



## THE HAPPY PRISONER (ADAPTED)

An adaptation of The Happy Prisoner (taken from The If Machine, p93)

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### STIMULUS

Sit one child in the center of the room and say:

“

This person is in a room. A locked room and the key has been thrown away. Whatever happens in this story it is important to remember that this person cannot leave the room. However, they can have whatever they want inside the room. Any suggestions?

”

As pupils suggest things the child in the middle can decide whether she wants them in the room or not. At a certain point you will want to say

“

by the way if you want to put something quite large we can make the room bigger, as long as she doesn't leave the room

”

**Inclusion strategy:** For the above stage ask everyone to stand up first. Then ask for things they can put in the room. Once a person has contributed an idea they can sit down. Continue at a quick pace until everyone is sat down. This gives everyone a chance to participate easily. It also means that everyone has added to the story, so they are likely to feel a little more invested.

“

So, imagine we put all these things (list a few of their ideas) in to the room and whatever else she wanted. I have one question...

”

### Task Question:

- ✓ Is s/he free?

### Nested Questions

- ✓ What is freedom?
- ✓ Is freedom getting what you want?
- ✓ Can you be free if you don't get what you want?
- ✓ Are we free?
- ✓ Is there anyone who we would place at the other end?

### ACTIVITY:

Place two pieces of paper or white boards at opposite sides of the circle. One has FREE written on it, the other has NOT FREE on it. Ask children where the person in

the room should go. Leave it open as to whether freedom is linear or binary (So don't ask, "Free or not free?" instead ask, "Free, not free or something else?")

Is there anyone who we would place at the other end?

Continue to add people to FREE or NOT FREE (or anywhere in between), allowing children to move people around as the arguments develop.

**Suggested characters from children's suggestions:**

- ✓ *Dogs (Are you free if you are owned?)*
- ✓ *Kings/Queens (Does freedom come with power?)*
- ✓ *Children (often in the middle)*
- ✓ *Explorer who can go wherever they want, even in to space (free through movement?)*
- ✓ *A person who is dreaming/believes they are free (free as a perception?)*
- ✓ *God (free to do anything)*
- ✓ *Prisoner (not freed – trapped in one place)*
- ✓ *Wheelchair user (Best to check with class teacher first)*