



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Moral Dilemmas in *Ender's Game*

Morals are a person's individual beliefs and principles regarding "right" and "wrong". For instance, one person might believe that all children should have access to free healthcare. Another person might believe that lies should never be told, no matter the circumstance. Another person might believe that personal integrity is the most important characteristic for mankind.

These morals are not necessarily based in law (though some could be), but they are instead personal principles that drive action and character.

A moral dilemma then is when a person's moral beliefs are called in question – the person is confronted with two or more beliefs, and there is no clear "right" and "wrong" answer.

**Directions:** Read the following moral dilemma and answer the questions below.

### The Overcrowded Lifeboat:

In 1842, a ship struck an iceberg and more than 30 survivors were crowded into a lifeboat intended to hold 7. As a storm threatened, it became obvious that the lifeboat would have to be lightened if anyone were to survive. The captain reasoned that the right thing to do in this situation was to force some individuals to go over the side and drown. Such an action, he reasoned, was not unjust to those thrown overboard, for they would have drowned anyway. If he did nothing, however, he would be responsible for the deaths of those whom he could have saved. Some people opposed the captain's decision. They claimed that if nothing were done and everyone died as a result, no one would be responsible for these deaths. On the other hand, if the captain attempted to save some, he could do so only by killing others and their deaths would be his responsibility; this would be worse than doing nothing and letting all die. Since the only possibility for rescue required great efforts of rowing, the captain decided that the weakest would have to be sacrificed (they were thrown overboard). In this situation it would be absurd, he thought, to decide by drawing lots who should be thrown overboard. As it turned out, after days of hard rowing, the survivors were rescued and the captain was tried for his action.



1. If you had been on the jury, how would you have decided? In favor of the captain or against? Why?

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2. Is one life ever worth more than another? Explain your answer.

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## Brainstorm: Graff's Morality

**Directions:** Re-read the opening dialogues of chapters 1-3 between Graff and Pace and complete the following pages.

1. What is the moral dilemma the officers face? (Hint: The last line of the chapter one opening: "All right. We're saving the world, after all. Take him.").
  
2. After Ender makes his decision to go to Battle School, Graff slips further into his dilemma. He is past the point of no return. What are four actions/decisions he makes to achieve his goal throughout the book? Your examples must span the whole text, not just chapters 1-3.

Action/Decision 1:	Action/Decision 2:
Action/Decision 3:	Action/Decision 4:

3. What are two results or consequences because of Graff's decisions (use responses to #2)?

Action/Decision (from above):	Result/Consequence:
Action/Decision (from above):	Result/Consequence:

4. Do you believe Graff made the correct decision for his moral dilemma? Explain why/why not using information from your charts above. Also, consider the ending of the book.

## Writing Assessment: Graff's Morality

**Directions:** Using your responses from the previous page, **write an analytical paragraph explaining Graff's moral dilemma in *Ender's Game* and whether he qualifies as a hero, someone whose duty is to protect and serve.** You must use at least two examples of directed, quoted textual evidence from the text (look at #2 and 3) and explicate them in relation to the significances of the decisions by Graff – how do the decisions affect Ender? Why are these decisions necessary/unnecessary? What is the result? Are the actions heroic?

\* You may type your response and bring a copy on the first day of school, if preferred.

\*\*This paragraph will be graded as a real writing assessment.

Consider starting with one of the following argumentative topic sentence starters. You may modify the starters as needed, if it will help you start your paragraph.

- In *Ender's Game*, Graff must choose between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Graff is/is not a hero because, though he believes/desires \_\_\_\_, he ultimately chooses \_\_\_\_, resulting in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Graff is/is not a hero because though he recognizes \_\_\_\_\_, he ultimately chooses \_\_\_\_\_. As a result of Graff's decisions, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Though Graff wants\_\_\_\_\_, he recognizes \_\_\_\_\_. Ultimately, Graff decides \_\_\_\_\_, and as a result, he is/is not a hero because \_\_\_\_\_.

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