

CAN ROBOTS AND ELEPHANTS MAKE ART?

This document prepares teachers for 'Can robots and Elephants Make Art?', an activity offered by UCL Department of Science and Technology Studies (STS).

Summary: This activity focuses on interdisciplinary oral argumentation skills, starting from five images. Teachers are asked to **print** the images as handouts for use in group discussion. Students should be organised into groups prior to the start of the lesson. This activity is designed to support the Theory of Knowledge curriculum of the International Baccalaureate programme.

Aim:

1. offer a real-to-life example of Theory of Knowledge
2. relate epistemology and aesthetics to contemporary issues in science and technology
3. encourage problem-solving, interdisciplinary thinking, and argumentation skills through collaboration

Duration: 45 minutes

Class configuration: This is a groupwork exercise. The ideal size for each group is 3-4 students. They should be sitting together and able to talk amongst themselves while jointly viewing the five images. They should identify:

1. Which (if any) images were made by human artists
2. Which (if any) images were made by elephants
3. Which (if any) images were made by a robot/Artificial Intelligence

Each group should start by looking at the pictures and annotate 3-4 keywords they think describe it (one keyword per student: what word comes to your mind when you see this picture? There is no wrong answer, so remember to write it down!).

The students should then agree on one or two reasons for classifying an image as human-made, machine-made or animal-made. During the discussion, each group will share their ideas with others in the classroom and with the tutors online.

Essential materials for each group:

1. blank paper for drawing and note-taking for each student
2. writing instruments, such as pencils
3. **one printed copy of the set of five images for each group.** The printable version of the images is available at:
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/tok> (under the 'Robots and Elephants' classroom activity)

During the LIVE session the UCL tutor will use the "share screen" screen function to show the images in the discussions.

Preparation for pupils: none.

Structure of the session (45 minutes total):

1. welcome by teacher (2 minutes)
2. introduction and instruction by UCL tutor (5 minutes)
3. group activity: how would your group describe the image (annotate keywords)? is it human, animal or machine made? What makes you say so? (10 minutes)
4. group sharing and facilitated discussion with UCL tutor (10 minutes)
5. questions and discussion (5 minutes)
6. closing by UCL tutor (1 minute)
7. closing by teacher (2 minutes)
8. end session

About us

The tutor is Dr Chiara Ambrosio <CAmbrosio@ucl.ac.uk>. She is UCL Associate Professor of History and Philosophy of Science. Dr Ambrosio is an expert in the philosophy of science and the relationship between art and science. For more about her:

<https://ucl.ac.uk/sts/ambrosio>

The sponsor is UCL Department of Science and Technology Studies (STS). The programme offers several undergraduate degrees:

1. History and Philosophy of Science BSc
2. History and Philosophy of Science with Study Abroad BSc
3. Sociology and Politics of Science BSc
4. Sociology and Politics of Science with Study Abroad BSc

For more about our programmes:

<https://ucl.ac.uk/sts/bsc>

Teachers interested in an online visit from STS tutors, especially supporting the Theory of Knowledge curriculum, should contact our Admissions team:

sts-admissions@ucl.ac.uk