

Ethics Summer Work



Ethics tries to answer questions such as:

- What actions are good? What actions are evil?
- How can we tell the difference? Are they the same for everyone?
- How can I tell if an action is good?

To be prepared for the study of ethics it is important to be able to distinguish between:

- Deontological ethics** – This is the branch of ethics concerned with **actions**. Here we should follow independent moral rules or duties. When we follow our duty, we are behaving morally. When we fail to follow our duty, we are behaving immorally. E.g. Kantian Ethics, Natural Moral Law.
- Absolutist ethics** – Some people think there are such **universal rules** that apply to **everyone**. This sort of thinking is called moral absolutism.
- Teleological ethics** – This is the branch of ethics concerned with **consequences**. Consequentialism teaches that people should do whatever produces the greatest amount of good consequences. E.g. Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics.
- Relativist ethics** – If you look at different cultures or different periods in history you'll find that they have different moral rules. So what is right or wrong **depends** on the **situation**.

Compulsory Tasks – handed to your teacher FIRST LESSON BACK in Year 12:

1. **Research the FOUR main categories of ethical theory and produce a summary of each (deontological, absolutist, teleological, relativist).** You should include particular philosophers or ethical theories, and try to link these to examples of ethical dilemmas.
2. **Read and summarise AT LEAST ONE** news article on each on the following areas of **Applied Ethics**:
 - a. Euthanasia
 - b. Business Ethics – issues such as globalisation, how to be an ethical business, or whistleblowing.

You should include the main ethical issue(s) raised in the article, and explain the arguments **FOR** and **AGAINST** the issue(s) mentioned.

Recommended Tasks - go for these as well if you're aiming for top marks next year!

Read:

- **Sophie's World** by Jostein Gaarder and **produce a 500 word (max) review** of what you learnt/thought about. This book is widely available from any bookshop, amazon, or you could loan it from a library. The task will also help you with your learning in Philosophy.
- **The Sage Train** by Nicky Hansell
- **The Puzzle of Ethics** by Peter Vardy & Paul Grosh (this will be a key text throughout the course and might be worth purchasing).
- **The Puzzle of Sex** by Vardy or **Being Jack Dominion** by Jack Dominion
- **Applied Ethics** Ed. Peter Singer

Watch:

- Any documentary you can find on euthanasia. For example, Terry Pratchett's 'Choosing to Die,' BBC2's 'How to Die: Simon's Choice.' Any documentary you can find on euthanasia. For example, Terry Pratchett's 'Choosing to Die,' BBC2's 'How to Die: Simon's Choice.' Another good but quite upsetting film (based on a true story) is 'A Short Stay in Switzerland'. *(This film shows a variety of different views points and really helps you to remember that ethical issues concern real people – something we sometimes forget!)*
- An episode of 'Life and Death Row' (originally on the BBC – can be found on youtube)