

# A Discussion on Ethics

TOPIC: ETHICS

GRADES: 9-12

LESSON DURATION: 45-60 MINUTES

SOFT SKILLS: COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, CRITICAL THINKING

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## Introduction:

- As the world becomes more and more automated, the legal and ethical ramifications of the technology boom have just begun. This lesson introduces students to ethical questions that have yet to be answered. The goal is to allow students to discuss these examples (and others) while developing a sense of the changing world and the ethical ramifications.
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## Learning Outcomes:

- Students will think critically on a variety of ethical situations and develop intelligent responses.
  - Students will display understanding of the ethical ramifications of technological advancements.
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## Materials:

- [Student worksheet](#)
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## Activities:

1. The teacher should begin with a discussion of ethics. What are ethics? How are ethics different than laws? How does one become ethical? Give examples of ethical and unethical behaviors.
2. Now begin a discussion on the difficulty of ethics. The following scenarios should be presented to students. The teacher can decide how students should respond: verbal discussion, group work, individual written responses, etc. A worksheet has been made and is available [here](#).
3. Scenarios:
  - A. *If a robot surgeon makes a fatal error while performing surgery and the patient dies, who is responsible?*
  - B. *My "Smart toothbrush" can store and send my data straight to my dentist. What are my dentist's ethical and legal obligations to me as a client?... Or is it the responsibility of the manufacturer to produce a "safe" device?*
  - C. *When a self-driving car gets in an accident, who will be at fault? Can the non-driving passenger be sued?*
  - D. *When a self-driving car is about to be involved in a collision, should its crash-optimization software be programmed to make it hit a telephone pole (kill the passengers), swerve left into the motorcycle, swerve right into the minivan, or continue straight onto the sidewalk and hit the pedestrians?*

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- E. *An unmanned drone unexpectedly begins acting erratically and crashes into a playground, injuring several elementary students during recess. Who is responsible?*
  - F. *In the year 2024, the world is rocked by a series of Coups d'états. All coups are made possible by a newly emerged social media platform. Without this new technology linking emerging dictators, these coups would never have been successful. Is the social media platform legally or ethically responsible for the many deaths that occurred and are likely occur under such dictators?*
  - G. *A company begins to market and advertise unmanned passenger drones for urban environments. What sorts of ethical issues should the manufacture be aware of before going public?*
  - H. *A major online goods store begins to utilize robots for delivery purposes. The company does not manufacture the robots but has a contract with a company who does. A small fleet of the robots begin behaving erratically and enters homes while delivering a package. Homeowners across the country are seriously injured by these "evil" robots. Research shows that the robots were "hacked" by a group of foreign hackers. Who is responsible for the injuries?*
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### **Enrichment/Follow-up:**

1. After the activity, further assessment can occur with the following scenario: You have been hired by Google to develop a code of ethics for all automation/AI-both in the present and the future. Develop this code of ethics.
2. Have students work in small groups or as a class to develop a "Code of Ethics" for their school.

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