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Word Generation - Unit 2.13

## Focus Words

prevention | critical | pursue | alter | approach



## Weekly Passage

When Ryan Ben's uncle was in the hospital in severe pain the doctor said he had only about a month to live. Ryan's uncle asked the doctor to give him pills so he could end his life. The doctor, however, refused to provide pills to assist with suicide. She said her approach was to help save lives, not end them.

But people like Ryan's uncle say they don't want a long painful death. They also worry about how much money useless treatment will cost their families. Since 1990, the idea of assisted suicide has been supported by Dr. Jack Kervorkian. According to Dr. Kervorkian, people have the right to pursue happiness. For people who are dying, he says, that includes the right to die when they choose.

Others are critical of that view. They say patients are not capable of making that choice. For one thing, patients who are in

pain can't think clearly. They may just want to end the pain, not their lives. The right treatment could be all that is needed for prevention of the pain. Those who are against assisted suicide also worry that family members might urge a sick relative to die in order to reduce medical bills. Besides, some say, suicide is wrong. Human beings didn't create life, so they don't have the right to take it, even their own.

People who support assisted suicide say it is cruel to make suffering people live. They say healthy people have no idea how bad pain can be. They want to alter the laws to make assisted suicide legal. A law legalizing assisted suicide passed in Oregon in 1997 and in Washington in 2008. In all other states a doctor who assists a suicide is considered to be guilty of murder. Where do you stand? Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill patients with suicide?

**Unit 2.13 -  
Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill  
patients with suicide?  
Focus Word Chart**

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
prevention	(n.) - avoidance			
critical	(adj.) - against, not supporting			
pursue	(v.) - to follow; to engage in			
alter	(v.) - to change			
approach	(n.) - method			

## Unit 2.13 - Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill patients with suicide?



### Problem of the Week

In 1997, Oregon passed the Death with Dignity Act (DWDA). This act allowed doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to certain seriously ill patients. Some people are glad that the law was **altered**, but others are **critical** of the change. Why do some patients decide to **pursue** the right to die?

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**Option 1:** Each year in Oregon, some seriously ill people make a decision to die by assisted suicide. In 2006, approximately forty-eight percent of these people said they chose this **approach** because they were in pain. Medical care could not **prevent** their suffering. Which decimal is equivalent to 48%?

- A) .48
- B) 48
- C) .048
- D) .0048

**Option 2:** In 2006, 22 of the people who decided to die by assisted suicide in Oregon said they chose this **approach** because they were in pain. Medical care could not **prevent** their suffering. If this was approximately 48% of the total number of people who died by assisted suicide, how many people died through assisted suicide in all?

**Discussion Question:** Patients give different reasons for **pursuing** assisted suicide. Understanding why people want to die is **critical** to making laws about this issue. What if a high percentage of many people began using assisted suicide as a way to **prevent** high medical costs for their families? Would this **alter** your view of assisted suicide?

# Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill patients with suicide?



## I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

# GO!

**A** Doctors should assist patients who are terminally ill to commit suicide.

**B** Doctors should never end a patient's life. Their job is to help their patients live, not die.

**C** Some patients may think they want to die but can't make this decision because they lack judgment. A doctor could make a terrible mistake by helping a patient who is not sure of his/her decision.

**D** A person's family should make or, at the very least, be included in the final decision. A group of caring people along with a doctor should make the final decision based on the patient's best interests.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

...because...

I disagree with part of that...

An example might help convince me. Can you give me an example?

What part of the passage makes you think that?

## 2. Get set...

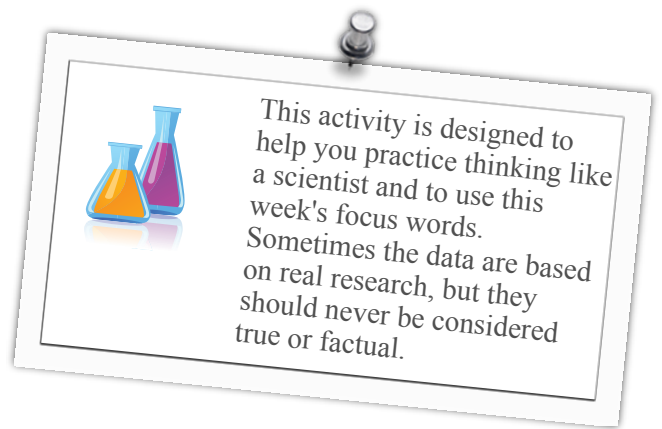
Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

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## Unit 2.13 - Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill patients with suicide? Science Activity



Jorge supports assisted suicide, but Lisa is **critical** of the practice.

“Most very sick people consider the idea of assisted suicide only if they feel they are a burden to their families. If we had better ways of taking care of people, we could **prevent** people from considering this **approach**,” Lisa says.

“Is that true?” Jorge asks. “If it is, maybe I would **alter** my opinion.”

“Actually, I have some data on this difficult topic,” says Professor Kahn. “The State of Oregon keeps a record of the end-of-life concerns of those who **pursue** legal assisted suicide.”

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### Question:

What are the common end-of-life concerns of individuals who pursue legal assisted suicide?

### Hypothesis:

Most people choose suicide because they feel they are a burden to their families

### Materials:

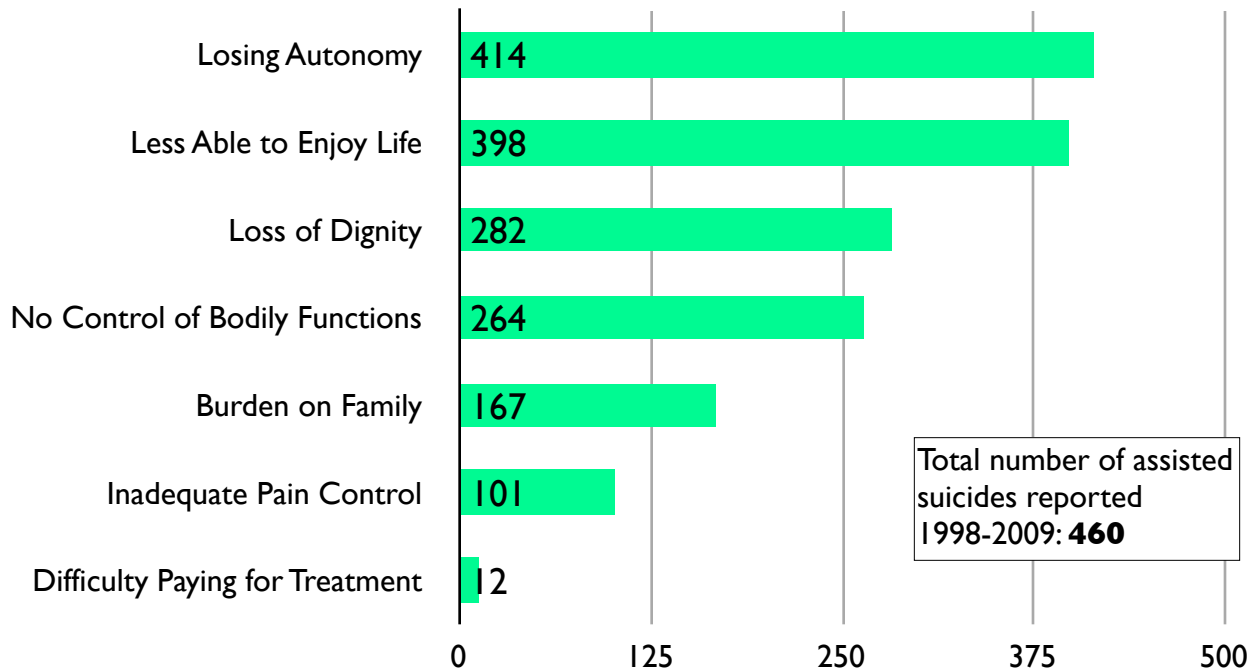
- ▶ data from the Oregon Death with Dignity Act official annual report

## Procedure:

1. Review data from legal assisted suicides.
2. Determine if “burden to family” is the main reason people choose legal assisted suicide

## Data:

### End of life concerns expressed by people who legally committed assisted suicide in Oregon 1998-2009



## Conclusion:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/>

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better study?



Should doctors be allowed to assist seriously ill patients with suicide?

## Focus Words

prevention | critical | pursue | alter | approach

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

[illegible]

**A tool to help you think about your own writing!**

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

## Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

## Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

## Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

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