

# Possible Debate Topics

Rank order your choices and circle the side you agree with related to the topic.

## USE OF PRIMATES IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

Pro Con

Should primates be used for scientific experimentation or are they so closely related to humans be afforded the basic rights of *Homo sapiens*? Do the benefits to humanity outweigh the costs to our closest living relatives?

PRO: Science should utilize primates for medical experimentation, given the similarities in physiology, and the obvious benefits to humans. Examples such as our understanding of the Rh blood group system, the development of a polio vaccine, etc are the direct result of primate testing.

CON: The Great Apes share over 95% of our genetic material. Their intelligence is clearly documented. Therefore, use of these animals for medical experimentation is ethically wrong. They exhibit the full emotional spectrum of humans and should be treated accordingly.

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

Pro Con

Do individuals have the right to chose the time and manner of their death? Do the dangers of uninformed or coerced decisions outweigh privacy concerning such an intimate decision?

PRO: Humans, as sentient beings, have the right to choose the time and manner of their death. As long as it is clear that the person is making the decision of sound mind and not under duress, this is a right of privacy that should be protected constitutionally.

CON: Suicide should not be legally sanctioned because it is a morally, legally, and/or financially flawed concept. In addition, there is substantial concern that people will be pressured into choosing this option so as not to burden family and friends with the costs, emotional and financial, of a prolonged illness. Also, insurance companies and taxpayers can not afford to foot the bills associated with the predicted increase in deaths.

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Pro Con

Does affirmative action protect the rights of the disadvantaged in a climate of prejudice, or does it in fact promote reverse discrimination? Are our current quota systems well-conceived, or have they spurred greater misunderstanding among groups?

PRO: Affirmative action policies should be abolished because they lead to inappropriate quotas that are paramount to reverse discrimination.

CON: Affirmative action policies should stand because they ensure equality in the work force.

## STEM CELL RESEARCH

Pro Con

The debate over experimentation on stem cells from human embryos has pitted patient groups and scientists who say the research could lead to new treatments for diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's against opponents of abortion and other who object to destroying the embryo. Do you agree or disagree with overturning the current federal restrictions on this form of research?

PRO: The possibilities for medical advancement are profound using fetal stem cells. Many of these cells are cast-off remnants of *in vitro* fertilization, and thus destined for destruction if not used for the common good. The blastocyst stage of embryonic development is nothing more than a group of dividing cells, and given the possible benefits to repairing muscle and nerve degeneration far outweigh other considerations.

CON: The blastocyst has the potential to develop into a human being if implanted, therefore destruction of these cells are immoral. Other forms of research, such as the use of adult stem cells, animal models, and computer simulations provide enough potential for medical advancement, without the moral implications.