

Ethics, Philosophy and Theology

Year 9 Knowledge Organisers

Term 2: Ethics: What does it mean to be good?



Topics Covered

- What is Ethics?
- What does it mean to be Good?
- What makes an action good?
- How can we work out what to do in a moral dilemma?
- Utilitarianism: Is happiness the highest good?
- Kantian Ethics: Is good about following a set of rules?
- Virtue Ethics: Is being good about having a good character?
- Situation Ethics: Should humans live by the word of God?
- What do religions say about Ethical Situations?
- Evaluation of these different ideas

Summary of each Ethical Theory we look at.

Virtue ethics states that your character is the most important thing. Living an ethical life, or acting in the correct way, means that you need to develop and demonstrate the virtues of courage, compassion, wisdom, and temperance. It also means that you need to avoid vices like greed, jealousy, and selfishness.

Utilitarianism states that the amount of happiness and suffering created by a person's actions is what really matters when making an ethical decision. To act correctly means that you need to consider maximizing the amount of happiness and minimizing the amount of suffering caused by the decision. Sometimes you may even need to break a moral rule to achieve such an outcome e.g. Euthanasia and the moral guide "Do not kill"

Kantian Ethics states that the principles behind actions rather than an action's results is most important, in other words the motivation of the action not the result of the action. Acting correctly means that you are motivated by correct universal laws that treat everyone with respect.

Situation Ethics states that the most important thing in any moral situation is to do the most loving thing. Universal laws do not apply; you make a decision on each different situation. What's right for one person might not be right for another. You must consider though that the most loving things might be against the law. Would you still do it?

Useful Links:

[ETHICS - YouTube](#)

[Kant's Ethical Theory - YouTube](#)

[Ethics and Moral Theories - YouTube](#)

[AQA GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES ANIMAL RIGHTS REVISION NOTES - YouTube](#)

[Aristotle's Virtue Ethics - YouTube](#)

[Situation Ethics In Under 5 Minutes | Theory In 5 - YouTube](#)

[Utilitarianism in 4 Minutes - YouTube](#)

[What is Deontological Ethics? \(See link below for more video lectures in Ethics\) - YouTube](#)

[What is TELEOLOGY? What does TELEOLOGY mean? TELEOLOGY meaning, definition & explanation - YouTube](#)

Keyword	Definition
Agape:	Selfless, unconditional love.
Categorical imperative	If an action is good in every situation you have a moral duty to do it.
Conscience	A voice in your head that tells you what is right and what is wrong
Consequentialists	philosophers who are teleological looking at the consequences of an action.
Deep ecology	Belief that humans have a duty to protect the earth and should do what they can to ensure this happens
Deontological Ethics:	An ethical theory based on following a set of rules.
Ethics	A science which studies what is the right course of action in any given situation
Eudaimonia:	A Greek term which literally means to have a good spirit. Today means well-being, Happiness or flourishing.
Golden mean:	The type of behaviour that is neither deficient or excessive.
Hedonism:	The idea that the most important thing to live for is pleasure.
Kantian ethics	Branch of ethics which says the action that helps the most people involved is right BUT it must be followed by everyone
Maxim	Rule
Morals	A set of rules which tell us what is right and wrong
Natural Law	Branch of ethics that says the right course of action is the one God would want, i.e., what does the Bible say?
Shallow ecology	Belief that the Earth is here for the benefit of humans and should be protected for humans only
Situation Ethics:	An Ethical theory that suggests that the right thing to do in a situation is the most loving thing. The right thing to do depends on a given situation. There are no laws that are always right
Teleological Ethics	An ethical theory interested in the outcome or consequences of actions.
Trolley problem	A thought experiment whereby a decision must be made between killing 5 people or 1 person. Links to utilitarianism
Universal Law	Something that is right to do in every culture and religion.
Utilitarianism	Branch of ethics which says the action that helps most people is right
Vice	Behaviours that are unwanted, unhelpful or do not contribute to the development of good character
Virtue Ethics	The theory that an action is only right if it is an action that a virtuous person would carry out in the same circumstances. The aim of this is to help you lead a good, happy and fulfilling life
Virtue Ethics:	Ethical systems that focus primarily on what sort of person one should try to be.
Virtue:	A virtue is a moral characteristic that a person needs to live well and have a good rewarding life. For example, kindness or loyalty

Help with Answering Questions

Here are tips to help you write answer to your questions.

Challenge yourself. Practice questions.

1. Outline the Trolley Problem
2. What is the difference between Deontological and Teleological Ethics?
3. Evaluate Utilitarianism
4. Is experimentation on animals ever acceptable?
5. Evaluate Kantian Ethics
6. Evaluate Situation Ethics
7. Evaluate Virtue Ethics
8. What does it mean to be good?

Always use PEEL when answering questions in sentences.

P – Point
E – Evidence
E – Explain
L – Link back to the question



Command Word	Meaning
Assess	Make a judgement using reasons
Compare	Identify similarities and Differences
Complete	Finish the task
Describe	Give a detailed account in words
Discuss	Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses
Evaluate	You need to consider different views and come to a judgement
Explain	You need to identify relevant points and show your understanding of them
Give/state/name	Recall knowledge, e.g. two examples/types/ways of something
Identify	Name or state something clearly
Outline	Set out main points
State	Express in clear terms
Suggest	Present a possible case
To what extent...?	Judge the importance or success of a strategy, scheme or project

