
Who Is the Sage?

In each pair of situations below, one of the people described resembles the ideal of the Taoist sage, the person who lives in accord with Tao and practices the virtue *wu-wei*. Read each pair of situations and circle the letter next to the description of the person that most resembles the sage. Be prepared to give reasons for your answers.

1

- A. She prepares for an exam by staying up all night right before the exam, reading all the assignments for the first time and comparing them with the notes she took in class, and memorizing the meanings of the important terms and concepts.
- B. She prepares for an exam by reading assignments regularly and attentively, listening, participating, taking notes in class, and then briefly reviewing her assignments and notes for several nights before the exam.

2

- A. When leading a group project, he allows each group member to give her or his input and to choose a preferred role in completing the task.
- B. When leading a group project, he assigns roles and gives directions to others to ensure that the task is completed according to his standards.

3

- A. When she catches a cold, she takes several types of medication so that she can continue with her busy schedule.
- B. When she catches a cold, she takes any necessary medication and gets plenty of rest, even if it means altering her schedule.

4

- A. In trying to become the team's starting quarterback, he throws many long passes, completing one of every four.
- B. In trying to become the team's starting quarterback, he throws many short passes, completing three of every four.

5

- A. An actor in a school play does not like some of her character's lines, but she speaks them as written.
- B. An actor in a school play does not like some of her character's lines, so she changes them.

6

Make up a situation modeled on those above. Write it on a piece of notebook paper. Then, on the back of this handout, draw a cartoon that illustrates both the person who lives in accord with the Tao and the one who does not. Be prepared to present your situation and your cartoon to the class, and to explain which person is the sage, and why.
