



PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING

Level 1 Philosophical Plumbing worksheet

Difficulty: ■□□

This is Mary Midgley.

Mary was a philosopher. Philosophers think about **Big Questions**. For example:

- What do people need to be happy?
- How are humans like other animals?
- How should we treat people that we love?

People often disagree about the answers to **Big Questions**. Mary thought that a philosopher needs to listen to lots of people's ideas before making up their own mind.

ACTIVITY 1

Here are some other examples of **Big Questions**.

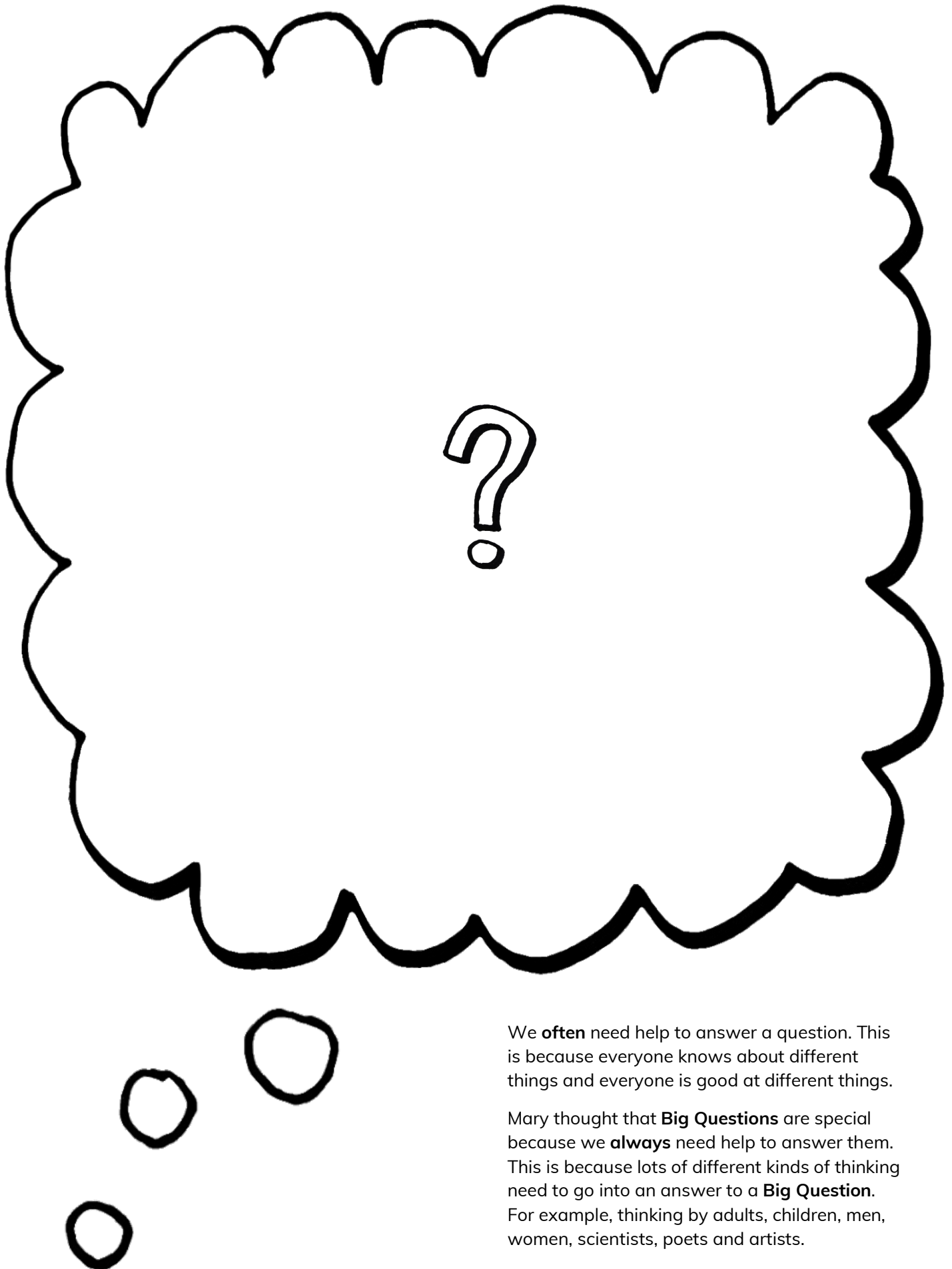
Answer these questions. Then ask friends or family for their answers. Are they different?



What is good and bad?	What makes a good friend?
What makes you different from other people?	What makes humans different from other animals?

ACTIVITY 2

Can you think of any Big Questions of your own?



We **often** need help to answer a question. This is because everyone knows about different things and everyone is good at different things.

Mary thought that **Big Questions** are special because we **always** need help to answer them. This is because lots of different kinds of thinking need to go into an answer to a **Big Question**. For example, thinking by adults, children, men, women, scientists, poets and artists.

Let's answer a Big Question together!

Mary was interested in the **Big Question**:
“What do people need to be happy?”

This is an important **Big Question**. If we do not know the answer to this question then we might make schools, jobs, and a world that make people unhappy.

To answer this **Big Question**, we can begin by asking lots of different people the smaller question: “What do you need to be happy?”

ACTIVITY 3

Connect the person to the answer. Add in a drawing of yourself and your answer.

What do you need to be happy?

I need to learn about the world.
I work with a team and we do experiments. I have to use my imagination to solve problems and find connections.

I need to be able to play with my friends. We like inventing stories and make-believe.
I like helping in the garden and learning about nature.

I need to think and write. I like making rhymes and thinking about language.
I enjoy trying to find new ways to share my emotions and ideas.

I need to be creative. I love looking at people for a long time and noticing what is special about them, then trying to copy it.

Poet



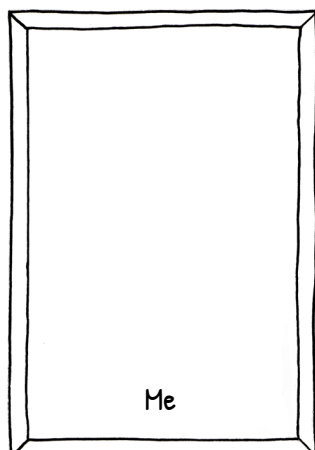
Artist



Scientist



Child



I need...

'**Philosophical Plumbing**' is Mary's idea about how we can answer **Big Questions**. Think about all the pipes in our houses and workplaces, and under the ground beneath our towns and cities.

Plumbers connect pipes so that water can flow. When pipes get blocked or need to be connected, they find the problem and fix it.

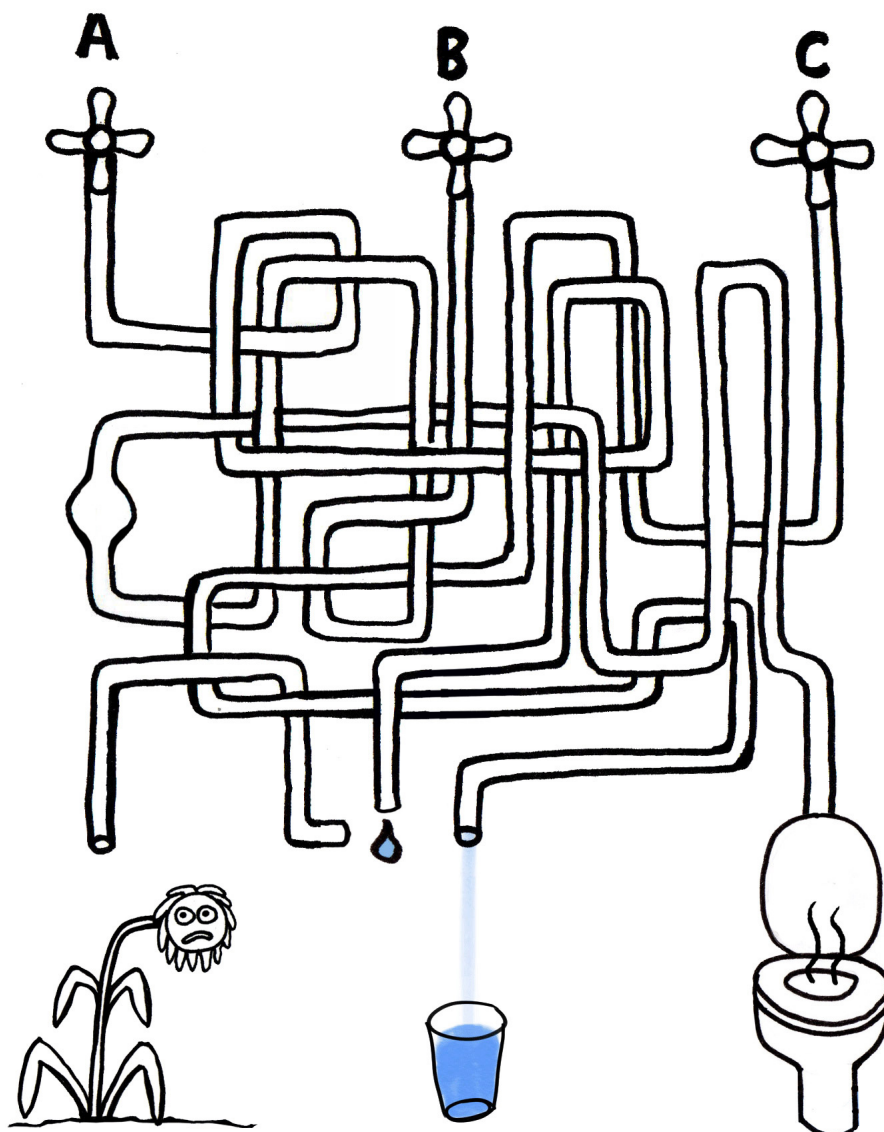
ACTIVITY 4

There's a problem with the plumbing...

Which tap do you need to turn off to prevent the glass overflowing?

Which pipe do you need to connect to water the flower?

Which pipe do you need to unblock to flush the toilet?

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Philosophical Plumbers also solve problems. They make connections and remove blockages when our ideas don't flow. They connect the different answers that different people give to make **Big Answers** to **Big Questions**. They find similarities and differences and connect ideas together.

ACTIVITY 5

Let's be philosophical plumbers!

Look at the different answers people gave to the question in Activity 3:

"What do you need to be happy?"

Can you see any connections between their answers? In the picture below, draw lines to connect the people with the things they need. What needs do the people share?

CHALLENGE

Ask your friends and family what they need to be happy. Find the connections between their ideas.

What do different people need to be happy?

I need to be creative

I need to share ideas

I need to be with other people

I need to learn

I need to...

I need to...



CHALLENGE

Add any other connections that you find.

ACTIVITY 6

Can you answer the Big Question: "What do people need to be happy?"

Be a philosopher plumber and join the answers together to make one Big Answer to a Big Question. Try to make sure everyone's view is included, including your own.

To be happy, people need...

CHALLENGE

Design a school that would make people happy! What lessons would there be? How would it look? What would you do all day? How would it compare to your school?



Did you enjoy learning about Mary Midgley's philosophy? Perhaps her ideas about 'Philosophical Plumbing' have inspired you to new ways of thinking and imagining?

If so, why not become a **Mary Midgley Young Poet**! For information about how to do so go to notesfromabiscuittin.com/young-poets