

Reema is a 21-year old woman. As an undergraduate student at a research university, she has been trying for a long time to get access to a lab in order to conduct her senior thesis research. Her project is supervised by Professor Harrison-Smith, a renowned cancer researcher and recipient of the Lasker Award. Reema does not live on campus and has had to travel a great distance in order to make use of the lab, which Professor Harrison-Smith reserved for their students from 8am to 1pm. Reema arrived at the lab at 9:30am, only to find two graduate students, Paul and Qui-Wen, hard at work in the second stage of an experiment unrelated to Harrison-Smith's research.

Not wanting to interrupt their progress, Reema approached Paul and Qui-Wen and asked when they thought they would be finished. Qui-Wen just shrugged in response. Paul replied, "You'll just have to wait until we are done."

Frustrated, Reema headed over to talk to the lab manager, Cristina, a 30-year old post-doc. Cristina was responsible for logging reservations and enforcing lab policies. Reema wanted to confirm that Professor Harrison-Smith had made a reservation. Cristina acknowledged the appointment but explained that she had allowed the graduate students to start their experiment at 9am since Reema had not shown up by then. From across the room, Reema heard Paul say, "Early bird gets the worm." Qui-Wen said nothing in response.

Edmund, another undergraduate student working in the lab, jumped into the conversation: "Wait a minute, they're not even in Professor Harrison-Smith's class." Cristina froze when she heard the name Harrison-Smith, then abruptly told Paul and Qui-Wen, "Shut it down and get out of here, you two."

Paul said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were working with Harrison-Smith. We'll get out of your way." Qui-Wen, who had been monitoring the experiment, replied, "But we'll lose all of our work if we don't complete this segment. The samples will expire."

Edmund, who was about to leave anyway, told Reema to just take his spot so the other team could finish. But Cristina insisted that Paul and Qui-Wen vacate their space to Reema.

*What other details do you wish you knew about this story?*

**Task 1:** Write down, in rank order, the characters (Reema, Professor Harrison-Smith, Paul, Qui-Wen, Cristina, Edmund) of whose behavior you MOST APPROVE to LEAST APPROVE. Be ready to explain your decisions.

MOST APPROVE	
LEAST APPROVE	

**Task 2:** Get into small groups. Write down, in rank order, the character of whose behavior your group **MOST APPROVES** to **LEAST APPROVES**. You must find a single group consensus. Be ready to explain your rankings to the whole group.

MOST APPROVE	
LEAST APPROVE	

**Task 3:** In your small groups discuss:

1. How do you decide what is morally right and wrong?
2. Who do you blame for problems in this scenario?
3. What assumptions are you making about details left out of the story?
4. What aspects (values) of your culture are shaping your opinions?

**Task 4:** With the whole group, come to a consensus. Write down, in rank order, the character of whose behavior your group **MOST APPROVES** to **LEAST APPROVES**.

MOST APPROVE	
LEAST APPROVE	

**Task 5:** Whole group debriefing questions (or individual written reflection questions):

1. What did you learn about your own and other cultures from this exercise?
2. How do people determine whether a behavior is morally preferable over another behavior?
3. What religious traditions, philosophies, and cultural value systems inform moral decision making in your own as opposed to other countries?
4. What do your evaluations of people's morality have to do with the empathy you feel for their circumstances?