire class. Encourage questions and discussion.

30 minutes

Extend

Move to **slide 47** and introduce the Web Inquiry and Bento Box project. Distribute the attached **Modern Existentialism Media Web Inquiry Graphic Organizer.** Let students know that they will research examples of modern media that they believe exemplify existentialism. Allow 20-30 minutes for students to research and complete the graphic organizer.

Display **slide 48**. Explain to students that they will be using their research to create a Bento Box. Students will "translate" their research into images related to their figures. For example, if a student chose to research René Margritte's three works, *The Pilgrim*, *The Lovers*, and *The Treachery of Images*, they may wish to include that his focus was on a deadpan, illustrative technique which resulted in powerful paradox rather than using techniques of modern painting that may have distracted from the work. Instruct your students to create one image made up of 5-7 different image components, similar to the composition of Japanese bento box-style meals served in a compartmentalized box. Additionally, have each student write a brief summary of their web inquiry on Modern Existentialism.

Teacher's Note: Optional Tech Integration

If available, consider having students create their Bento Box project using Google Slides, Canva, Thinglink, or Piktochart. If creating digital Bento Box projects, consider having students' hyperlink to helpful videos or readings they may have found in their research.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 49** and share the instructional strategy Chat Stations with your students. Place your students into groups of three to four. Have students rotate in their groups taking turns presenting their Bento Box.

Once your students have completed their share outs, display **slide 50**, pass back their sticky note from the beginning of the lesson, and have them look back at the original definition they wrote down for "existentialism." Ask them if they would change anything about their definition? If so, what would they add or remove?

Resources

- Holland, Dean. (Director & Producer). (2018). The good place. (Season 2, Episode 1). YouTube. https://youtu.be/bbcAPxQ3YLA?si=1CS2SZ69vCnxC4rf
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bento box. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1128
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Canva. Tech tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/612
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Establishing norms. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/188
- K20 Center. (n.d.). It's OPTIC-AL. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/99
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Piktochart. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2394
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Philosophical chairs. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/71
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Web inquiry. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/2532
- Williams, Steven. (Director). (2018). Westworld - consciousness does not exist, Anthony Hopkins. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S94ETUiMZwQ