

Moral/Ethical Relativism

**Essential Question:** *Is morality relative? Are there any objective truths?*

**Objectives:**

Have students consider the status (?) of their own moral viewpoints, the potential moral value of respecting another's moral beliefs, and how the two intersect/conflict.

**Intro(Relative Beliefs):**

Is it important to respect others' beliefs?

- Religious Practices (Sam)
  - Ex. non-Kosher food should probably not be given to Jewish customer
    - I am not Jewish, so I can eat all the bacon I want. That doesn't mean I should give a Jewish person a BLT
- Personal Wishes (Sam)
  - Even beyond broader cultural behaviors, personal preferences are similarly relative
  - Ex. Maybe I don't like people touching my jacket. You might not mind if someone touches yours, but it bothers me.
    - So, don't touch my jacket
- Extra: How to raise a kid (Jazmyne)
  - Access to electronics(when?)
  - Grounding kids
  - Physical punishment
  -

**Activity (Jazmyne)**

- Do you have the same moral beliefs as your classmates?
  - Think of an example where your own moral beliefs differ from another student's
    - You may speak with a partner to find such a difference if you cannot think of one off of the top of your head
  - If nobody can think of anything, propose a version *trolley problem* to hopefully find varied opinions
    - Ventilator version

**Discussion(Moral Relativism): (Sam)**

- Does the importance of respecting beliefs extend to moral issues?
  - Different cultures have different standards for what is moral and what is not
    - Can the moral value of actions within a certain context be evaluated under the standards of another context?

- Extreme example: Individual bad people might feel that there is no moral weight to harming another person.
  - Does that mean they should be able to harm others without resistance?
    - Most would probably say no
    - Is the individual different from the entire society?
      - Ex. Society of baby-murderers
- What makes moral relativism different from other relativism?
  - Actions impact another person
  - The importance of certain moral issues overrules the positive of respecting beliefs in certain cases
- Intent
  - Is intent the only thing that matters for moral weight?
    - If so, can anyone act unethically?
      - Maybe I think my actions don't accord with general ethical standards, but, if I felt my actions were wrong, I would not make them. Instead, my ethical standards are just different.
      - Therefore, I am acting ethically always.

### **Discussion(Real-World Example)**

- Puerto Rican Cockfighting (Sam)
  - Animal Abuse
    - Different from factory farming?
      - Maybe neither should be allowed
        - Just b/c one isn't stopped, doesn't mean the other shouldn't be
  - Very important to PR culture
    - History of imperialist overreach, etc
  - History
    - Supreme Court banned it
  - Should cockfighting be permitted in Puerto Rico?
    - Also a positive economically
      - 11k jobs, a \$65m annual boost to the economy
      - Is this important?
- Extra: Honor-Killing (Jazmyne)
  - Istanbul: 14-y-o girl raped
    - Her family feels she has dishonored them
      - Kill her to regain honor
  - Right to them
    - Not right by our standards
  - Morality?

