

NAME _____

DATE _____

Admissions Dilemma

Part 1: Dilemma

Read the text below.

ADMISSIONS DILEMMA

Alex was recently accepted to a prestigious college and joined a private online group made up of other accepted students. In the group, students were exchanging inappropriate jokes. Some jokes were hateful toward certain groups of people. Alex was taken aback by what the other students were sharing, but also unsure of what college would be like and anxious to make new friends. After reading some of the other students' posts, Alex contributed a joke that mocked a minority group. A few weeks later, the college's admissions team learned about the online group and decided to take back admission offers from students who contributed hateful content, including Alex. Alex was no longer welcome to attend the university.

Do you agree with the college's decision to take back Alex's admission offer? Why or why not?

Part 2: Take a Stand

Complete the steps below to take a stand on the issue. Some steps are done individually, and others as a class.

TAKE A STAND

(On your own.) What do you think? Explain your perspective.

on their own, have students reflect on their perspective. They could take one minute to think and three to four minutes to write their responses on the handout. You can provide anchors to help students start their responses, such as a line from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree where students mark their position along the continuum.

Encourage students to consider the arguments for and against regulating hate speech they discussed in the previous activity.

The aim of this step is to support students' immediate reaction, thinking, and reflection -- no need for them to write out a full paragraph or complete sentences. Getting down thoughts in the form of bullet points or keywords works.



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STAND BACK

(As a group.) Where do your classmates stand? Listen to their perspectives.

As a group, first get a sense of where students stand. You can either have students:

- Give a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs sideways to signal if they agree, disagree, or are undecided, or
- Get up and position themselves physically to show where they stand. Assign each corner of the room to one of these positions, or form a line along one wall. It's helpful to have signs to remind students where to go -- e.g., for "Strongly Agree" vs. "Strongly Disagree."

Invite students to share their perspectives. Try to hear from students who have different perspectives. As students share their views, document themes from their responses on the board. For example, if a student shares "it's unfair," you might write "Fairness/Unfairness"; if a student shares "they might have made a mistake and should be forgiven," you could write "Mistakes" and/or "Forgiveness." Your aim as a facilitator is to help surface as many different considerations as possible.

Encourage students to show changes in their thinking. As students listen to their classmates' perspectives, their own stance on the dilemma may shift. If students have physically located themselves on a line or in different corners of the room to show where they stand, invite them to shift their location to represent any changes in their thinking.

LOOK AGAIN

(On your own.) Look again at your original response. What had you not considered that other people brought up? (Maybe you changed your mind, maybe you didn't -- that's OK! Either way, you heard other views. How has your thinking shifted after hearing your classmates' perspectives, even if you haven't changed your mind?)

on their own, have students look again at their original response and identify what they had not considered. The "Look Again" step is not about asking students, "Did you change your mind?" Rather, the idea is to help them identify ways their thinking has changed based on what they learned and heard. It's powerful to recognize that our perspectives can evolve, deepen, or change when we listen to others. Students don't need to identify considerations that are opposite their perspectives. Perhaps someone had the same general opinion as them (agree/disagree) but raised a consideration that they hadn't thought



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of, which is fine to include here.

Students can use the sentence starters for guidance:

- I had not considered ...
- My perspective did/did not change because ...

LOOK BEYOND

(As a group.) Look beyond this specific case. How does this dilemma remind you of other situations we've explored in class or that you've seen, heard about, or experienced?

Students make connections to situations or experiences beyond this specific dilemma. Ask:

- How does the dilemma connect to other things we've talked about in our class?
- How does the dilemma connect to other situations you've seen, heard about, or experienced?

Your aim is to support students in recognizing connections and applying considerations beyond the current abstract situation.

Part 3: Complicate

In your group, pick and discuss one of the questions below.

- What if Alex was a member of the minority group that he mocked?
- What if the joke was shared in a private text rather than in an online group?
- What if Alex made the joke after he had already started college?

Part 4: Exit Ticket

Take a moment to reflect on today's activity and then respond to the following prompt.

"I used to think _____, and now I think _____."

