

MODERN DILEMMAS

should / must / have to / be allowed to

Modern morals

Readers ask



- 1** How should I deal with my difficult and disagreeable neighbour? He is in the habit of dumping his garden waste along the public footpath between our two houses.
Jim T. via email
- 2** Is it OK to greet people you don't know with a 'How are you?' In California (my home) it's considered friendly, but here in London some people react with a cold look. Should I be less friendly in my greetings?
Erica Fleckberg, London
- 3** My new PC automatically picks up wireless networks to gain access to the Internet. This includes the one belonging to my neighbour. Is it right for me to use it?
Richard Dalton, via email
- 4** My stepfather was disqualified for two years for drink-driving, but we have learnt that he still drives while under the influence of alcohol. Should we keep quiet or inform the police?
Stella Milne, Newcastle
- 5** I am a medical student. After I qualify in June, I have one month before my first job starts. My fiancée says that I am not allowed to claim unemployment benefit for this. I disagree, because I'll be unemployed. The dole is for all those who are out of work, isn't it? What do you think?
J. R. Collin, via email
- 6** Is it wrong for me to record CDs borrowed from my local library? I am not denying anyone the money, as I wouldn't buy the CD anyway.
Pete Rodriguez, via email
- 7** Is it ever permissible to lie to children? I lied to my two-year-old granddaughter to remove her from a fairground ride without a tantrum. I said: 'You must get off now because the man is going for his dinner.' She got down without a fuss. But I'm worried that if she remembers this, she won't trust me in future.
Barbara Hope, Perth, Australia

Readers reply

- a** You must ring 'Crimestoppers' and report him. You don't have to give your name.
- b** I think you are allowed other benefits. You should check online.
- c** You don't have to be like the English just because you're in England.
- d** You've got to act with self-control. I don't think you should confront him.
- e** It's not only wrong, it's illegal. You are not allowed to do this.
- f** Not only should you lie sometimes, you often have to.
- g** You must tell your neighbour this. It's the only fair thing to do.

1) Read the problems. Pick 3 situations and think: What advice would you give?

- I think they should...
- I don't think they should...
- He must...

2) Read the replies. Which lines do you think go with which problems?

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____
4. ____
5. ____
6. ____
7. ____

3) Read the full replies. Do you agree with the advice?

1 A reader asks

How should I deal with my difficult and disagreeable neighbour? He is in the habit of dumping his garden waste along the public footpath between our two houses.

Jim T. via email

(d) A reader replies

You've got to act with self-control in a situation like this. I don't think you should confront him. Rows between neighbours can get out of hand. If I were you I'd quietly clean up his mess and keep the peace.

2 A reader asks

Is it OK to greet people with a "how are you?"? In California (my home) it's considered friendly, but in London some people react with a cold look. Should I be less friendly in my greetings?

Erica Fleckberg, London

(c) A reader replies

You don't have to be like the English just because you're in England. Be yourself. Be warm. Be American.

3 A reader asks

My new PC automatically picks up wireless networks to gain access to the Internet. This includes the one belonging to my neighbour. Is it right for me to use it?

Richard Dalton, via email

(g) A reader replies

You can stop others accessing your wireless network if you use a password. You must tell your neighbour this. It's the only fair thing to do.

4 A reader asks

My stepfather was disqualified for two years for drink-driving, but we have learnt that he still drives while under the influence of alcohol. Should we keep quiet or inform the police?

Stella Milne, Newcastle

(a) A reader replies

Your stepfather is not allowed to drive by law. He is a danger to himself and everyone else on the road. You must ring 'Crimestoppers' and report him. You don't have to give your name.

5 A reader asks

I am a medical student. After I qualify in June, I have one month before my first house job starts. My fiancée says I am not allowed to claim unemployment benefit for this. I disagree, because I'll be unemployed. The dole is for all those who are out of work. What do you think?

J. R. Collin, via e-mail

(b) A reader replies

Your fiancée's right. You aren't allowed to claim unemployment benefit but I think you are allowed other benefits. You should check online. Perhaps you should claim it and give the money to charity, if you don't need it.

6 A reader asks

Is it wrong for me to record CDs borrowed from my local library? I am not denying anyone the money, as I wouldn't buy the CD anyway.

Pete Rodriguez, via e-mail

(e) A reader replies

It's not only wrong it's illegal. You are not allowed to do this. You should buy the CD.

7 A reader asks

Is it ever permissible to lie to children? I lied to my two-year-old granddaughter to remove her from a fairground ride without a tantrum. I said: 'You must get off now because the man is going for his dinner.' She got down without any fuss. But I'm worried, if she remembers this, she won't trust me in future.

Barbara Hope, Perth Australia

(f) A reader replies

Not only should you lie sometimes, you often have to. Children should be treated with respect but you don't have to explain everything. Also, it's a good way to learn that we often have to tell 'white lies', such as when asked 'What do you think of my new boyfriend?' 'Er- very nice.'



4) Read the problems (1-7) again. Find the questions used to ask for advice.

5) Read the replies (a-g) again. Find the verbs used to give advice.