

## Dividing Line - The Ethics Committee

Another activity developed for G&T secondary, but you can see how the principle could be adapted easily for younger children - fairytale characters that are good or bad, for example.

In this application of dividing line, players are in role as a university ethics committee. Which of the various experiments (a mixture of past, present, futuristic and fictional) would they allow to happen and why?

Some particular references:

- A. The story of "Flowers for Algernon" by...
- E. Frankenstein of course!
- F. Jenner's experiments that began the fight against smallpox.
- H., I. and K. All described in "Elephants on Acid"
- J. A recent offer from [www.trekstudy.com](http://www.trekstudy.com)

Raises issues such as:

Is it right to have a child for a particular purpose?

How important is animal suffering?

How much should we risk for knowledge?

What should count as informed consent?

Are there limits to how we should alter nature?

Is "playing God" still wrong if you don't think anyone is being God?

A. A surgical experiment to give someone with severe learning difficulties high intelligence.

B. Screening of embryos to select those with a high chance of being highly intelligent.

C. Screening of embryos to select those that do not carry a hereditary disease

G. Replacing the nuclei from bovine egg cells with nuclei from human skin cells to further stem cell research.

E. Exploring the role of electricity in life by passing a current through body parts reassembled into a humanoid form.

F. Giving a new vaccine to children and pregnant women, then testing its effectiveness by injecting them with the live virus.

D. Injecting monkeys with Simian Immunodeficiency Virus in order to test the effectiveness of drugs to extend the lives of patients with HIV/AIDS.



H. Placing volunteers into a "prison" with some as guards and some as prisoners to test the impact of roles on behaviour.

I. Enabling monkeys to self-administer doses of various drugs in order to test their addictiveness.

J. Giving young people  
free holidays to  
Guatemala to test the  
effectiveness of a  
diarrhoea vaccine

K. Testing people's obedience to authority by getting them to inflict apparent electric shocks to an actor under the direction of a scientist, as part of a mock experiment into learning.