

## Teacher's notes

The following lesson plan aims to encourage students to think about the topic of moral dilemmas on the basis of two short stories. The short stories deal with dilemmas during war time and can be accessed via the following links (two stories were chosen because the first one (The Sniper) is very short (only two A4 pages):

The Sniper by Liam O'Flaherty (1923) <https://americanliterature.com/author/liam-oflaherty/short-story/the-sniper>

A Horseman in the Sky by Ambrose Bierce (1889) <https://americanliterature.com/author/ambrose-bierce/short-story/a-horseman-in-the-sky>

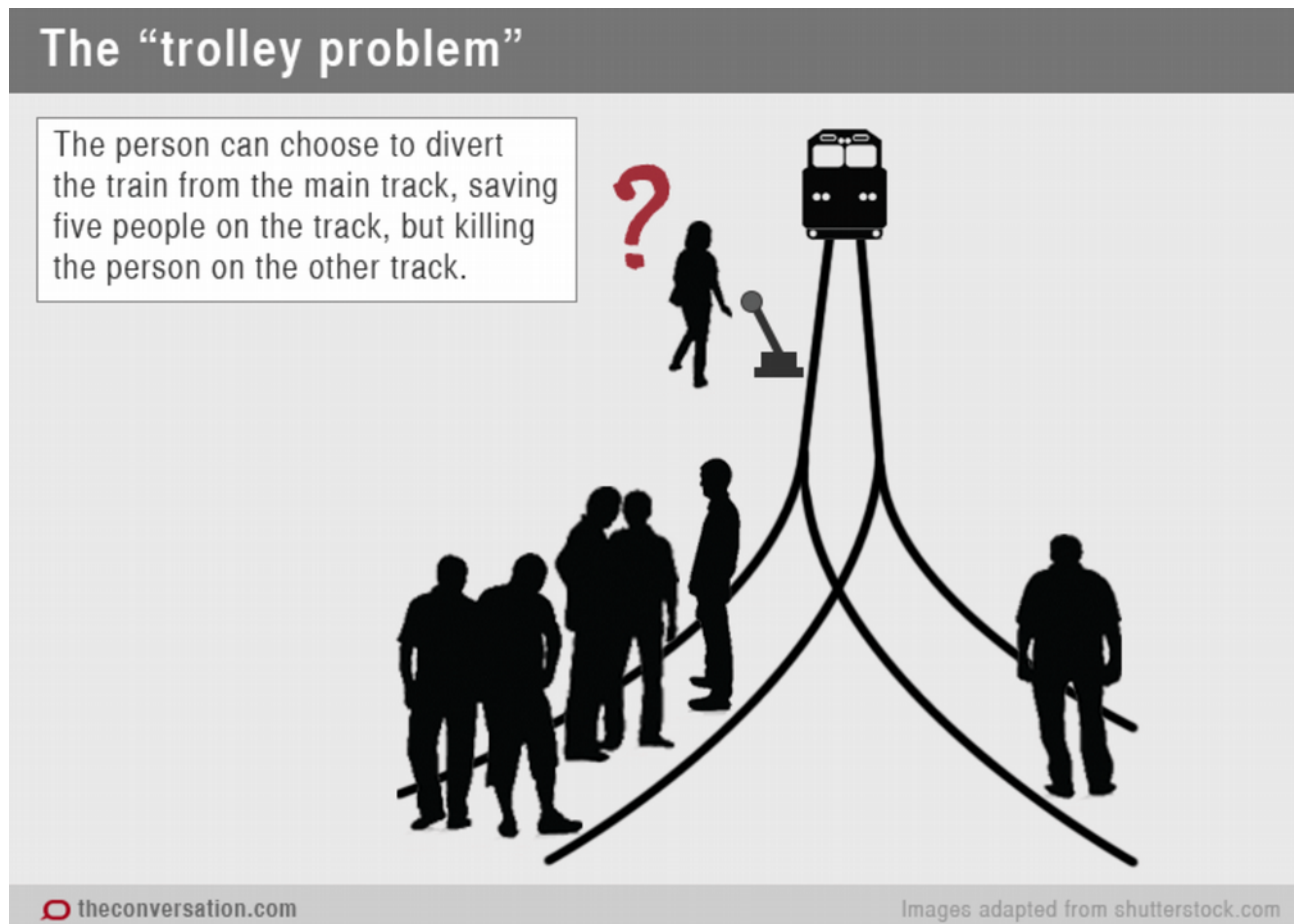
Time needed: 2 lessons

Suggested age group/level: Year 7

Stage	Task	Approx. duration [minutes]
<b>Lesson 1</b>		
Pre-reading	Teacher hands out worksheets	1
	Think-Pair-Share* to get students thinking about the topic and activate prior knowledge (and language skills)	10-15
	The „trolley problem“: T shows slide (see next page) and explains what the so-called „trolley problem“ is; this is followed by a whole-class discussion on what they would do if they faced such a dilemma	10-15
While-reading	T hands out first text (The Sniper), Ss start reading → IMPORTANT: Teacher has removed the last half sentence before copying the text („...looked into his brother's face“	15
	Ss talk to their neighbour about their suggestions as to the story's ending; T reveals the final words before setting homework task and handing out second story	5
Homework task	Ss read the second short story and take notes (see worksheet)	
<b>Lesson 2</b>		
Post-reading	Ss draw a Venn diagram to compare the two stories with regard to the protagonists and their dilemmas; they discuss it with a partner and share with the whole class	20 15-20
	Time permitting: Class discussion (using quotes as springboards for discussion) as topic wrap-up	
Homework task	Ss either write an alternative ending OR continue the story	
*T-P-S: <u>think</u> - students first collect ideas individually, <u>pair</u> – they discuss their ideas with a partner, <u>share</u> - they share with the entire class		

## The „trolley problem“

for a detailed explanation see <http://www.trolleydilemma.com/> or  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem)



## Student Worksheet

### Pre-reading task: Think-Pair-Share

Think about the following questions and write down your answers (key words). Then discuss your ideas with your neighbour and finally share it with your class mates.

What is a moral dilemma?

Have you ever faced a moral dilemma? What was it? How did you resolve it?



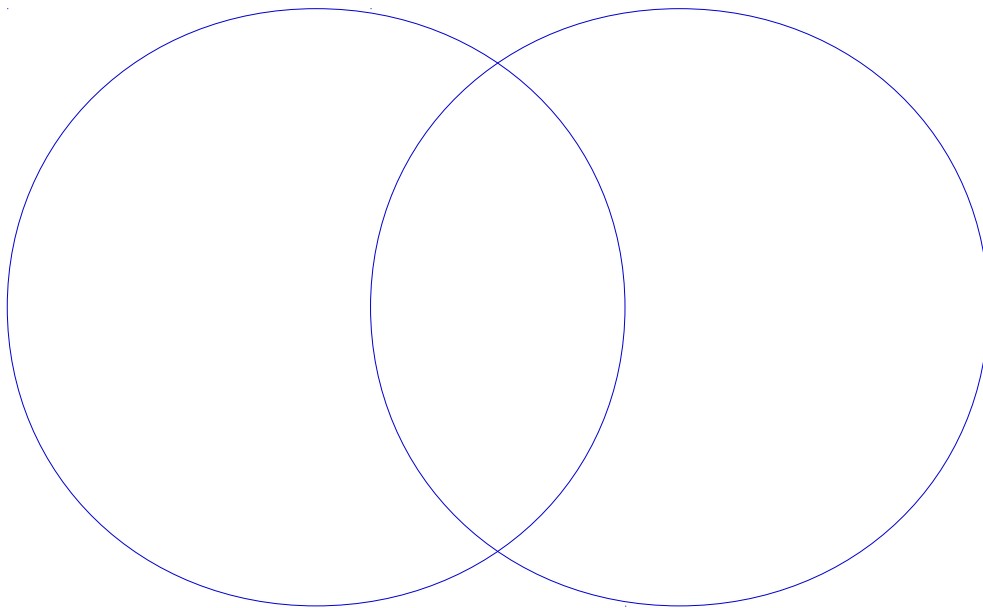
**The „trolley problem“** - How would you react?

**Reading:** Now read the short story „The Sniper“ by Liam O’Flaherty. The last sentence is half missing – what do you think will happen? Talk to your neighbour, then share your ideas with the class.

**Homework Task:** Read the short story „A Horseman in the Sky“ by Ambrose Bierce and take notes on the protagonist’s dilemma (What is it? How does he resolve it?) and think about your own opinion on it.

**Compare the two protagonists:** Fill in the Venn diagram below. The following questions may help you:

Describe the protagonists characters – are they alike? In which respects do they differ? Do the two protagonists face the same dilemma? Why/Why not? How do they react to the conflict they're facing? Which role do the following aspects play: family, fulfilment of duties, survival, compassion & conscience, treason, judgement.



**Talk to a partner** about their ideas; then you can explain your diagram to your class mates.

**Homework task:** Did you like the endings? If not, write your own alternative ending to one of the stories. OR Continue the story – what happens to the protagonist? Can he live with what he's done?

**For the teacher: Time permitting – class discussion** as topic wrap-up using quotes from the text as springboards for discussion:

Text 1:

*The sniper lay still for a long time nursing his wounded arm and planning escape. Morning must not find him wounded on the roof. The enemy on the opposite roof covered his escape. He must kill that enemy and he could not use his rifle. He had only a revolver to do it. Then he thought of a plan.*

*The sniper looked at his enemy falling and he shuddered. The lust of battle died in him. He became bitten by remorse. The sweat stood out in beads on his forehead. Weakened by his wound and the long summer day of fasting and watching on the roof, he revolted from the sight of the shattered mass of his dead enemy. His teeth chattered, he began to gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody.*

*He looked at the smoking revolver in his hand, and with an oath he hurled it to the roof at his feet. The revolver went off with a concussion and the bullet whizzed past the sniper's head. He was frightened back to his senses by the shock. His nerves steadied. The cloud of fear scattered from his mind and he laughed.*

Text 2:

*The father lifted his leonine head, looked at the son a moment in silence, and replied: "Well, go, sir, and whatever may occur do what you conceive to be your duty. Virginia, to which you are a traitor, must get on without you. Should we both live to the end of the war, we will speak further of the matter.*

*So Carter Druse, bowing reverently to his father, who returned the salute with a stately courtesy that masked a breaking heart, left the home of his childhood to go soldiering.*

*The duty of the soldier was plain: the man must be shot dead from ambush--without warning, without a moment's spiritual preparation, with never so much as an unspoken prayer, he must be sent to his account.*

*In his memory, as if they were a divine mandate, rang the words of his father at their parting: "Whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty." He was calm now. His teeth were firmly but not rigidly closed; his nerves were as tranquil as a sleeping babe's--not a tremor affected any muscle of his body; his breathing, until suspended in the act of taking aim, was regular and slow. Duty had conquered; the spirit had said to the body: "Peace, be still." He fired.*