

ETHICS CHALLENGE: FRIEND, FOE, OR FEAST?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Grade Levels: 6-12

In this lesson, students will participate in a writing activity and in-depth discussion about whether it is possible to hold on to one's humanity during a catastrophic disaster.

STANDARDS

CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
CCSS ELA.CCRA.W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will write an argument supporting their decision in an ethical dilemma.
- Students will discuss and explore the possible consequences of that decision.

MATERIALS

- Images depicting individuals in a post-disaster situation

PROCEDURES

Procedures for Ashfall Ethics Challenge

- STEP 1:** Show students a picture of a person who appears to have been involved in a recent catastrophic event (earthquake, terrorist attack, volcanic eruption, etc.) Use the picture provided or locate pictures of your own.
- STEP 2:** Inform students that they were also affected by the same disaster, and that as the situation worsens, their ability to survive this apocalyptic situation will become increasingly difficult. Students must decide what they would do if they came into contact with this person.
- STEP 3:** Introduce this writing prompt to the students. What would you do when coming into contact with this person?
1. Befriend the individual and attempt to form a mutually beneficial relationship.
 2. Hide from the individual because he or she might jeopardize your safety or supplies.
 3. Attack the individual and attempt to steal whatever resources he or she has to better ensuring your survival.

Students should decide what they would do by simply looking at the picture. They will know nothing else about the person. They must explain the reasoning behind their decision and why they think it is the best option. Encourage students to create a background story for the person pictured and use that to defend their responses (e.g. could the person be a great hunter, a surgeon, nurse, dangerous criminal, etc.) Encourage students to carefully consider what they believe and what they think they are really capable of.

- STEP 4:** Once students have been given ample time to make their decision and form their argument, engage students in a discussion about the possible repercussions of each of the available options. They should explore the possible benefits and dangers of each response. During this time, have students share their essays and explain their reasoning. Students will likely offer a variety of reasons why they made their decision.
- STEP 5:** Pose these follow-up questions:
- After hearing your peers' responses and discussing the possible outcomes of this scenario, do you think there is one correct way to react?
 - How would your response to this question change if you were in charge of protecting your friends and/or family?
 - How would your response to this question change if you knew the aftereffects of the catastrophic event were permanent and that the world you lived in before the event would never exist again?
 - How would your response change if the picture was of a very elderly woman? If you would respond differently, please explain.
- STEP 6:** Optional research project: Have students research historical examples of how people have reacted to catastrophic disasters. For example, students could research the Donner Party in which multiple individuals resorted to cannibalism to stay alive or Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, after which people looted to get the survival resources they needed. You could have students research the many "ordinary" people that performed great acts of heroism after the Twin Towers collapsed on 9/11. They could use this research to reflect on how they would have behaved in each of those real-life situations.

GUIDING INFORMATION

The overlying themes of the writing and discussion should be: Is it possible for humans to maintain their humanity in the face of catastrophic events? Can humans still behave like humans when faced with a high probability of death and destruction? Is there a correct answer to whether they should help the individual in the picture? If students decide to attack the person and steal from them, does that mean that supplies and resources are more valuable than the person's life? Is this an acceptable way to behave in an apocalyptic scenario? What are humans truly capable of (good and bad) when faced with a life or death situation?

ETHICS CHALLENGE IMAGE



RUBRIC

	Target (3)	Meets (2)	Partially Meets (1)	Does Not Meet (0)
ARGUMENT SUPPORT	Argument addresses all prompt questions and provides ample reasons and examples.	Argument addresses all prompt questions and provides some reasons or examples.	Argument either does not address all prompt questions or does not provide enough reasons.	Argument does not address all prompt questions and does not provide reasons.
GRAMMAR AND SPELLING	There are no spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are a couple spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are several spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.	There are many spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.
WRITING STRUCTURE	The writing is very well organized. One idea or scene follows into another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The writing is well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Transitions are used.	The structure of the writing is somewhat confusing. The transitions are sometimes unclear.	The writing lacks coherent organization.
REQUIREMENTS	Meets all of the requirements for the project.	Meets most of the requirements for the project.	Meets some of the requirements for the project.	Does not meet the requirements for the project.
DEMONSTRATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT IN DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES	Does a great job showing an understanding of the content covered in class.	Does an okay job showing an understanding of the content covered in class.	Tries but has a difficult time showing an understanding of the content covered in class.	Does not show an understanding of the content covered in class.
TOTAL				/15