

Listed below are 13 vignettes describing research situations that involve possibly questionable ethical decisions:

- a. A sociology instructor asks students in an introductory class to complete questionnaires that the instructor will analyze and use in preparing a journal article for publication.
- b. After a field study of deviant behavior during a riot, law enforcement officials demand that the researcher identify those persons who were observed looting. Rather than risk arrest as an accomplice after the fact, the researcher complies.
- c. After completing the final draft of a book reporting a research project, the author discovers that 25 of the 2,000 survey interviews were falsified by interviewers but chooses to ignore that fact and publish the book anyway.
- d. A Ph.D. candidate gains access to an underground mine as a researcher-employee by telling management that he has a BA degree and wants to get some practical experience before going on for a degree in metallic engineering. He is very familiar with mining work.
- e. A college instructor wants to test the effect of unfair berating on exam performance. She administers an exam to both sections of a course. The overall performance of the two sections is essentially the same. The grades of one section are artificially lowered and the instructor berates the students for performing so badly. She then administers the same final exam to both sections and discovers that the performance of the unfairly berated section is worse. The hypothesis is confirmed, and the results are published.
- f. In a study of sexual behavior, the investigator wants to overcome subjects' reluctance to report what they might regard as deviant behavior. To get past their reluctance, subjects are asked, "Everyone masturbates now and then; about how often do you masturbate?"
- g. A researcher discovers that 85 percent of students smoke marijuana regularly at a school. Publication of this finding will probably create a furor in the community. Because no extensive analysis of drug use is planned, the researcher decides to ignore the finding and keep it quiet.
- h. To test the extent to which people may try to save face by expressing attitudes on matters they are wholly uninformed about, the researcher asks for their attitudes regarding a fictitious issue.
- i. A research questionnaire is circulated among students as part of their university registration packet. Although students are not told they must complete the questionnaire, the hope is that they will believe they must, thereby ensuring a higher completion rate.
- j. A researcher promises participants in a study a summary of the results. Later, due to a budget cut, the summary is not sent out.
- k. A professor rewrites a thesis of one of his or her graduate students into an article and lists himself or herself as the sole author.
- l. A panel of reputable social scientists is pressing for Congressional approval of a National Data Service, which would combine all data on particular individuals from separate data files into one master file. The advantages of such a center would be reduced duplicity of efforts and an increased number of variables per individual.
- m. A graduate student joins an Internet discussion board about the sports car that she drives. She occasionally posts some responses on the board and decides to do a sociological study about the sense of community experienced by members. She attends a car rally sponsored by the board and mingles with participants. She uses archived discussion posts and notes she kept while at car rallies for her study.

For these 13 vignettes, do the following:

1. Place each situation in one of the following four groups: "no ethical violations," "minor ethical violations," "moderate ethical violations," or "severe ethical violations."
2. Rank order these situations in terms of how seriously they violate the principles of ethical research on human subjects.
3. Explain the reasons for your rankings.
4. For each of the above issues, identify what you believe to be the one or two ethical principles (of the five) that are most apparent in that situation. Explain why.