

QUESTION SET BASED ON
BAKER AND HAWN'S 'ALGORITHMIC BIAS IN EDUCATION' (2021)

Below is a question-set based on Baker and Hawn (2021). Think about what you might say in response to the questions and feel free to discuss your responses with a fellow student, colleague, or friend, making sure to explain anything that they might need to understand as your discussion proceeds.

Q1: Baker and Hawn observe that "algorithms often encode the biases of their developers or the surrounding society, producing predictions or inferences that are clearly discriminatory towards specific groups." What is the significance of the fact that, as they observe later in the paper (in section 4, p. 23), some of these biases are known and some of them are unknown? Can developers, or the surrounding society, be held morally responsible for holding discriminatory biases that they do not know they hold? Explain your reasoning for your view.

Q2: Baker and Hawn distinguish two kinds of algorithmic harms, allocative harms and representational harms, that can result from discriminatory algorithmic bias. Come up with one example from your educational context where you, or someone you know, has experienced an algorithmic allocative harm. Next, come up with one example from your educational context where you, or someone you know, has experienced an algorithmic representational harm. How do you think such harms affect a person's educational development?