

# Comparing Perspectives in Three Chinese Philosophies: Confucianism, Taoism, & Legalism

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are eight scenarios that teenagers deal with in one form or another. Knowing what you now know about these three philosophies, how would each philosophy tell a young person what to do and how to act properly? Write your responses in each box.

How would you respond to each one of these dilemmas as a follower of each different philosophy?	<b>Confucianism:</b> Respect for family and elders; following the order of the Five Relationships; loyalty and obedience; hard work; education to bring honor to your family; <i>ren</i> (proper feelings & attitude) should guide <i>li</i> (proper actions & behavior)	<b>Taoism:</b> Going with the Way/the Tao; keeping life simple; listening to your inner self; “effortless effort” and “actionless action”; inner balance leads to peace with others; “Go with the flow”; you can’t force anyone to do anything.	<b>Legalism:</b> All power to the legal ruler; strict laws & harsh consequences for going against the laws or ruler; no trust in your equals or family to teach you right from wrong; no way to hide when you have done wrong.
1. A student knows that he/she is failing a class. The student must tell his/her parents. How can the student expect his/her parents to respond?			
2. A student’s friends smoke and are trying to get him/her to start. What should the student tell his/her friends?			
3. A student has found \$20 in the school hallway next to the principal’s office. What should the student do and why?			OVER→

<p>4. A student spills ink all over a brand new, expensive outfit due to playing around. How should the parents react to this accident?</p>			
<p>5. Student A really likes a new kid at school, Student B, but everyone else is making fun of Student B's clothes. Some of these teasing kids are friends of Student A. What should Student A tell his/her friends and expect them to say back?</p>			
<p>6. A student knows that an older brother is cheating on school tests. How should the student act towards the brother knowing this information?</p>			
<p>7. A student sees an opportunity to take something he/she has really wanted with only a small chance of getting caught. For what reason(s) would the student <i>not</i> take the item?</p>			

**HW:** Choose three questions to ask someone else. Interview a family member or a friend—either of the same age or older than you—using these questions. Write down the person's responses on a sheet of loose leaf (#18A). After the "interview," privately try to determine if his/her reason for that response would best fit the thinking and behavior of a Confucianist, a Taoist, or a Legalist. Next to each of your interviewee's answers, write down a "C" "T" or "L" next to each response.