



Reasoning with Ethics

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Ethics in action creates character.

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

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Riot Ethics

Riot—a tumultuous disturbance of the public peace by three or more persons assembled together and acting with a common intent.

The Merriam-Webster definition of “riot” is being demonstrated daily since the protests over the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis policeman. It is unclear if the “common intent” clause of the definition accurately describes the many riots in multiple US cities.

Commentators have suggested the rioters are motivated by many factors that include anger in the Floyd killing, frustration over police failures in the past, anxiety over the COVID-induced economic shutdown and personal economic stress, and using the event to loot or advance an anarchist agenda.

Mr. Floyd’s death and the ethics associated with police restraint and arrest procedures are one possible option for ethical analysis. However, SEE invites students to consider the activities of rioters, whatever their motivation, and whether or not there is any ethical support for the activities such as attacking police stations, breaking into and looting businesses, and burning down stores along with other property.

If there are ethical values to support these rioting activities, are there any limits these ethical values place on the rioters? If there are not ethical values that support rioters, is there anything society can do to advance ethics to realistically resist or avoid this behavior in the future?

Supplemental links:

CBS-- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/derek-chauvin-taken-custody-george-floyd-death-minneapolis-police-officer/>
CBS Weekend report(3:19) -- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/minneapolis-longfellow-neighborhood-lake-street-business-community-property-damage/>
AMI Video-- <https://www.dailywire.com/news/watch-protesters-interviewed-were-stealing-because-its-slavery-money-we-should-kill-them-police-bes-if-anybody>

