

3” Scenario



Visiting the homeless, developing countries, and the elderly

Students' response:

“I think they are very lazy/unwilling to improve.
Why should I help them?”

Teachers can guide students to analyze their response as follows:

- (1) “I feel they are very lazy/unwilling to improve” is their observation.
- (2) “Why should I help them?” is their sentiment.

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Students' observations of the beneficiaries are merely short-term and tend to be superficial, resulting in a negative impression. Teachers can guide students to provide specific details and examples so as to help them further analyze the underlying reasons.

Responses from students can be:

About homeless	“They are idle and lazy, refusing to work and even succumbing to drug addiction. It's their own fault.”
About people in impoverished countries	“They are inherently lazy, content with their current situation, and lack the drive to improve their lives.”
About the elderly	“Teaching the elderly to use computers and smartphones is difficult as they often claim they don't understand or need them. They lack the motivation to learn.”

Teachers can further inquire why the beneficiaries become homeless, why they do not find a job, and why they refuse to learn new technologies.

Responses from students can be:

About homeless	Expensive rent of subdivided flats/cage homes, poor living conditions; physical or mental disabilities that prevent employment; difficulty in finding jobs.
About people in poverty-stricken countries	Lack of job opportunities due to underdeveloped national economy; difficulty in finding jobs in rural areas; insufficient education.
About the elderly	Poor eyesight, difficulty in reading computer screens or smartphones; lack of understanding or difficulty in remembering technological terms and internet procedures; feeling that they have no need for technology.

Teachers can guide students to analyze the underlying reasons behind the apparent “laziness” of the beneficiaries. It actually stems from a sense of “powerlessness” and “incompetence” caused by a significant gap between the individual and the society or era they live in. They also lack support and assistance from family, friends, and society, leading to low self-esteem and a sense of isolation. This brings immense pressure to their mental and emotional well-being, making it difficult for them to muster motivation and even leading them to resort to different ways to escape reality. Such an analysis would help students understand that personal observations are often inaccurate and may result in many misconceptions. Labelling others with negative stereotypes casually can cause harm to them.

Teachers can guide students to reflect on their personal feelings again by asking: **“If you were in a similar situation, how would you face it? Would you seek help?”**

Let students imagine how they would solve the immediate problems they face if they were homeless, impoverished, or elderly. They would then realize that it is difficult to overcome these challenges through personal abilities alone and would hope to receive assistance from family, friends, and society. The assistance could include housing, financial support, job opportunities, education, healthcare, as well as emotional and psychological support. However, in reality, they often find it difficult to seek help.

Teachers can also ask students to think more about their own situation: “Have you personally encountered similar situations?”

In fact, many students may have come across helpless situations or have been given negative labels. Take learning as an example. A student may be weak in a certain subject and find learning difficult. They struggle to catch up with the pace, but lack effective strategies to overcome the challenges. They feel frustrated and finally lose interest. Yet they may be misunderstood by parents and teachers who regard them as “not studying hard enough”, “merely being lazy”, or “only caring about playing computer games”

“So, would you like to get assistance?”

Students may want to seek homework tutoring, extra classes, study groups, etc., to help them catch up with their studies. They would also appreciate encouragement and recognition from their parents and teachers to maintain their interest in learning.

This type of discussion would help students understand that both the beneficiaries and themselves may face certain challenging situations that they are incapable of changing but are misunderstood by others. They both urgently need help and care. Instead of criticizing others based solely on appearances, students should think deeply and have empathy and compassion for others.