

Imagine a new born baby. A new born baby hasn't done anything yet. It can't be blamed for being naughty or praised for what it has achieved. It's just a baby. It can't do much for itself, so it needs other people to think about what it needs and to take care of it.

We would think someone strange if they say that one baby matters more, and another baby matters less. Unless it's their own baby, of course – every baby is special to its parents, and to their friends and family. But imagine someone says, "This baby is not important. It matters less than the others."

If they say the baby matters less because of the colour of its skin, we'd say, "That's racist!"

If they say the baby matters less because of its sex, we would say, "That's sexist!"

But if they say the baby matters less because it is not born now, but will be born 200 years from now, what should we say?

Should we say, "That's nowist!"

What I mean by "nowist" is "acting and thinking as if now people matter more than future people".

It's important because some of the choices we make now, as individuals or as countries, are likely to have an impact on the lives of babies born in 200 or even 2000 years' time.

For example, if farming for now people destroys a habitat and makes an animal extinct, future people will not be able to see it - unless they can bring it back from extinction with new technology. Is it nowist to allow the animal to go extinct?

Or maybe I'm taking things a bit too far. We don't act as if people who live in far away countries are as important as we are, or we'd spend more money helping those that are poorer than us. So maybe it's not our responsibility to worry about people who are far away from us in time either. Or maybe it is?

Here are some questions you could think about:

Is a now born baby more important than a future born baby?

Is the word "nowism" useful?

Is nowism as bad as sexism or racism?

How nowist are we? How nowist are you?

What should we do about nowism?

I'd be interested to hear your answers, and your own questions about nowism, as this is a new word and I'm not sure what I think about it yet.

When practising the skill of assessing the strength of reasons, it is helpful to compare reasons on the same side of the argument, to avoid contamination from whether or not people agree with the conclusion. They could assess which argument on each side they think is the strongest and why.

Nowism is like racism or sexism because, just like race or gender don't make somebody more or less important, neither should when they are born.

Nowism is not something we should be ashamed of because everyone in the past has been nowist to us, so it's normal to be nowist.

Nowism is important because we wouldn't have wanted people in the past to ruin things for us, so we shouldn't ruin things for future people.

Nowism is not the same as racism or sexism because it's possible to treat people who are alive today equally but you can't do that with people in the future.

A future born baby is just as important as a now born baby because it still has a life that matters to it and wants the same things.

It's not nowist to worry most about people alive now, because we can do something for them but we can't do anything for people who aren't alive yet.

Nowism is worse than sexism or racism because there are billions of people who haven't been born yet, so it's thinking we are more important than even more people.

It's not bad to be nowist because we don't know what people in the future will want anyway.

Nowism is important because future people get ignored in the same way that women got ignored by men in the past, or people of other races got ignored by people of races with more power at the time.

It's not bad to be nowist because the point of right and wrong is that people can be good or bad back to you, and that doesn't work with people in the future.

Nowism is important because some of the problems we are causing now cannot be reversed.

It's not bad to be nowist because we have our own problems to worry about now, and future people will have future problems.

It's not bad to be nowist because people in the future will have much better technology than us so they will be able to sort things out.