

The Art of Ethics Bowl

Lesson 9: Writing An Ethics Bowl Case

Overview: (50 minute lesson)

In this lesson students will practice analyzing the general format and template of an Ethics Bowl Case. Then, they will begin writing their own Ethics Bowl Case in an effort to submit it to the NHSEB's "Case Writing Competition" which is usually open for submissions in the spring.

Student Learning Goals:

We will...

- Identify elements and structure of an Ethics Bowl Case
- Brainstorm and identify topics for potential Ethics Bowl Cases
- Present a case through a balanced approach, acknowledging multiple positions on a topic.

Materials

- ["I'm Afraid" - Elements of Writing an Ethics Bowl Case](#)
 - (color copies, if possible)
- [Writing an Ethics Bowl Case - Planning Document](#)
 - (color copies, if possible)
- [Case Writing Guidelines from NHSEB](#)

NOTE: Students will need access to devices for this lesson. Phones will work, but computers would be preferable.

Preparation before lesson:

- Print all materials from above (enough for each student)
- [Read about the NHSEB case submission contest here.](#)
Know enough to be familiar with the rules and guidelines for your students.

How will this help in Ethics Bowl?

This will help your team...

- Identify central moral dimensions and ethical tensions
- Develop awareness of different viewpoints
- Create constructive and insightful commentary
- Collaborate in respectful discussions

Lesson Facilitation:

1. Introduce the ["Case Writing Contest" from the NHSEB website](#). Give students a chance to ask questions about the contest, and emphasize the prizes / publication opportunities for the winning cases.
2. Ask students: If you got to write a case, what would it be about? What issue, current event, or topic would you write about?
 - a. NOTE: You might encourage them to think about the issues that "adults seem to miss". For example, the previous case "Tears of the Koroks" focused on the ethics of a particular videogame. While the topic was niche, the larger dilemma was universal. [Here is a link to the case.](#)
3. Discuss a few options with students. Then, have students research the [NHSEB Case Library \(nhseb.org/case-library\)](#) to see if there are any cases related to the topic they might be interested in. At a minimum, have each student pick at least 1 case from the library that seems interesting to them.

4. Instead of talking with students about the “content” of the case, ask them to share about the “structure” of the case. Here are some general questions worth discussing and comparing between cases:
 - a. How many paragraphs is your case?
 - b. Is there a clear “introduction paragraph” in your case? What specific content does it address?
 - c. What transition words or phrases does your case use at the beginning / end of each paragraph?
 - d. Is your case “based on research”?
 - e. Does your case have “footnotes” with linked articles? If so, how many?
 - f. How many different “positions” or “perspectives” does your case discuss? 2? 3? More?
 - g. What discussion questions does your case have? Are there any similarities / differences in the types of questions for each case?
5. Draw out as much student-generated conversation as possible about what they notice and identify within the structure of the cases, then pass out copies of [“I’m Afraid” - Elements of Writing an Ethics Bowl Case](#) to students. Walk through the labeled annotations in this case. Draw connections between this document and student conversations.
6. Pass out the [“Writing an Ethics Bowl Case - Planning Document”](#) handout and review page 1.
7. Then, give students the [“Case Writing Guidelines from NHSEB”](#) handout, and review the specifications they will need to include in their case.
8. Finally, encourage students to brainstorm, research, and outline their own potential topics for a case using the “Planning Document” you provided for them. This could be “team based” or individual. The primary goal should be to sketch out an outline, so that they can begin drafting an example for submission in the future.
9. If students opt to pursue this case writing contest, you’ll want to schedule follow up meetings for further work and revisions. For this 50 minute session, it’s likely that students will only get to the brainstorming phase. So, with that in mind, be sure to set a schedule as needed for students to meet the case submission contest deadline.