

# The Ethical Butterfly: Opt-in vs. Opt-out

(Year 9 - Ages 14-15)

## Lesson 6 of 9

### Lesson Overview

Lesson Title:	The Ethical Butterfly: Opt-in vs. Opt-out
Year Level:	Year 9 (Ages 14-15)
Lesson Duration:	60 minutes
Key Focus Areas:	Bioethics, Civics, Consent Models, Debate.
Curriculum Links:	<p>Australian Curriculum – Health and Physical Education (Foundation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>AC9HS9K04</u>: The role of political parties and... how citizens participate in Australia's democracy. (Focus on how laws influence social behaviour and policy debate)</li><li>• <u>AC9HP10P05</u>: Critique behaviours and community actions that impact health and wellbeing. (Analyzing health policy effectiveness)</li><li>• <u>AC9E9LY02</u>: Plan, create and edit... texts... to present a point of view. (Debating skills)</li></ul>

### Learning Intentions

- Differentiate between "Hard Opt-in", "Soft Opt-in" (Australia), and "Opt-out" (Deemed Consent) systems.
- Analyze the ethical implications of "Silence as Consent" versus "Active Choice."
- Investigate whether changing the legal system (e.g., to Opt-out) effectively increases donation rates if family trust is not maintained.
- Construct a reasoned argument for or against a specific consent model based on ethical evidence.

### Success Criteria

- Define "Opt-in" and "Opt-out" using the "Subscription" analogy (e.g., subscribing to a newsletter vs. being auto-subscribed).
- Explain why Australia's system is described as "Soft" (because the family is still consulted).
- Identify one benefit and one risk of an "Opt-out" system.
- Participate in a "Town Hall" debate, using at least one statistic or ethical principle to support their view.



# Teaching Sequence

Work through this lesson in the following sequence:

Duration	Part	Focus
15 minutes	Part A: The Silence Experiment	Hook: Simulating an "Opt-out" rule in class.
15 minutes	Part B: Decoding the System	Worksheet: Defining the terms and analyzing the psychology.
20 minutes	Part C: The Town Hall	Structured Debate (Pro vs. Con).
10 minutes	Part D: The Verdict	Reflection: Why "Family Knowledge" trumps "Legal Systems."

## Part A: The Silence Experiment (15 minutes)

### Step 1. The Setup

- Action: Start the lesson by writing a new "Rule" on the board. "Everyone stays 10 mins after class to clean. If you disagree, sign this sheet at the front."
- Wait: Teach normally for 5 mins. Then ask: "Who is staying to clean?"
- Discuss: "Most of you didn't sign the sheet. Does that mean you want to clean? Or were you just busy/lazy?"

### Step 2. The Concept

- Link: "This is the Default Effect. Opt-out systems assume your silence is a 'Yes'. Opt-in systems require you to speak up."

## Part B: Decoding the System (15 minutes)

### Step 1. Definitions (Worksheet Part 2)

- Direct Instruction: Use the Teacher Content to explain Hard/Soft Opt-in vs Opt-out.
- Visual: Show the world map (Blue vs Green countries).
- Activity: Students complete the definitions table.

### Step 2. The Family Factor

- Discuss: "Even in Opt-out countries, doctors ask the family. If the family doesn't know, they often say No to be safe. So, changing the law doesn't fix the communication problem."



## Part C: The Town Hall (20 minutes)

### Step 1. Preparation

- Task: Divide the room. Left = Keep Opt-in. Right = Switch to Opt-out.
- Drafting: Students write their argument in Part 3 of the Worksheet.

### Step 2. The Debate

- Format: "Ping Pong." One student from Left speaks, then one from Right.
- Challenge: Encourage students to use the words "Trust," "Freedom," "Laziness," and "Safety."

## Part D: The Verdict (10 minutes)

### Step 1. The Reality Check

- Say: "The debate is interesting, but here is the reality: In Australia, the family has the final say. The law helps, but the Conversation is the key."

### Step 2. Reflection

- Exit Ticket: "Does an Opt-out system make you feel more or less trusting of the government? Why?"

## Differentiated Learning

- Extension:
  - Students research the "Nudge Unit" (Behavioral Insights Teams) in governments and find other examples of "Defaults" being used (e.g., Superannuation, plastic bag bans).
- Learning Support:
  - Provide a "Pros and Cons" list on the board for students to choose from during the debate preparation.

## Teacher Reflection

- Did the "Silence Experiment" effectively demonstrate the flaw in assuming silence = consent?
- Were students respectful of differing ethical views?
- Did they grasp that the "Legal System" is secondary to the "Family System"?

## Assessment

- Worksheet (Part 2): Assess understanding of the psychological difference between Active and Passive choice.
- Debate: Assess critical thinking—can they see the pros and cons of their side?

## Additional Notes:

This lesson is intellectually stimulating for Year 9s who are beginning to question rules and authority. It validates their desire for autonomy. Ensure you clarify that while Opt-out sounds efficient, it carries ethical risks (mistrust). The conclusion should always circle back to the unit's core theme: Communication is the solution.

