Ethical Capability – a selection of classroom resources

Foundation to Level 2

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Introduction

The annotated selection of classroom resources in this document illustrates the kind of resources that can be drawn on when designing teaching and learning activities for Ethical Capability.

Each resource is aligned to one or more Ethical Capability content descriptions from Foundation to Level 2. The resources can be used as stimulus for discussions or as models for making decisions or reasoning in response to ethical problems.

These resources may also be used to enrich the learning of knowledge and skills in other curriculum areas, enabling students to go deeper with their understanding of particular learning area contexts.

When designing learning activities the appropriate aspect of the relevant achievement standard should also be taken into account. For support with explicit teaching and assessment, see ‘Introduction to explicitly teaching and assessing the capabilities’ on the [Overview of the capabilities page of the VCAA website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/Pages/OverviewoftheCapabilities.aspx).

Links to Ethical Capability, Foundation to Level 2

Content descriptions

Understanding Concepts

* Explore the meaning of right and wrong, good and bad, as concepts concerned with the outcomes of acts [(VCECU001)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU001)

Decision Making and Actions

* Explore the type of acts often considered right and those often considered wrong and the reasons why they are considered so [(VCECD002)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD002)
* Explore the effects that personal feelings can have on how people behave in situations where ethical issues are involved [(VCECD003)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD003)

Achievement standard

By the end of Level 2, students identify and describe ethical concepts using illustrative examples from familiar situations and a basic vocabulary about ethical problems and their outcomes.

Students identify and explain acts and situations that have ethical dimensions, using illustrative examples. They explain that personal feelings may influence the way people behave in situations where ethical issues are involved.

Summary of resource alignment to Ethical Capability, Foundation to Level 2

Note: Some picture books may be out of print or hard to find. These books may be accessed other ways, such as via read-aloud versions on YouTube.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resource name** | **Resource type** | **Suitable as introductory stimulus** | **Ethical Capability content descriptions, Foundation to Level 2** |
| **VCECU001** | **VCECU002** | **VCECU003** |
| VAPS Understanding Concepts Right and Wrong | Downloadable ‘toolkit’ for teachers | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| ‘Why should I be good?’, *What Makes Me Me? and Other Interesting Questions* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ‘Exploring’, *Spot and Stripe* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *What if Everybody Did That?* | Picture book | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *What Do You Do with a Problem?* | Picture book |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| *The Island* | Picture book |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *The Giving Tree* | Picture book | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *This Is Not My Hat* | Picture book | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ‘Animals’, *Spot and Stripe* | Video |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* | Picture book | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| *The Little Shop of Curiosities* | Video |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *The Rainbow Fish* | Picture book | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| ‘Garden Stakes’, *Dot* | Video |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ‘Flying’, *Spot and Stripe* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| ‘Teasing’, *Bluey* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ‘Dad Dancing’, *Kazoops!* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ‘Pirates’, *Spot and Stripe* | Video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| *Kept In* | Painting |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| *Fox* | Picture book |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Selected classroom resources

**Resource name:** VAPS Understanding Concepts Right & Wrong

**Resource type:** Downloadable ‘toolkit’ for teachers

**Source:** [Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools (VAPS)](https://www.vaps.vic.edu.au/ethical-capability/understanding-concepts/)

About the resource:

VAPS is a subject association that provides support, training and resources for teachers and schools teaching philosophy. It has developed a suite of teaching tools and training courses for the planning, development and implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F–10’s Ethical Capability.

These downloadable ‘toolkits’ will aid teachers in the exploration of Ethical Capability concepts from Foundation to Level 10. Each toolkit features a summary of relevant concepts, an overview of the nature of contestable concepts, a range of concept games with accompanying instructions, sample discussion plans and advice for teachers on developing discussion plans and further readings.

The toolkit VAPS Understanding Concepts Right & Wrong will aid exploration of the Foundation to Level 2 concepts of right and wrong and good and bad. The games or activities help students to make a connection between the meaning of the concepts (VCECU001) and the evaluation of acts (VCECU002). This toolkit is particularly suited to introducing students to the content descriptions for the first time; however, it can be used at any stage of their learning.

**Resource name:** ‘Why should I be good?’, *What Makes Me Me? and Other Interesting Questions*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Mosaic Films for BBC (may be available on [ABC iview](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/what-makes-me-me/series/1/video/ZX9585A003S00))

About the resource:

This five-minute animated short film is part of a series exploring ethical and philosophical concepts through everyday questions. All the videos in the *What Makes Me Me? and Other Interesting Questions* series include animations, questions and ideas, as well as dialogue in response to these questions modelled by children. The episode ‘Why should I be good?’ features an animated story about what an individual might do if they happen across a magical ring of invisibility and the ethical choices that arise with this discovery. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus for delivery of all content descriptions.

**Resource name:** ‘Exploring’, *Spot and Stripe*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Episode 12, *Spot and Stripe*, The Philosophy Man, Jason Buckley (available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3UdWQJYYDM))

About the resource:

This one-minute video shows Spot and Stripe discussing whether it is good or bad to explore places that people have never been to before. The characters model different perspectives on the issue, with Spot thinking it is great while Stripe has some hesitation. This video could be used as a provocation to explore the meaning of right and wrong or good and bad as concepts concerned with the outcomes of a behaviour or choice (in this case, exploring uncharted territories). As well as modelling effective reasoning to help justify viewpoints and opinions, it also demonstrates how analysing the consequences of different choices and feelings associated with them can help us to think about whether a behaviour might be ‘good’ or ‘bad’. This resource is suitable at any stage of curriculum delivery.

**Resource name:** *What if Everybody Did That?*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:**  Ellen Javernick (author) and Colleen Madden (illustrator), 2010, *What if Everybody Did That?*, Amazon Publishing, Seattle, USA

About the resource:

The central character in this picture book takes us through a range of scenarios in which he makes particular behavioural choices and is then asked to consider the question ‘What if everybody did that?’. Each choice made by the main character is then followed by an illustration depicting a likely consequence of his choice, allowing students to explore typical reasons for justifying whether an act is right or wrong, for example, whether the action breaks rules or results in harm. The illustrations may also stimulate discussion about the influence of the main character’s feelings on his behaviour. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus for the early stages of inquiry.

**Resource name:** *What Do You Do with a Problem?*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Kobi Yamada (author) and Mae Besom (illustrator), 2016, *What Do You Do with a Problem?*, Compendium Publishing & Communications, USA

About the resource:

This picture book explores what can happen when we have a problem, including emotions and feelings that can be experienced. It allows for exploration into what can occur as a result of not facing a problem. The illustrations allow for multiple interpretations, promoting further exploration, for example, on whether thinking about these problems involves thinking about ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, and whether it is ‘right’ or ‘good’ to face problems. This resource is suitable as a stimulus for students who have previously been introduced to the content descriptions VCECU001 and VCECU003.

**Resource name:** *The Island*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** John Heffernan (author) and Peter Sheehan (illustrator), 2005, *The Island*, Scholastic Australia, Gosford, Australia (also available read aloud by the author on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bdF79h3Ohs))

About the resource:

*The Island* explores a range of ethical concepts through its colourful illustrations and detailed written text. It tells the story of a blind sea urchin who finds a sea monster that brings happiness to all those around it; however, the people of the village seek to capture the creature to ensure their own happiness.

This picture book can be used as a provocation to help students explore the consequences of actions as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, particularly in relation to seeking happiness. It also allows for exploration into personal feelings and how personal feelings have implications on choices. Students can compare the deliberations and actions of people who share a problem but experience different feelings, as well as reflect on the influence feelings have on the outcome, such as the way the villagers handle the situation compared to the way the sea urchin handles the situation.

The open-ended nature and conclusion of this text also allows for further inquiry into the ethical implications of events in the book. This resource is suitable as a stimulus for students who have previously been introduced to all the Foundation to Level 2 content descriptions.

**Resource name:** *The Giving Tree*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Shel Silverstein, 1964, *The Giving Tree*, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., New York, USA

About the resource:

This classic picture storybook tells the simple yet thought-provoking story of a little boy and a tree who loves him. As the boy grows, he asks more and more from the tree, and as the story unfolds it provides opportunity for exploration into the ethical implications of asking of and giving to others and whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, in different situations. Students can explore how the terms ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ can be used in different ways in relation to giving and receiving, and the consequences and emotions that can arise as a result. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus for the early stages of inquiry.

**Resource name:** *This Is Not My Hat*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Jon Klassen, 2014, *This Is Not My Hat*, Walker Books, London, UK

About the resource:

This picture book uses humour and a simple yet thought-provoking approach to explore the right or wrong, good or bad, argument for taking something that does not belong to you. It tells the story of a little fish who steals a hat from a larger fish and asserts a range of justifications and reasons for his decision to take and keep the hat, in particular, that he does not believe he will get caught. This stimulus promotes discussion and inquiry into the meaning of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, as concepts concerned with the outcomes of acts, and whether it is acceptable to do the ‘wrong’ thing if you will not get caught. This allows for the unpacking of the ethical consequences that may occur.

The open-ended nature of the conclusion to the story can also be unpacked with regards to what students believe might be the result of the little fish’s choice to take the hat and the question of whether there is always a consequence for ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’ behaviour. Students can also explore the feelings associated with each action (for example, how might the big fish have felt when they realised their hat was gone? How might their feelings influence what they decide to do in response and how they do it?). This resource is suitable as a stimulus for introducing the content descriptions for the first time.

**Resource name:** ‘Animals’, *Spot and Stripe*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Episode 24, *Spot and Stripe*, The Philosophy Man, Jason Buckley (available on [Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/198758372))

About the resource:

In this video, Spot and Stripe pose the question ‘Would it be good if animals could talk?’. The use of the word ‘good’ to frame the question allows students the opportunity to explore how using the terms ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ can show that we are wanting to evaluate effects or outcomes, in this case as a result of animals talking. Spot and Stripe model reasoning and justifying their ideas by drawing on the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ implications of animals being able to talk.

This stimulus provides opportunities for students to classify animals being able to speak as ‘right’ and/or ‘wrong’ or ‘good’ and/or ‘bad’ and to discuss similarities and differences in their justifications. It also allows for the exploration of the effects that personal feelings can have on people’s choices and preferences in situations where ethical issues are involved. This resource is suitable for consolidating content descriptions already introduced to students.

**Resource name:** *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Judith Viorst, 1987, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* , Aladdin Paperbacks, USA

About the resource:

In this classic picture book, Alexander begins by telling readers that he knew it was going to be a terrible day when he woke up with gum in his hair. He goes on to explain and describe everything that he considers ‘bad’ and ‘wrong’ about his day. This stimulus uses humour and relatable situations that allow for exploration into the meaning of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ situations, events and experiences. This book can also be used to help students explore how feelings might influence our interpretations of events and vice versa. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** *The Little Shop of Curiosities*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** [The Philosophy Foundation](https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/stories-for-thinking)

About the resource:

The storyteller in this four-minute video stimulus uses imagery and places the audience at the centre of the story. The audience is asked to imagine they are walking down the street one day when they see a strange shop that contains books with the details of each person’s past, present and future. The question posed by the storyteller when the audience reaches the page showing the present moment is ‘Do you turn the page?’. This prompt provides opportunity for students to unpack whether it would be ‘right’ or ‘wrong, ‘good’ or ‘bad’, to turn the page of their book, thus requiring them to think about the ethical implications of knowing what might occur in their future. Ethical considerations can also be highlighted when asking students whether it would be ‘right’ or ‘wrong, ‘good’ or ‘bad’, to read another person’s book. This resource is suitable as a stimulus for students to consolidate learning after introductory lessons.

**Resource name:** *The Rainbow Fish*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Marcus Pfister, 2012, *The Rainbow Fish*, NorthSouth Books, Zurich, Switzerland

About the resource:

The central character of this picture book is a fish with rainbow-coloured, iridescent scales who is aloof and uninterested in the fish around him. When a small blue fish asks the Rainbow Fish for one of his beautiful shiny scales, the Rainbow Fish is outraged and refuses the request. As a result, the Rainbow Fish ends up disliked by all the other fish, and he finds himself alone. A wise octopus advises him to give his scales away to the other fish, leaving himself only one. There are a range of relevant concepts in this text; for example, the type of acts considered ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ can be explored through analysing and exploring the actions of the Rainbow Fish, the other fish and the advice of the octopus. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** ‘Garden Stakes’, *Dot*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Ontario Ltd Dot 1 Productions, 2016 (may be available on [ABC iview](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/dot))

About the resource:

In this episode, Dot and her friend Hal are Rangeroos who are hoping to earn their ‘Built-It Badges’ by creating a community garden on their own. They soon face a decision about whether they should persist on their own despite the disastrous results or enlist help from other members of the community to make sure the community garden is a success. Dot and Hal must grapple with the concept of the ‘right’ thing to do and consider whether they should think about what is good for them or what is good for the community; this provides opportunity to explore the nature and value of community spirit and how we might know what the right thing to do is. This stimulus is suitable for students who have experienced introductory lessons, to apply and further consolidate their learning.

**Resource name:** ‘Flying’, *Spot and Stripe*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Episode 23, *Spot and Stripe*, The Philosophy Man, Jason Buckley (available on [Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/198756155))

About the resource:

In this episode, Spot and Stripe consider whether it would be good if people could fly. They discuss the reasons and possible consequences that support each stance on this issue, including the reasons why this would be a useful skill for people to have, and also the negative consequences that could occur if people could fly. This stimulus models how to consider different reasons and invites students to continue the discussion. It opens up exploration into whether the use of the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is always about ethical outcomes – for example, whether flying to save time or to just have fun has an ethical aspect – and more broadly it creates opportunity to discuss what is meant by a good or bad idea. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** ‘Teasing’, *Bluey*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** LUDO Studios, 2018 (may be available on [ABC iview](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/bluey))

About the resource:

What is the difference between teasing and playing? Is one of them ‘wrong’ and the other ‘right’? And if so, what makes it so? In this episode, Bluey, Bingo, Mum and Dad explore these questions through a range of contentious examples that Dad says are ‘not teasing’ but Bluey and Bingo think are teasing. We then get more information about each of the examples, providing opportunity for a deeper discussion about the difference between teasing and playing, including the role of feelings. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** ‘Dad Dancing’, *Kazoops!*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Cheeky Little Media Productions, 2016 (may be available on [ABC iview](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/kazoops))

About the resource:

In this episode, older sister Jeanie is teaching her family some moves from her dance class. Dad claims that he is not a very good dancer and does not want to join in – and when he does the results are less than graceful. Monty poses the question ‘Do you have to be good at something to enjoy doing it?’.

This episode provides opportunity to discuss how the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are used in different ways and to consider to what extent feelings should be considered when deciding to act. In particular, the stimulus could provoke discussion about what it is to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at something and whether the meaning in this context has an ethical aspect. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** ‘Pirates’, *Spot and Stripe*

**Resource type:** Video

**Source:** Episode 18, *Spot and Stripe*, The Philosophy Man, Jason Buckley (available on [Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/198473273))

About the resource:

In this episode, Stripe is a pirate named Captain Stripe who has been sailing the seven seas for a long time and has saved enough money and treasures to be able to live comfortably. However, Captain Stripe has a treasure map that would allow him to make one last voyage to find an immense bounty of treasure. If he finds the treasure, Stripe would be rich; however, if he leaves his home, he may never come back, as this journey leads him through a dangerous part of the ocean. Should Captain Stripe make this one last voyage and have the possibility of being rich forever or should he be happy with what he has? What is the right thing to do? This stimulus provides opportunity to discuss how risks in comparison to potential benefits might influence what we consider the right thing to do. This resource is suitable as an introductory stimulus.

**Resource name:** *Kept In*

**Resource type:** Painting

**Source:** Ralph Hedley, 1908, *Kept In*, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (image available on [Art UK Website](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/kept-in-36558/search/actor%3Ahedley-ralph-18481913/view_as/grid/page/4))

About the resource:

This painting, titled *Kept In*, was painted in 1908 and depicts an image of a young boy in what appears to be an olden-days classroom. He is sitting on a wooden bench and peering over a tatty book. The open-ended nature of the artwork means that the teacher can use a range of ethical concepts and leading ideas and questions based on this stimulus, beginning with the title, which implies that this child has been ‘kept in’ after class. The stimulus provides opportunity to discuss the distinction between good and bad behaviour and why we might interpret consequences as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, including the role of feelings. This resource is suitable as a stimulus for students who have already been introduced to the Foundation to Level 2 content descriptions.

**Resource name:** *Fox*

**Resource type:** Picture book

**Source:** Margaret Wild (author) and Ron Brooks (illustrator), 2004, *Fox*, Allen and Unwin Children’s Books, Sydney, Australia

About the resource:

*Fox* tells the story of a one-eyed dog who rescues an injured bird. The bird soon becomes the dog’s eyes and he becomes her wings as he runs through the forest with her on his back. Then, one day, a fox comes to join them in their cave, and this event brings about changes to the dynamics, thoughts and emotions of the characters. The decisions of characters are also affected, for example, when Bird chooses to leave Dog and go with Fox.

This story includes a number of ethical considerations and concepts involving ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Questions such as ‘Is Fox bad/good?’ and ‘Did Bird do the wrong/a bad thing by leaving Dog?’ can help students to explore the nature of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Concepts within the book, including friendship, loyalty, risk and betrayal, can assist students to understand that reasons for making judgments about good, bad, right or wrong are often linked to other ethical concepts, for example, justifying what Bird did in leaving Dog as ‘wrong’ based on ideas of what friends owe each other. The open-ended nature of this book, as well as its open conclusion, provide the impetus for further discussion and inquiry. This resource is suitable as a stimulus for students who have already had introductory lessons.