NAF Professional Ethics

Lesson 11

The Culminating Project

Student Resources

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| Resource | Description |
| Student Resource 11.1 | Organizer: Research on Ethical Issues |
| Student Resource 11.2 | Guide: Ethics Issue Report |
| Student Resource 11.3 | Example: Ethics Issue Report |
| Student Resource 11.4 | Organizer: Speaker Notes |

Student Resource 11.1

Organizer: Research on Ethical Issues

Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Fill out each section of this organizer so that your research into ethical issues in your industry is thorough. This process will also help you decide which issue you want to focus on for your project.

Step 1: Choose Two or Three Issues to Research

Look at the list below of issues that are currently causing ethical problems in your industry. Pick two or three that look especially important and interesting to you. Need help deciding on one? Try grouping the issues below according to common themes or ethical concerns. If you know of an issue that you’d like to research that is not on this list, it’s probably fine, but run it by your teacher before you proceed.

Academy of Health Sciences

Covid – 19 equity, access

Access to health care for everyone

Assisted suicide

Patient privacy and confidentiality

The role of social media in health care

Informed consent

Right to an abortion

Body parts trafficking

Risk of contracting communicable disease

Marketing practices

Surrogate mothers

Embryonic stem cell research

Human cloning

Balancing quality of care with efficiency

End-of-life issues

Medication shortages

The cost of health care

Nursing shortages

Nurse and doctor burnout

Treatment of the mentally ill

Treatment of addicts

Academy of Hospitality & Tourism

Impacts of Covid-19

Cultural misunderstanding with international travelers

Cultural clashes in the workplace

Guest and employee theft

Bribery

Discrimination

Sexual harassment

Harming the environment

Greenwashing (misleading about environmental record)

Child labor

Selling unsafe food

Extortion

Overcharging

Low wages

Fake online reviews

Misleading or false marketing

Poor work ethic, low motivation

Illegal activity in hotel rooms

Poor working conditions

Intoxication at events

Event security

Illegal drugs for athletes

Rigging games at sporting events

Cheating at sporting events

Underage drinking and drug use at festivals

Academy of Information Technology

Misuse of personal information

Invasion of privacy

Sharing information when changing companies

Ownership of software

Disclosing the monitoring of employees

Quality control

Profit versus social responsibility

Piracy

Stealing intellectual property

Stealing identities

Disclosing security breaches

Hacking

Malware

Virus infection

Cyberbullying

Embezzlement

Online theft

Academy of Finance

Embezzlement

Fraud

Lack of transparency

Money laundering

Investment in corrupt countries with totalitarian regimes

Investment in projects and companies that harm the environment

Usury (charging excessive, unfair interest rates)

Irresponsible credit lending

Lying to clients or not informing them of what their money is being invested in

Investing in cluster munitions

Insider trading

Collusion/Antitrust

Step 2: Gather Information on Issues in Your Industry

Use the table below to gather information about the ethical issues you have chosen. You need to track where you get your information; follow the example for citing sources so that your own citations are complete. You can start by looking at the websites below. Then conduct your own searches. Remember to pay attention to your online sources. Only use reputable websites with trustworthy information. If you have not learned how to tell a reputable website from a questionable one, ask your teacher for guidance.

Websites about current ethical issues in our industry:

You may need more room to take notes. Copy this table into your notebook and keep going!

|  |
| --- |
| First ethical issue I am researching: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Second ethical issue I am researching: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |

The issue I am most interested in focusing on for my project is:

Student Resource 11.2

Guide: Ethics Issue Report

Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use this guide to gather information for your report, analyze your issue, and propose a solution by applying the decision-making framework. This guide also helps you to decide which member of your group will complete each task so that the work is divided fairly.

1. Our issue:

2. Members of our team:

3. Who holds the master copy of this guide:

Each of you will use your own copy of this guide to complete the parts of the report that are your responsibility. But one team member should record everyone’s contribution in his or her copy of this guide. It will help you see where the gaps are and make sure everything is covered. Write the name of that person above.

4. Research that one of us has already completed that is relevant to our issue.

Each team member needs to look through the research conducted in Student Resource 11.1, Organizer: Research on Ethical Issues. Does any of your research apply to the issue you are focusing on for your project? If so, copy that information here (of course, use more space as needed).

|  |
| --- |
| Research we have already completed that applies to our issue: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |

5. What do we still need to find out?

Use this space to generate as many questions as you can about your issue. After you have thought of all the questions you can right now, divide the list up among teammates. These are the questions you will conduct research on. Circle the questions that are your responsibility from this list.

|  |
| --- |

6. Research on my questions.

Use this table to record what you discover as you look for answers to your questions. Use more space if needed. If you happen upon information that will help to answer a teammate’s question, share it!

|  |
| --- |
| Question I am researching: |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| **Question I am researching:** |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |
| **Question I am researching:** |
| Website: |
| What I found out: |

7. Allocate responsibilities for writing sections of the rough draft.

Decide which teammate will write each section of the rough draft. You will work through a decision-making process, writing about how you worked through the problem using this framework and what solutions you came up with.

| Section of Report | Person Who Will Write It | Notes and Questions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Introduction  Description of ethical issue  Explanation of why it is important to address  How resolving this issue will benefit your industry |  |  |
| Information about the issue  Summary of relevant research your team conducted, including about the opposing viewpoint  Conclusions you have drawn regarding this issue, based on the research  Commentary on the issue, such as personal responses or experiences relevant to the issue; if relevant, how the issue would be addressed by different ethical philosophies |  | All team members work together to draw conclusions about the issue based on the research and all team members contribute commentary. One person is in charge of putting it all together. |
| Decision-making framework  Describe the process you used to arrive at possible solutions to the issue |  | All team members work through the decision-making framework together, according to the steps in Lesson 3. One person writes the summary of this process. |
| Discussion of the solutions  If you arrived at more than one solution, describe how your team decided which was the best, and why |  |  |
| Conclusion  Brief wrap-up of the issue, its importance, your solution, and any concluding thoughts from your team |  |  |

8. Write your section of the rough draft.

Check in with your teammates when you have new ideas or questions. Refer to the example report as needed for a sense of how much detail to include.

9. Have one team member create a complete rough draft that includes all of the sections.

10. Use peer feedback to revise the rough draft into the final draft.

Each member of the team is responsible for polishing his or her section of the draft. Designate a new person to pull together the final draft that includes every section. Team member who creates the final draft:

Each person should proofread the whole draft, looking for errors, repetition between sections, or anything else that detracts from the flow of the report.

11. Designate the team member who didn’t write either the rough draft or the final draft to create the list of citations.

One person—whoever wasn’t responsible for pulling together the rough draft or the final draft—should create the final list of all the sources your team consulted in the process of writing this report.

Make the list alphabetical according to the author’s last name. If there is no author, alphabetize according to the first letter of the title of the article. (You can also refer to the example citation list at the end of Student Resource 11.3.)

Team member who writes the list of citations:

12. Create a title page for your report.

Follow the format your teacher gives you, if he or she has a preference. At a minimum, the title page should include the names of everyone on the team, the date, and the title of your report.

Student Resource 11.3

Example: Ethics Issue Report

**INTRODUCTION**

The video game industry is a huge money maker. In 2014 it generated more than $22 billion. More than 150 million people in America play video games. About 90% of children play them, and many children play video games for hours every day. Two out of three boys between the ages of 12 and 14 play violent video games a lot. These games affect the way children see the world, because they play them so much. The games influence what kind of adults these children will become. We believe that the video game industry has an ethical responsibility to the children who play video games. But we have not found that the industry is honoring this responsibility. Our task is to answer the question “What is a serious ethical issue currently facing our industry?” Our answer is that the sale of violent video games to children and teens is a serious ethical issue in the gaming industry. Resolving this issue will promote children’s well-being and therefore make a positive contribution to society. It will give the gaming industry a more trustworthy image.

**RESEARCH**

In 2012, Adam Lanza shot and killed 26 people at Sandy Hook Elementary School before killing himself. He played a lot of video games, including violent ones. In 1999, two seniors killed 12 people and injured 21 others at Columbine High School. They also played violent video games. And in 2013, a 15-year-old boy in New Mexico murdered his parents and three of his siblings. He played violent video games too.

It would be easy to say that there is a link between violent behavior and playing violent video games. But the research has to prove it. Our research uncovered a lot of evidence that playing violent video games has many negative effects on children and teens. If you compare people after they’ve played violent games with people who have played nonviolent ones, the players of violent games have more feelings of hostility and aggression. They are desensitized to violence.

To support the opposing argument that video games do not have a bad effect on children and teens, we only found a few studies. There were a couple of reports that did not find any connection between playing violent video games and more violent behavior. We also saw that the number of acts of violence has actually gone down in recent years. As a final argument, some people think that it’s a violation of free speech to prevent children from playing violent video games.

However, many more studies have found a range of negative effects that are measurable when people under the age of 18 play violent video games. Teens who play M-rated video games are more impulsive and aggressive than teens who don’t. They are more likely to engage in risky behavior like drinking, smoking, and doing other drugs. This effect was noticeably worse if kids played games like Grand Theft Auto II or Manhunt, where the main character is antisocial. The effect was not as bad in games with a hero as the main character, like Spider Man 2. Playing violent video games is a better predictor of whether someone is going to commit a crime than if they do drugs. There is also a link between playing more than two hours a day of violent video games and depression.

With this kind of evidence, is it unethical for video game makers to choose profit over the mental health of young people, and—ultimately—the overall health of our society? The video game makers might point out that it isn’t their problem. Violent video games aren’t intended for people under the age of 18. It’s not their responsibility to deal with it. But we feel that this is a dishonest stance to take. Video game makers do use indirect methods to market violent video games to young people, and they do have a responsibility to consider the ethics of their actions.

**ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK**

**Step 1**

We used an ethical decision-making framework to explore possible solutions to this issue. The first step of the framework is to figure out what the problem is. The problem is that a high percentage of children are playing M-rated video games. *M* stands for *mature,* meaning meant for people aged 17 and older. The games they should be playing are E-rated, meaning okay for everyone to play. If they are over 14, then T-rated games would be okay; the *T* stands for *teen.* But we learned that two-thirds of boys between the ages of 12 and 14 play M-rated games often, for long periods of time.

The video game industry markets M-rated games to children and teens by including ads for these games in the packaging for E- and T-rated games. The industry also plays ads for M-rated games on kids’ TV shows, like *Teen Wolf* on MTV. Of course, they also advertise them on shows for adults—but teenagers watch those shows too. *South Park* and *Walking Dead* are examples. So the video industry makes these games look really great to teens, and then the teens figure out how to get around their parents. For example, if your parents don’t let you play these games, you just make friends with someone whose parents don’t mind, and you go to their house to play.

Some people argue that there’s violence in all of the media, and that’s true. You can see violence on the news, hear about it on the radio, read about it in the newspaper. Lyrics for music can be violent. TV shows and movies have plenty of violence in them. It isn’t a good thing for children to see or hear violence in any of these ways, but video games have a different kind of negative influence. In video games, you are participating in acts of violence, not just witnessing them. You are the one who shoots people, and the technology makes the killing very realistic. These games also reward you for committing acts of violence. Some even reward you for killing innocent people or police. And the more violent you are, the more points you get. Players get the message that the more violent and aggressive, the better.

**Step 2**

The second step of the framework is to examine the facts and opinions. In addition to the research already cited, it is a fact that video games are more violent and more realistic than they used to be. It’s a fact that the most violent games are the most popular, like Grand Theft Auto, World of Warcraft, and Call of Duty. And it’s a fact that playing violent video games has a negative effect on the behavior of young people. Dr. Craig Anderson of Iowa State University analyzed 130 research reports worldwide. He says that his study “proves conclusively that exposure to violent video games makes more aggressive, less caring kids—regardless of their age, sex, or culture.”

**Step 3**

Step 3 of the framework asks, what are the choices for solutions? Questions we ask in Step 3 include: What is best for the community as a whole? What will do the most good and the least damage? What is the fairest thing to do? What is most respectful to the people closely involved?

Violent video games could be banned. But this would violate freedom of speech and would not be fair to the adults these games are intended for. We could punish stores that sell M-rated games to minors. Maybe they could get heavily fined. But that wouldn’t work either, because most stores already refuse to sell these games to minors. And it doesn’t stop the video game industry from marketing to kids either. Another idea: somehow come up with a punishment for parents who let their kids play these games—but that would be impossible to enforce.

The real issue we are addressing is the ethics of the industry itself, and the real solution lies with the industry, not with the people who sell and buy and play its violent video games.

The gaming industry, along with social scientists and players, acknowledge that video games have enormous power to influence people’s behaviors and attitudes. What if the industry creates games in which people make moral choices in difficult situations? What if the players get rewarded for doing the right thing? Then the industry would be contributing to the betterment of society. They would be giving people the tools and practice that we all need to make good choices. It’s a great creative challenge too. Having players go around killing others doesn’t take much imagination. But coming up with interesting scenarios and hard choices takes much more creativity.

Therefore, the solution that we feel is most workable and effective is to require the video game industry to make more socially responsible games that are so creative and interesting, people will love playing them. We also think that ads for violent video games should be banned from TV, and ads should not be included in the games that have E and T ratings. Ads for cigarettes are banned from TV, and so should ads for violent video games.

We think that the most violent games, where children are murdered or the player is rewarded for committing mass murder, should be banned. The gaming industry should use an ethical decision-making framework to see if a game is too harmful. They could use a framework like the one we are using now. The framework would definitely cause the industry to make more ethical games.

**Step 4**

Step 4 of the ethical decision-making framework is to test our decisions using three criteria: reversibility, publicity, and harm. Reversibility asks: what if we were the ones being affected by this decision? If we worked for a video game company, we’d say yes, it’s a good idea to use an ethical decision-making framework. It would help us to see if we are creating a game that protects or improves the well-being of young people instead of glorifying violence.

Banning ads for violent video games from TV would not harm the industry, because there are so many more effective ways to publicize them, like in gaming magazines and in the packaging for games that are also M-rated. The industry could publicize its new policies through emails, Facebook, and at game-maker conventions. The Entertainment Software Rating Board would be involved, and they have their own publicity system.

The final question is about harm. Do our decisions harm any of the stakeholders? We don’t think so. Game makers can still make violent games. They just have to be for people over the age of 17. Game makers can make a profit from creating ethical games for children and teens. They may lose some profit if kids and teens aren’t playing violent games, but it’s worth it if the psychological well-being of kids and teens is protected. The kids experience no harm with our solutions. They can still play as many games as their parents will let them, but now they will be learning skills that will serve them as adults.

**Step 5**

Step 5 of the ethical decision-making framework is to evaluate the outcome of our decision. We can’t take this step, obviously, since the gaming industry hasn’t tried out our solutions (yet). But we do know that our decisions respect the interests of all the stakeholders. They also contribute to society by preventing children and teens from participating in violent games for hours every day.

**CONCLUSION**

When we first started this project, two out of three of the people on our team played violent video games. Both have younger sisters and brothers who also played them. They didn’t really think there was a problem with it. But the more we researched the issue and thought about the ethics, the more they questioned their original opinions. Now we all think that the ethical decision-making framework is a useful tool to apply to real-world decisions. And one member of our team is working with her parents to get her little brother to play other kinds of video games.

List your Citations:

Student Resource 11.4

Organizer: Speaker Notes

Student Names:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use this resource to decide what to say in your speaker notes and to choose which team member will talk about each point you want to make.

Step 1: Choose the Sections of Your Report to Use for Your Presentation

Your report is detailed, thorough, and written to be read, not spoken. You can’t just take turns reading each section of it. It will take way longer than eight minutes, which is the very longest your presentation can be. You are aiming for seven to eight minutes total. Besides, it wasn’t written to be read aloud. So your first task is to read through your report and see which parts you think should go into your presentation. Keep these thoughts in mind to help you choose:

* Pick the facts and examples that are the most vivid or surprising
* Choose so that your listeners can follow your logic easily (Your listeners can’t go back and re-read anything. They have to understand as they are listening. Each point you choose must lead logically to the next.)

You can each go through your report alone, highlighting the parts that you think you should talk about. Then compare your reports and see what you all agree on.

Or, you can look through together, talking through why you think one part should be kept versus another.

Step 2: Create a Rough Draft of the Presentation and Divide It Up

Pull out all the parts you picked, and make a rough draft of your presentation by cutting and pasting them into one document. Leave space between parts to make notes and additions.

When you see this skeleton of your presentation laid out, think together about how you’d change each part to make it sound conversational and natural. Add in some ideas for things to say.

Divide the draft up so that team members take turns talking. Team members will be responsible for writing speaker notes for their sections.

Step 3: Write a Rough Draft of Your Speaker Notes

Copy each section you are in charge of onto its own blank piece of paper.

Read the first section that you are in charge of. Then say it out loud. It will be missing pieces, and it will sound unnatural because it’s still in the right form for a written report. Saying it out loud will help you see what to change. Write down these additions and changes. Then do the same for the rest of the sections.

Step 4: Evaluate Draft Notes with Your Team

Look at all of your draft notes in order together. Most likely you will discover some repetition and awkward jumps in logic. Make revisions so that transitions sound smoother and you aren’t repeating what a teammate said.

Then read this draft out loud. It’s probably way too long! Where can you cut back so that your presentation only takes seven to eight minutes altogether?

Step 5: Write the Next Draft of Your Speaker Notes

Put your speaker notes on index cards. Remember, don’t write them out verbatim: just make notes that will jog your memory about what you want to say. Practice saying your notes. If you forget what you meant, look at the complete rough draft and revise your notes so that they are better at helping you remember.

Step 6: Practice with Your Team

Do another run-through of your presentation. How can it be polished to be smoother and more persuasive? Is it the right length? Is everyone speaking for about the same amount of time? Make edits to get your presentation in great shape.

Make sure your assignment meets or exceeds the following assessment criteria:

* The notes cover all of the important points from the report they are based on.
* The notes contain illuminating examples and facts about the ethical issue.
* The notes are written as summary reminders for the speaker, not as a complete script to read verbatim.
* The notes reflect a deep understanding of the ethical issue and make a solid overall case.