

English 96

Discussion Activities for Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave”

Welcome to Plato’s Cave

1. Retell Plato’s allegory
2. Have students volunteer to “re-create” Plato’s cave.
 - a. Darken the room, if possible.
 - b. Have two or three students volunteer to be actors. They silently re-enact some everyday scene.
 - c. Have one person shine a flashlight so as to direct the shadows of the actors on one of the walls of the classroom.
 - d. The rest of the class can only look at the shadows cast on the wall and will attempt to figure out what the performing students are doing.
 - e. Repeat as necessary

What Does It Mean?

Working in small groups, list what each of these elements from Plato’s allegory might symbolize in your life. You do not need to agree—if the group comes up with multiple meanings for any of the elements, list them all.

What do these things symbolize in your life?

The cave

The shadows

The fire

The light

The prisoners

The shackles

The voices

When all the groups have finished, we will discuss these responses.

Writing (Time Permitting)

Use one of your reading journals to write on the following topic. “Seeing the light” is a common philosophical metaphor in many cultures and religions. Using what you have learned from the “Allegory of the Cave” and from your own experiences, describe a situation in which you or someone you know was liberated from “darkness” and now lives outside of the “cave.”