

# Discussion Post Prompts: Stem Cell Research

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## 1 Compromise and Moral Complicity in the Embryonic Stem Cell Debate

Possible discussion post topics

1. What are the ‘polar moral positions’ in the debate over embryonic stem cell research? Can you give examples of more intermediate positions? What reasons might you have to prefer one of these positions over the others?
2. What is the use-derivation distinction? Do you agree that there is a moral difference between the use of embryonic stem cells and their derivation? Why or why not?

## 2 Ethics of Stem Cell Research

Possible discussion post topics

1. What is one of the main arguments against destroying human embryos? How does Siegel criticize that argument? Do you agree with the argument, or with any of Siegel’s criticisms? Why or why not?
2. Siegel claims that even if human embryonic stem cells are human embryos, and even if it is morally impermissible to destroy human embryos, it may still be morally permissible to use human embryonic stem cells for research. What reasons does Siegel give to support this claim? Do you agree with those reasons? If so, why? And if not, how would you criticize them?

## 3 Killing Embryos for Stem Cell Research

Possible discussion post topics

1. Summarize McMahan’s example of cryogenically frozen children in an isolated country. What purpose does that example serve? Do you think it succeeds in doing what McMahan intends it to do? Why or why not?
2. What does McMahan think that a human organism is? And why does he deny that we are essentially human organisms? Do you agree with this view of his, and the reasons for it that he gives? Why or why not?