



THIRD PLACE RECIPIENT

Ethics: Not Up for Debate

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My school has a strict anti-AI policy and has been adamant about the harms of using it. I saw the harm of it firsthand last Spring. As a Speech and Debate competitor, I commonly support or reject resolutions based upon ethics. Because of this, I have researched the ethical harms of AI and why its usage in specific situations can be considered ethically wrong.

Last year, I was selected to be captain of the debate team, something that came with numerous responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to ensure that everyone completes their cases on time. Everyone on the team then shares their documents with me for review. While reading through one of my teammates' cases, I noticed that the third section sounded significantly different from the other two and was not written in the format she typically used. I was immediately suspicious and did not want to think the worst. I found an online AI checker and copied the third segment from my teammates' case. It came back within seconds as being 98% AI-generated.

My head spun. I had known this competitor for years, and would never have suspected that she would cheat. I took a step back, weighing my options. If I told my debate coach what she had done, then she would be disqualified from the tournament and risk getting kicked off the team. My parents ingrained within me a strong moral code; I knew right from wrong very well, but they also taught me that people make mistakes, people struggle, and that one wrong turn should never define someone's life. I chose to approach my teammate about the issue.

The next day, during class, I pulled my teammate aside and showed her what the AI checker displayed. I asked her what she was thinking using AI like that, and she immediately began to apologize. She told me that she didn't fully understand the resolution and, with exams that week, could not take the time to understand it. I told her about the consequences of using AI

and how, if I found her using it again, I would tell our coach. I then offered her help, because making the right ethical decisions means offering assistance to those in need. She willingly accepted that help, promising never again to use AI for cases. We sat down and began working on the case.

The following day, I checked her case, and there was nothing copied from AI. At the next tournament, she presented her case proudly, as she made the right ethical choice.

Reflecting on this, I would have made the same choice. A person's life should not be defined by a single mistake, and she was well-intended but just did not know how to ask for help. Making strong ethical decisions means weighing the consequences of one's choices and considering the possible outcomes. That's what I did in this scenario, and I helped her truly succeed.