
# Weekly Discussion Questions 12/9/2024

Apple, Charles. "The End of Smallpox." *The Spokesman-Review*, 8 Dec. 2024, pp. D7

## Classroom Discussion Question Grades 9-12

**Impact of Eradication:** Smallpox is the only human disease that has been officially eradicated. Discuss the social, economic, and medical impacts of this achievement. What lessons can current global health initiatives learn from the smallpox eradication campaign?

**Ethical Considerations of Vaccine Development:** Early smallpox prevention methods, like variolation, involved risks of causing the disease itself, and even modern vaccines had severe side effects for some individuals. What ethical considerations should be considered when developing and distributing vaccines, especially in emergency situations?

**Modern Risks of Bioterrorism:** The smallpox virus still exists in secured labs in the U.S. and Russia. What are the potential risks and benefits of maintaining such samples? Should the virus be destroyed completely, or kept for research purposes, considering the potential threat of bioterrorism?

## Classroom Discussion Question Grades 6-8

**Why was eradicating smallpox so important?** Smallpox was a dangerous disease that caused many deaths. How do you think life changed for people once it was gone? What can we learn from the effort to get rid of smallpox that might help with diseases today?

**How did people prevent smallpox in the past?** Before vaccines, people used risky methods like variolation, which could make them sick. Why do you think they took such risks? What makes vaccines a safer option today?

**Should we keep the smallpox virus in labs?** The smallpox virus is stored in special labs for research, but some people worry it could be dangerous. Do you think we should keep it for research or destroy it completely? Why?

## Classroom Discussion Question Grades 1-5

**Why was it important to stop smallpox?** Smallpox made many people very sick and could even cause death. How do you think people felt when the disease was gone forever? What can we learn from how they stopped it?

**How did people try to stop smallpox before vaccines?** Long ago, people used a risky way to stop smallpox that sometimes made them sick. Why do you think they tried it anyway? How are vaccines better and safer?

**What should we do with the smallpox virus?** Scientists keep the smallpox virus in special labs to study it, but some people think it should be destroyed. What do you think? Should we keep it for learning or get rid of it forever?