

Have you the right to know?

In this activity, you will use a case study to stimulate group and class discussion of issues involved in gene profiling for paternity testing.

You will be asked to make up your own mind about the issues.

What to do:

1. Read the case study and decide on your response and a reason or reasons for it.
2. Share your answers with others in a small group of about four students.
3. Try to come to an agreed answer in the group. If you can't agree, try to decide what different ideas are preventing agreement.
4. Select a member of the group to report to the class and to answer any questions from the teacher or other groups.
5. In your group, run through the checklist on the next page to see if the class discussion covered all these points of view, consequences or issues. Discuss them in your group if the class discussion didn't cover them.

Case study

Jeremy and Sarah have been married for ten years. They have two children: Matthew, aged 8, and Holly, aged 4. Recently, Jeremy has become depressed and has begun to doubt that his children are indeed his. He has decided to leave Sarah. While surfing the web, he has come across a site that offers DNA paternity testing for \$550 per test. All he needs to do is mail in a few of his and his children's hair follicles.

Should Jeremy do this? Where on this scale would your answer lie?

YES	I DON'T KNOW	NO
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Questions	Discussed in class
Should Sarah or the children be told that the test was going to be done?	
Should the children and their mother be asked for permission to use their samples for DNA analysis?	
Does Jeremy have the right to know whether he is the genetic father of the children?	
Do the children have the right to know whether Jeremy is their genetic father?	
Should the children find out about their genetic parents from a test taken in circumstances like this?	
From the point of view of the children or Sarah, should Jeremy go ahead with the test?	
What might be the legal outcome, in terms of financial maintenance for the children, if Jeremy leaves Sarah once the results of the test are known (either positive or negative)?	
What might be the outcome in terms of family relationships if the test is positive or negative for one or both the children?	
How reliable is the test?	
Is this an ethical thing for Jeremy to do?	