

Ethics Olympiad

2026 INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR SCHOOL ETHICS OLYMPIAD CASES PACKAGE

Welcome to the cases for the 2026 Junior School Ethics Olympiad. The Ethics Olympiad is a collaborative event which encourages students to analyse and discuss real-life, timely, ethical issues. An Ethics Olympiad differs from a debate in that students are not assigned opposing views; rather, they defend whatever position they believe is right and succeed by showing that they have thought more carefully, deeply, and creatively about the cases in question. Experience shows that this type of event encourages and helps students develop ethical awareness, critical thinking skills, civil discourse, civic engagement, and an appreciation for diverse points of view. We are using Zoom to enable schools to participate from throughout Australasia.

Thanks for supporting this initiative. Please feel free to email us if you have any queries at; admin@ethicsolympiad.org Teachers are encouraged to familiarise the students with these cases.

There are six cases. Case 1- 'Online Sport' was written and adapted from a case written by Atharv Bagria at Shiv Nadar School in India as an entry in the 2025 Case writing competition.

Case 2- '*Using Animals*' and Case 5-'*The Invention of lying*'- Professor Tom Wartenberg
<http://whatsthebigideaprogram.com/>

Case 3- 'Changing Schools' was adapted from the US Middle School Ethics Bowl case set - (<https://www.ethicsatkentplace.org/student-programs/middle-school-ethics-bowl>)

Case 4- '*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*' and Case 6- '*The giving Tree*' comes from the Prindle Institute for Ethics (<https://www.prindleinstitute.org/>)

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Case Summary

Case 1 – Online Sport

Case 2 – *Using Animals*

Case 3 – Changing Schools

Case 4 – *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*

Case 5 – *The Invention of Lying*.

Case 6 – *The Giving Tree*

Case 1 – Online Sport

In the 21st century, video games have become more popular than ever before. Millions of people all over the world play games, and over 600 million people watch others play in big competitions called e-sports. Some of the best players train for hours every day and compete on teams, sometimes even representing their country just like athletes in the Olympics.

E-sports started out small with games like *Pong* and *Space Invaders* back in the 1980's but today, they've grown into something huge. Games like *Fortnite*, *League of Legends*, and *Counter-Strike* are now played in professional tournaments with real teams, coaches, and even big businesses that help pay for the events. Companies like Coca-Cola and Microsoft support e-sports and events now have fans, trophies, and prizes worth millions of dollars.

Some people ask if e-sports should be called a real sport. One way to decide is to look at how hard it is to play at the top level. When expert gamers compete, their heart rate and breathing can go up, just like in other sports. Scientists have studied this and found that professional gamers really do use physical and mental energy when they play. They also practise a lot, just like athletes. Playing video games well also takes a lot of skill. Gamers need fast reaction times, sharp thinking, and the ability to work with team mates. Good communication and planning are very important, and the top players practice these skills all of the time. Being great at e-sports doesn't happen by accident—it takes time and effort.

With so many people watching, playing, and cheering for E-sports, it's hard to ignore how much it has grown. But some people still worry. They say that too much gaming can lead to problems like becoming addicted or feeling depressed. If games are not played in a healthy way, they can cause harm. That makes people wonder if e-sports should be seen as a good example for young people or not.

Study Questions:

1. Is it fair to call something a “sport” if it doesn’t involve running or physical activity like football or basketball? Why or why not?
2. If a video game competition helps people learn teamwork and thinking skills, should it be respected in the same way as traditional sports?
3. Do companies that make money from video games have a responsibility to make sure players stay healthy and safe? What should they do?
4. If someone is really good at games but spends too much time gaming and feels lonely or sad, is winning still worth it? Why or why not?
5. Do you think schools should treat e-sports like school sports teams (like soccer or basketball)? What would be good or bad about that?

Case 2 - BABE - Using Animals



Film Summary

Gentle farmer Arthur Hoggett wins a piglet named Babe at a county fair. Narrowly escaping his fate as Christmas dinner when Farmer Hoggett decides to show him at the next fair, Babe bonds with motherly border collie, Fly, and discovers that he too can herd sheep. But will the other farm animals, including Fly's jealous husband Rex, accept a pig who doesn't conform to the farm's social hierarchy?

Click on the image above to watch this small segment of the film Babe.

Study Questions:

- (1) Do you think it is OK to eat animals as long as they are stupid?
- (2) Which animals would you not eat and why?
- (3) All animals can experience pain. Is this relevant to the question of whether it is all right to eat them?
- (4) When you learned that the duck had a name did it change your feelings about the family eating it?
- (5) In China some people eat dogs. In France some people eat horses. Is this any more disgusting than eating cows or pigs?

Case 3 – Changing Schools



Juan and his best mate Ari are in their last year of primary school. They hae been going to the same schools and have been best friends since Year 3. Even though Juan wants to become an artist and Ari wants to become a biologist, they still join the same clubs and love doing things together. They've always said they would go to the same high school.

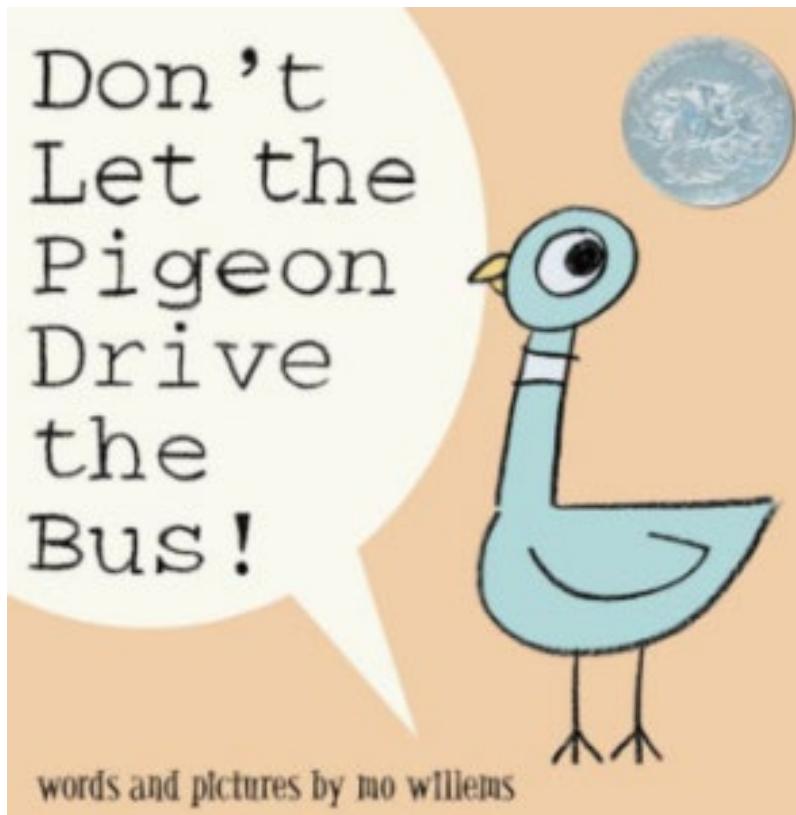
But then, a few months before they need to choose high schools, Juan hears about a brand new school opening up in his area. It's a special school just for kids who are really into art. Juan asks his teacher about it, and his teacher says he would have a good chance of getting in if he applies. Juan feels really excited... until he remembers that he and Ari had always planned to go to the same high school.

Juan feels unsure about what to do. After thinking for a few days, he decides to tell Ari about the art school. He hopes Ari will understand, because they have always talked about their dreams. But when Juan tells him, Ari gets really upset. "What about our promise?" Ari says. "We said we'd go to high school together, just like always!" Juan feels sad and confused. He didn't think Ari would react like that.

Study Questions:

1. What should you do when you've made a promise but a great new chance comes up?
2. What does it mean to be a good and loyal friend?
3. Does Juan owe it to Ari to keep their promise? Why or why not?

Case 4 – Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus



In *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, a bus driver begins the story by expressing to readers the importance of not letting the pigeon drive the bus while he is gone. However, the persuasive pigeon spends the entirety of the book trying to talk us into letting him drive the bus.

Study Questions:

1. Is it ever okay to do something even when it might hurt other people?
2. Should you believe someone if you know they have lied to you many times?
3. Should bigger crimes receive bigger punishments? Why?
4. Should someone be punished for doing something bad if their parent told them to do it? Why or why not?

Case 5 - THE INVENTION OF LYING – Lying



Summary:

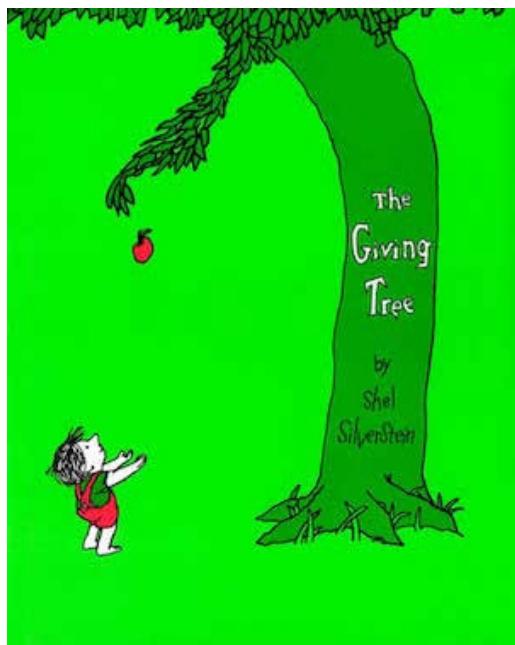
In a world where lying doesn't exist, failing script editor Mark Bellison suddenly develops the ability to bend the truth. Spinning tall tales to get out of trouble his unique ability proves invaluable as the painfully truthful townspeople believe every 'porkie-pie' he utters.

Click on the image above to watch this small segment of the film “The Invention of Lying”

Study Questions

- (1) Each person in the scene says exactly what he or she is thinking of the time. Do you think this makes for an ideal social situation?
- (2) Is there such a thing as a “white lie”?

Case 6 – THE GIVING TREE- Environment



By Shel Silverstein, Harper Collins

Summary

Once there was a tree... and she loved a little boy. Every day the boy would come to the tree to eat her apples, swing from her branches, or slide down her trunk... and the tree was happy. But as the boy grew older he began to want more from the tree, and the tree gave and gave.

Study Questions:

1. Do you think the boy is selfish? Why or why not?
2. When you are given something, do you feel that you owe something to the person who gave you the gift? Would you give something you really need to someone you love if they really needed it, too?
3. Have you ever been angry with someone you love because they went away for a while, or because they did something you did not like? Can you be angry with someone and love them at the same time?
4. Do you need others in order to be happy? Do you need a reason to be happy, or can you be happy for no reason at all? Can you be happy and sad at the same time?

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