

Different people have different points of view, opinions and ideas about many things. Often these things become issues or questions for people to answer or decisions for them to make. Issues become controversial when people disagree or even argue about them. People are often divided on controversial issues. Some people support one side of an argument. Other people oppose this side and support another side. Sometimes we have to decide whether we are for or against such issues because they can affect and influence our daily lives and the country and the world that we live in. Sometimes we have to reach a compromise. A compromise is a solution to an issue that both sides can agree upon.

One such controversial issue is about using animals in laboratory experiments. Before you read the article, think about these questions:

- What kinds of animals are usually used in laboratory experiments?
- What kinds of things are scientists trying to find out?
- Why do they use animals instead of using humans in the experiments?

Every year about seventeen million animals are used in medical laboratory experiments. In many countries, people are questioning whether this is morally right or wrong. They are asking the question: Do we have the right to use animals in research this way?

The case for using animals in medical research:

The use of animals in medical research has many practical benefits. Animal research has enabled researchers to develop cures and treatments for many diseases. This includes treatments and medicines for heart disease, AIDS, cancer, hypertension, and depression. It would not have been possible to develop vaccines for smallpox and polio without using animals for research. Every drug anyone takes today was first tested on animals. This way we can be sure it is safe and there are no harmful side effects. Which is more important: the life of a mouse or the life of a human?

Another argument for using animals in laboratory experiments is that it can help to get rid of unwanted animals. Last year in the USA five million animals were killed in animal shelters because nobody wanted to take them as pets.

The case against using animals in medical research:

Using animals in laboratory experiments and research is cruel and unnecessary. Animals suffer a lot in these experiments. They are forced to live in small cages, and sometimes do not have enough room to move. The experiments often are painful, uncomfortable experiences for the animals. The animals are often afraid or forced to take dangerous drugs and medicine. They can even involve killing the animals. Much of the research done on animals could be done in other ways. Researchers could use cell samples or virtual computer simulations to do experiments instead of using animals.

Ten Controversial Issues:

Think about these controversial issues. Fill in the chart.

- What are the pros and cons of each?
- What would people who support them say?
- What would people who oppose them say?
- What is your personal opinion?
- Try to think of a compromise for each of these issues.

Issue	Support	Oppose	Your Opinion
Animal Testing			
Religion in Schools			
Legal Abortion			
Death Penalty			
Legal Guns			
Immigration			
Higher Taxes			
Military Service			
Electric Cars			
Nuclear Power			

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some controversial issues in your country right now?
2. What is the pro-side? What is the con-side? What is your opinion?
3. Can you think of a compromise for these issues??
4. What are some controversial issues in some other countries right now?
5. What is the pro-side? What is the con-side? What is your opinion?
6. Can you think of a compromise for these issues?
7. Are there any controversial issues in your family right now?
8. What is the pro-side? What is the con-side? What is your opinion?
9. Can you think of a compromise for these issues?