

Student handout 2.3

How would you decide? Dilemma case stories

1. That's not my litter

Litter has been a big issue at your school. Discussions have been held, and some classes have written up rules on a big chart and solemnly signed them – we want our school be a clean, friendly place, and we will deposit our litter in one of the many litter bins on the premises. You have taken this initiative very seriously, as you don't like putting up with other people's dirt and litter.

During the lunch break, you come across a heap of paper bags, fruit peel, and even a half-eaten pizza in the school yard – right next to an empty litter bin. There are plenty of students around, but you do not know if they are responsible for the mess. What do you do? Pick up the litter – or leave it?

2. My best friend – a dealer

Your best friend is suspected of having dealt drugs on the school premises. You know the suspicions are correct. The head teacher is seriously concerned about the matter, as he wants to protect the students, particularly the younger ones. Apart from that, he does not want to see any reports in the media. He knows you are friends, so he has asked you to come to his office.

If you say what you know, your friend will have to leave the school and may be taken to court. If you do not give evidence, you are breaking the law, and you may be in trouble yourself. In this situation, a compromise is not possible. Either you tell the head teacher what you know or you don't.

The situation becomes even more complicated as you do not know what your friend will do. Will he keep silent? Or might he even confess if he is offered a milder punishment?

3. My friend wants to catch the train

It is 6 a.m. on a cold winter morning. You passed your driving test three months ago and haven't had much practice in driving yet. Now you are driving your friend to the railway station. Before you started, you had to scratch a layer of ice off the windscreen, and then you had to stop at a filling station on the way.

Now you are late. The station is 3 km away, and your friend has to catch the train in 10 minutes, and she needs to buy a ticket.

The speed limit is 50 km/h, as is usual in town. As far as you can see, the road is empty. "Come on, speed up a bit," your friend demands. What do you do?

4. Which bananas shall I buy?

You want to buy some fruit in a supermarket. Two types of bananas are on sale; both seem to be good quality – they are ripe and in perfect condition. One batch of bananas is a bit cheaper than the other. The more expensive one carries a "Fair Trade" sticker, and an information leaflet tells you that a certain amount of the sum you pay will go directly to support the small farmers overseas. They need capital to develop their banana plantations – by our standards, a very modest amount. Which bananas do you buy?