



Topic on a Page for A Level Year 2 AQA

Component 1B: Ethics

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Contents

Product Support from ZigZag Education	ii
Terms and Conditions of Use	iii
Teacher's Introduction.....	iv
A3 Summary Pages	4 pages
1. Introduction to Meta-ethics: The Meaning of Right and Wrong	
2. Free Will and Moral Responsibility	
3. Conscience	
4. Bentham and Kant	
Activities.....	4 pages
A4 Summary Pages	11 pages
Answers.....	6 pages

Teacher's Introduction

This resource covers the A Level Year 2 AQA Religious Studies specification for Component 1B: Ethics and Religion, and includes the following content:

Introduction to meta-ethics: the meaning of right and wrong

- Divine command theory
- Naturalism: utilitarianism
- Non-naturalism: intuitionism

Free will and moral responsibility

- The conditions of moral responsibility
- The extent of moral responsibility
- The relevance of moral responsibility to reward and punishment

Conscience

- The nature of conscience
- The role of conscience in moral decision-making
- The value of conscience as a moral guide

Bentham and Kant

- A comparison of key ideas
- How far their theories are consistent with religious moral decision-making

The resource is split into five sections as follows:

1. **A4 teacher information pages.**
2. **Four A3 revision posters**, between them covering the four subtopics. These are labelled: **1** to **4**. These posters are intended as a summary of all topic material, focusing on the main points rather than the detail, so that all important areas are covered without going into too much depth.
3. **Four A3 subtopic sheets with activities.** Each of these sheets covers one subtopic and provides write-on activities for students to complete. Answers can generally be found in the A3 revision posters themselves, but are also provided in a separate answer document (see section 5). These are labelled with numbers inside white circles: **4**

Exam-style questions, modelled on those found in the AS / A Level exam, are marked by a pencil icon: 

4. **Eleven A4 subtopic revision posters.** These provide answers for the main activities given in the A3 subtopic activity sheets. As revision posters, these can be used as a summary for each area, and have enough space for teacher or student annotation. These are labelled with numbers inside black circles: **11**
5. **A4 answer sheets.** These pages provide more detailed answers to the questions on the A3 subtopic activity sheets; in particular, the long-answer questions. Student-friendly, AQA-style mark schemes are also provided for the exam-style questions.

All posters can be displayed on classroom walls, or given to students to learn in lessons or at home.

As a whole, the resource can be used to help students to consolidate knowledge at the end of a topic/subtopic, or to revise before a test or an exam. Different styles and layouts are used to make the information interesting and to help the students engage with the information in a productive way.

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Divine Command Theory is a religious meta-ethical theory. It posits that morality comes from God and that this can be derived from sources of divine revelation such as scripture. An example of this is where someone believes in morality coming directly from the Bible, e.g. an individual who believes in God and the Bible will consider the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) to be divine commandments and important moral rules which should be followed. The Ten Commandments are considered to be wholly good, because God is wholly good.

Ten Commandments: a set of divine commands which form the central moral principles for Christianity – where they believe these were special moral instructions from God. They are found in Exodus 20 and include such commandments as 'You shall not lie'.

Ethical naturalism is a cognitive theory that can be arrived at through discovery of what is right or wrong if it fulfils the intention of happiness (utilitarianism). It treats morality as we would expect the statement 'this is blue' can see and be certain that it is blue and can be empirically tested by analysis.

Divine Command Theory

Naturalism

Utilitarianism

Meta-ethics: literally means 'beyond ethics' and is concerned with language and the way in which it is used. It examines less whether or not something is moral, but more why it is considered to be moral.

Introduction to Meta-ethics

Non-naturalism

Ethical non-naturalism is the idea that things which are good or bad cannot always be equated with being good or bad. If we accept ethical non-naturalism, they will believe the following:

1. Sentences which express ethical ideas express propositions.
2. Some of these proposed ideas can be said to be true or false.
3. These propositions are the result of facts of the world, without the influence of opinion.

As with ethical naturalism, it is best to give an example of ethical non-naturalism. This example is **intuitionism**.

Strengths

- Moore's use of the colour yellow is particularly effective – it appeals highly to human reason and logic.
- It gives a relatively straightforward and clear path to finding moral goods which is open to everyone who is able to think in a logical way.
- Moore's intuitionism is able to overcome the naturalistic fallacy while still maintaining that moral goods are objective simply by constantly stating this and refusing to budge.

Strengths

- It works well within a religious context. God is truly the all-knowing and all-powerful being that has the authority to give divine commandments. Surely this would be a very sound source of morality.
- It is a clear and definite source of morality – moral statements generally permit or do not permit an action fairly clearly, e.g. lying is wrong and there is little wiggle room in this.
- Fits well with other religious ideas, so will appeal to those who believe in God.

Weaknesses

- Requires belief in God; therefore, this will not be a valid form of ethics for an atheist.
- Within the vacuum of religious texts there is the stark issue of contradictory laws – how then should these be navigated?
- Furthermore, if two people are following the same divine command and interpret them differently, then there is limited cohesion.
- **Euthyphro's dilemma** throws up multiple weaknesses with the arguments around divine command theory.

First posed by Greek philosopher Plato, this is a dilemma named after one of his dialogues. If an action is good because it is commanded by God, then surely God could command immoral actions which would then be considered good? And if they are good in and of themselves, then does this mean that there is some kind of being greater than God which determines the inherent goodness of each action by our responses to outside stimuli which we cannot control? This is important to consider.

Are acts moral in and of themselves, and, therefore, commanded by God because they are good, or are acts good because God has commanded them?

The arbitrary problem is the issue that it seems that God's whims are what govern morality – are commandments then morally arbitrary?

The problem of divine commands is the issue that if God is the ultimate power and creator of what is moral, then surely he could change his mind – then things such as murder could all of a sudden be considered moral.

The problem of independence is the issue that if we decide that acts are good in and of themselves, then they must be independent to God – which challenges the idea that God is the ultimate power and greatest being.

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The conditions of moral responsibility are determined by the question of whether or not we have free will. With free will comes moral responsibility; being held accountable for our actions.

Do we have free will?

No

If we do not have free will, then we cannot be held responsible for our moral decisions.

Being predestined to make a choice means that an individual cannot be personally blamed for having made that decision. We see this line of logic at work in the law, e.g. via issues of diminished responsibility. If an individual who has committed a crime is considered to have had a diminished will, then their culpability for that crime is diminished.

Yes

If we consider human beings to have free will, then the condition of this is that human beings need to also be morally responsible for their actions. Making a choice necessitates a consequence in order for society to have some form of justice and structure.

Understanding the Difference between Right and Wrong

The Extent of Moral Responsibility

An example of people who might be considered to have diminished responsibility is those with specific learning disabilities or people who have not been privy to certain facts. This ties the idea of free will and moral responsibility to the human capacity to reason. If we are unable to do this, then we cannot be held fully responsible for our actions.

Free Will choices of make an in

Moral Res choices, are this basis th

Compatibilism

Compatibilists believe that the ideas of free will and determinism are not mutually exclusive and that both are equally valid.

They might argue that we can see instances both of external influence on choices and of choices made of free volition in our society. For example, Mahatma Gandhi is well known for going on hunger strike to protest British occupation of India. This was a free choice; an exercise of his free will towards an end. However, there have been thousands of historical examples of people who have been denied food as a method of punishment or torture. These people had no choice in their lack of eating – their starvation was a predetermination.

Libertarianism is the view that human beings have free will, and are, therefore, wholly responsible for any moral choices they make. While libertarians acknowledge the existence of external factors, they argue that these factors only influence choices rather than determine them.

In a libertarian view, predestination only applies to mechanical non-sentient beings, e.g. flowers being blown by a gust of wind. Within libertarian thought we find the concept of 'contingent truths' – things which are highly likely to be true but are not necessarily so, e.g. If Bob is stronger than Bill, then most likely Bob would beat Bill in a fight. However, this result is not predetermined – it is possible, although unlikely, that Bill might still win.

While external factors have an impact, they do not completely determine the choice that has been made.

The Extent of Moral Responsibility

Free Will and Moral Responsibility

Predestination: the idea that our choices are determined by an external force to ourselves, such as a deity.

Determinism

Hard determinism is the belief that all actions are pre-decided by an external force before they occur. It has multiple forms, including the following:

Causal determinism is the belief that the natural and physical laws which govern nature determine actions taken by human beings.

Psychological determinism is the idea that the choices of human beings are determined by the psychological state which they experience prior to taking that action.

Theological determinism is the belief that our choices are pre-determined by a deity – e.g. that God is supremely powerful even over our choices.

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Aquinas' Religious Idea of Conscience

Aquinas' ideas about conscience are closely tied to his ideas about natural law. He believed that every human being is born with an instinctive conscience that is given to them by God and it is from this instinct that we decipher what is right and wrong. There are some key concepts in Aquinas' thought, which are as follows:

Synderesis: the correct moral reason; choosing to do what is right and rejecting what is evil.

Conscientia: this is the conscience, which is able to decipher what is good and evil and use this knowledge to make a judgement in a moral choice.

Aquinas believed that there are two approaches to making choices. Firstly, knowing that an action is right (e.g. just the Bible) and knowingly doing it anyway.

In order to make a correct choice, human beings have wisdom, which Aquinas considered to be a virtue. Using reason to make a correct choice is known as 'prudence'. Using prudence in order to find a moral action is known as *practica ratio* – the practical application of human reason to decipher the correct moral choice.

Aquinas believed that conscience is innate and is possessed by all human beings. This idea gives human beings autonomy over their choices – they can choose whether or not to follow their conscience.

However, Aquinas made emphatic differentiation between different kinds of error in moral judgement between what he termed 'vincible' and 'invincible' errors.

- A vincible error is when an individual knowingly does something wrong as they know the truth of the law of God.
- An invincible error is when an individual chooses to take an action which violates God's law without the knowledge that they are doing so.

Conscience is widely regarded as being a moral guide – think of the character 'Jim' in Disney's *Pinocchio*. However, not all people view it as such. While Aquinas' theory shows that we should consider conscience to be a sound moral guide instilled in all of us by God, others, such as Freud, would consider conscience to be of little value as a moral guide beyond allowing us to fit in with what our parents or sources consider to be acceptable.

Modern psychology has generated the view that our choices are not necessarily free, as we would assume, but rather strongly influenced by our responses to outside stimuli which we cannot control. If this is the case, then our conscience cannot necessarily be relied upon in terms of making moral choices as they are little more than programmed reactions to stimuli.

If the likes of Aquinas are correct, then the value of a conscience is high. In this line of thinking, conscience is viewed as a navigation tool given by God for human beings to figure out what is and what is not moral. This gives us other potentially valuable concepts – such as the concept of moral responsibility, which plays a large role in today's legal system.

Durkheim's Sociological Idea of Conscience

Emile Durkheim was a French sociologist, who believed that conscience is the result of social conditioning. He believed that a guilty conscience is an action conflicting with a learned moral value which is established by society. People's reactions are not a result of an innate moral objection, rather a reaction against something they have learned is morally wrong.

He addresses the issue ignored by the other theories – that some people, he argues, have not fully internalized the values of a society. A number of possible reasons (e.g. biological factors) could explain this.

He also puts forward the idea of the collective conscience. This is the set of beliefs and values shared by a society is particularly strong. It is a participation in a conscience.

Durkheim also notes that the conscience experienced by collective conscience is an evolutionary trait – providing a kind of social scaffolding for groups to identify with.

Religious Ideas of Conscience

Non-religious Ideas of Conscience

Conscience

Lying and Conscience

The Value of Conscience as a Moral Guide

Aquinas would view the claim that conscience is irrational – this is because Aquinas believes we all innately know the law of God against lying set out in the Ten Commandments. Disrupting the order of society is a promise as, by breaking a promise, we are breaking a moral guide.

Freud believed that lying was a necessary part of conscience if they were raised by our parents or sources of moral guidance in a neutral manner, then so would be the conscience. The exact moral value. The exact moral value. The exact moral value.

Durkheim would argue that conscience is caused by society to be unstable. He would never trust the words of a person unless they were backed by the structure could ever function because of the collective conscience. He would also argue that conscience is because it is on the basis of a contract.

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Act Utilitarianism: theory which holds that the right *action* is the one which maximises pleasure and minimises pain.

J Bentham argued that humans are ruled by pain and pleasure. He developed the ethical theory of utilitarianism. It is the idea that the most ethical thing to do fulfils the principle of utility – creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number. He developed the **hedonic calculus** in order to measure this to judge actions.

For Bentham, and utilitarian ethicists, the way to approach a moral decision is based on the amount of happiness it can generate. The **hedonic calculus** is a method developed by a decision. It is a systematic way of measuring happiness by gauging happiness by different criteria. Hedonic comes from the Greek word 'hēdonē', which means pleasure. The hedonic calculus includes **criteria** by which an action can be judged to determine how much happiness it would create quantitatively. These include:

- 'intensity' (the strength of a pleasure)
- 'duration' (the length of the pleasure)
- 'fecundity' (how likely one pleasure is to lead to more pleasures)
- 'certainty' (how likely the action is to create pleasure)
- 'propinquity' (how near the pleasure is)
- 'purity' (how removed the action is from pain)
- 'extent' (the number of people who will experience pleasure)

Unlike Kantian ethics, utilitarianism is consequentialist. This means that the consequences of a decision are the measure by which the decision is judged. This can be morally challenging as it can come into conflict with actions which we can see as being immoral. It can be used to justify immoral actions such as infringing or violating human rights of the minority group because it benefits the majority group – for example, in its purest form, utilitarianism could be used to justify the actions of the Nazis during the Second World War.

Utilitarianism can also be considered **hedonistic**, meaning it values happiness as the goal.

Kantian Ethics and Religion

☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas of moral duty are central to both Kant's and religious ideas. • The kingdom of ends principle fits well with ideas of the dignity and importance of human beings. • The universalisable principle fits well with some religious ideas that actions are either incorrect or correct. • The concepts of summum bonum and immortality link strongly with religious concepts of the afterlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If religious teachings conflict, then the universalisable principle does not work. • Reason is the most important thing in Kantian ethics – this might be considered to subvert God.

Utilitarianism is the ethical view which posits that the most ethical, moral action to take is the one which will garner the greatest **happiness** for the greatest number. There are various forms of utilitarian ethics. The first formation is known as act utilitarianism, and this was put forward by Jeremy Bentham.

Act Utilitarian Ethics

Bentham's Ideas about Moral Decision-making

Bentham and Kant

Applying Bentham and Kant's Ideas to Religious Decision Making

Utilitarian Ethics and Religion

☺	☹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea of the principle of utility being a base rule mirrors the role of the golden rule (Matthew 7:12–14). • There is some flexibility in New Testament moral codes, which can be viewed as being similar to the flexible nature of utilitarian ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarian ethics is hedonistic, which is something widely condemned in religious thought. • It is a consequentialist theory, which religious thought tends to oppose. • Utilitarian ethics often results for the minority, which is often important to religion.

Kantian Ethics

For Immanuel Kant, rationality is the entire system of his ethics, and it is greatly influenced by the hypothetical imperative.

Hypothetical imperative: do x if you want y.

Kant's Ideas about Moral Decision-making

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Introduction to Meta-ethics

1. Define what is meant by the term 'meta-ethics'.

2. Fill in the words below

Divine Command Theory is a religious meta-ethical theory. It posits that morality comes from **A** _____ and that this can be derived from sources of divine revelation such as **B** _____.

An example of this is when people believe in morality coming directly from the **C** _____, e.g. an individual who believes in God will consider the **D** _____ (Exodus 20) to be divine commandments and moral rules which should be followed.



The Ten Commandments are considered to be **E** _____ because God is **F** _____.

Meta-ethics

4. What is ethical naturalism? Refer to utilitarianism in your answer.

5. Give three strengths of utilitarianism as a naturalist theory.

Give three weaknesses of utilitarianism as a naturalist theory.


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Free Will and Moral Responsibility

1. Define what is meant by the term 'free will'.



A large dashed rectangular box for writing the definition of 'free will'.

2. Define what is meant by the term 'moral responsibility'.

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4. Fill in the blanks in the paragraph below.

A _____ is the view that human beings have complete B _____, therefore, wholly responsible for all moral choices they make. When C _____ acknowledge the existence of D _____ factors, they argue for E _____ choices rather than F _____ choices.

In a libertarian view, predestination only applies to mechanical, not organic, events, e.g. flowers being blown by a gust of wind. Within libertarian thought, the concept of 'F _____' – things which are highly predictable but are not necessarily so.

Free Will and Moral Responsibility



3. Describe the following forms of hard determinism.

Psychological determinism...

Causal determinism...

Theological determinism...

5. Explain the concept of...

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6. Why is it important to understand the difference between right and wrong?

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Free Will and Moral Responsibility

1. Fill in the gaps to complete the sentences below.

Aquinas' ideas about conscience are closely tied to his ideas about **A** _____. He believed that every human being is born with an instinctive conscience that is given to them by **B** _____ and it is from this instinct that we decipher what is right and wrong. There are some key concepts in Aquinas' thought, which are as follows:

C _____: the correct moral reason; choosing to do what is right, rejecting what is evil.

D _____: this is the conscience, which is a habit that tells us what is good and evil and use this knowledge to make a moral choice.

In order to make a correct choice, human beings have wisdom, which Aquinas considered to be a virtue. This is known as **E** _____. Using this in order to find a moral action is known as **F** _____ – the practical application of human reason to decipher the correct moral choice.

Aquinas made emphatic differentiation between different kinds of error in moral judgement between what he termed 'vincible' and 'invincible' errors.

A **G** _____ error is when an individual knowingly does something wrong as they know the truth of the law of God.

An **H** _____ error is when an individual chooses to take an action which violates God's law without the knowledge that they are doing so.

3. What is the value of a conscience as a moral guide?

2. S

of

no

Conscience

Aquinas

Freud

Durkheim

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1. What role does Immanuel Kant believe that reason plays within ethics?

3. What is the principle at the heart of Bentham's utilitarianism?

2. In your own words, explain the three forms of the categorical imperative.

The First Form:

The Second Form:

The Third Form:

5. In the boxes below, give two reasons for and two reasons against the following statement:

'Kantian ethics fits well with religious ideas.'

Reasons for ☺

Reasons against ☹

4. Explain how the hedonic calculus informs the decisions of a utilitarian.

Bentham and Kant

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Introduction to Meta-ethics: The Meaning of Right and Wrong (1)

- It works well within a vacuum – if God is truly the all-knowing, benevolent and all-powerful being that he is believed to be by divine command theorists, then surely this would be a very sound source of morality
- It is a clear and definite source of morality – divine statements generally permit or prohibit a particular action fairly clearly, e.g. lying is wrong and there is little wiggle room
- Fits well with religious ideas, so will appeal to those who believe in God.

Strengths

Ten Commandments: a set of divine commands which form the central moral principles for Christianity – where they believe these were special moral instructions from God. They are found in Exodus 20 and include such commandments as 'You shall not lie'.

Are acts moral in and of themselves, and, therefore, commanded by God because they are good, or are acts good because God has commanded them?



Euthyphro's Dilemma

Divine Command Theory

First posed by Greek philosopher Plato, this is a dilemma named after one of his dialogues. If an action is good because it is commanded by God, then surely God could command any action which he considered good? And if they are good in and of themselves, then does that mean that there is some kind of being greater than God which determines the inherent goodness of each action by our responses to outside stimuli which we cannot control? This is important to consider.

The **arbitrariness** problem is the issue that it seems that if God's will is what governs morality – then commandments then morally arbitrary?

The problem of **abhorrent commands** states that if God is the sole decider of what is moral, then surely he can change his mind – then things such as murder could suddenly be considered moral.

The problem of **independence** is the issue that if we decide that acts are good in and of themselves, then they must be independent to God – which challenges the idea that God is the ultimate power and greatest being.

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Introduction to Meta-ethics: The Meaning of Right and Wrong (2)

Ethical naturalism is a cognitive theory; the belief that decisions about what is right and wrong can be arrived at through discovery of the natural world and human nature. An action can be right or wrong if it fulfils the intended purpose of human nature, natural reason, or if it produces happiness (utilitarianism). It treats ethical statements the same as non-ethical statements. Just as we would expect the statement 'that car is blue' to be empirically tested (by looking at the car, I can see and be certain that it is blue), so ethical statements, such as 'happiness is good', can be empirically tested by asking whether an action has produced happiness.



An example of a naturalistic theory is Jeremy Bentham and later developed by John Stuart Mill on the crux of the idea that what is right and what is wrong morally is what causes the most happiness. As long as the murder itself causes more pleasure than pain (for the millions to suffer), then this murder is morally right.

Strengths

- It appeals to human reason.
- Largely naturalistic theories appeal to our experience of the world – we have experienced pain and found it to be unpleasant, so it is natural to assume that it would be good to avoid it. What is good is what is natural for human beings to do, and what it is good for them to do.



Weaknesses

- The main weakness is known as the 'is-ought' gap, which means proponents of this theory confuse what is with what ought to be.
- Bentham's classification of what is painful and what is pleasurable is critiqued by Hume to be an assumption.
 - Many argue that it is also reductionist.

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Introduction to Meta-ethics: The Meaning of Right and Wrong (3)

Ethical non-naturalism is the idea that things which cause pleasure or happiness cannot always be equated with being good. If someone believes in ethical non-naturalism, they will believe the following statements:

1. Sentences which express ethical ideas express ethical **proposals**.
2. Some of these proposed ideas can be said to be **objective**.
3. Some of these proposals are the result of facts of a nature observable by humans without the influence of **emotion**.
4. These features of the world **cannot** be reduced to be non-moral.

As with ethical naturalism, it is best to give an example of a theory of ethical non-naturalism. This example is **intuitionism**.

Non-naturalism

Intuitionism

Sten

- Moore's intuitionism is particularly effective in dealing with human reason and logic. It provides a relatively straightforward and clear path to finding moral goods which is open to everyone who is able to think in a logical way.
- Moore's intuitionism is able to overcome the naturalistic fallacy while still maintaining that moral goods are objective simply by constantly stating this and refusing to budge.

-
-
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Intuitionism is a theory of ethics that holds that moral truths are self-evident and can be known through intuition.

The intuitionist approach to ethics is based on the idea that moral truths are self-evident and can be known through intuition.

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Free Will and Moral Responsibility (1)

The conditions of moral responsibility are determined by the question of whether or not we have free will. With free will comes moral responsibility; being held accountable for our actions.

Do we have free will?

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If we consider human beings to have free will, then the condition of free will is that human beings need to also be morally responsible for their actions. Making a choice necessitates a consequence in order for society to have some form of justice and structure.

Under
between

One of the key factors that has on moral responsibility is the difference between knowledge and ignorance. Knowledge is the understanding of facts, while ignorance is the lack of knowledge.

Therefore, a person's knowledge and knowledge of the criteria might be a factor in determining their moral responsibility.

If we do not have free will, then we cannot be held responsible for our moral decisions. Being predestined to make a choice means that an individual cannot be personally blamed for having made that decision. We can see this line of logic at work within the law, e.g. via issues of diminished capacity. If an individual who has committed a crime is considered to have had a lack of free will, then their culpability for that crime is diminished.

The Conditions of Moral Responsibility (1)

An example of people who might be considered to have diminished responsibility is those with specific mental disabilities or people who have not been able to ascertain facts. This ties the idea of free will or moral responsibility to the human capacity to make decisions. If a person is unable to do this, then we cannot be held responsible for our actions.

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Free Will: This is the ability to make choices of their own free will, to make an informed decision.

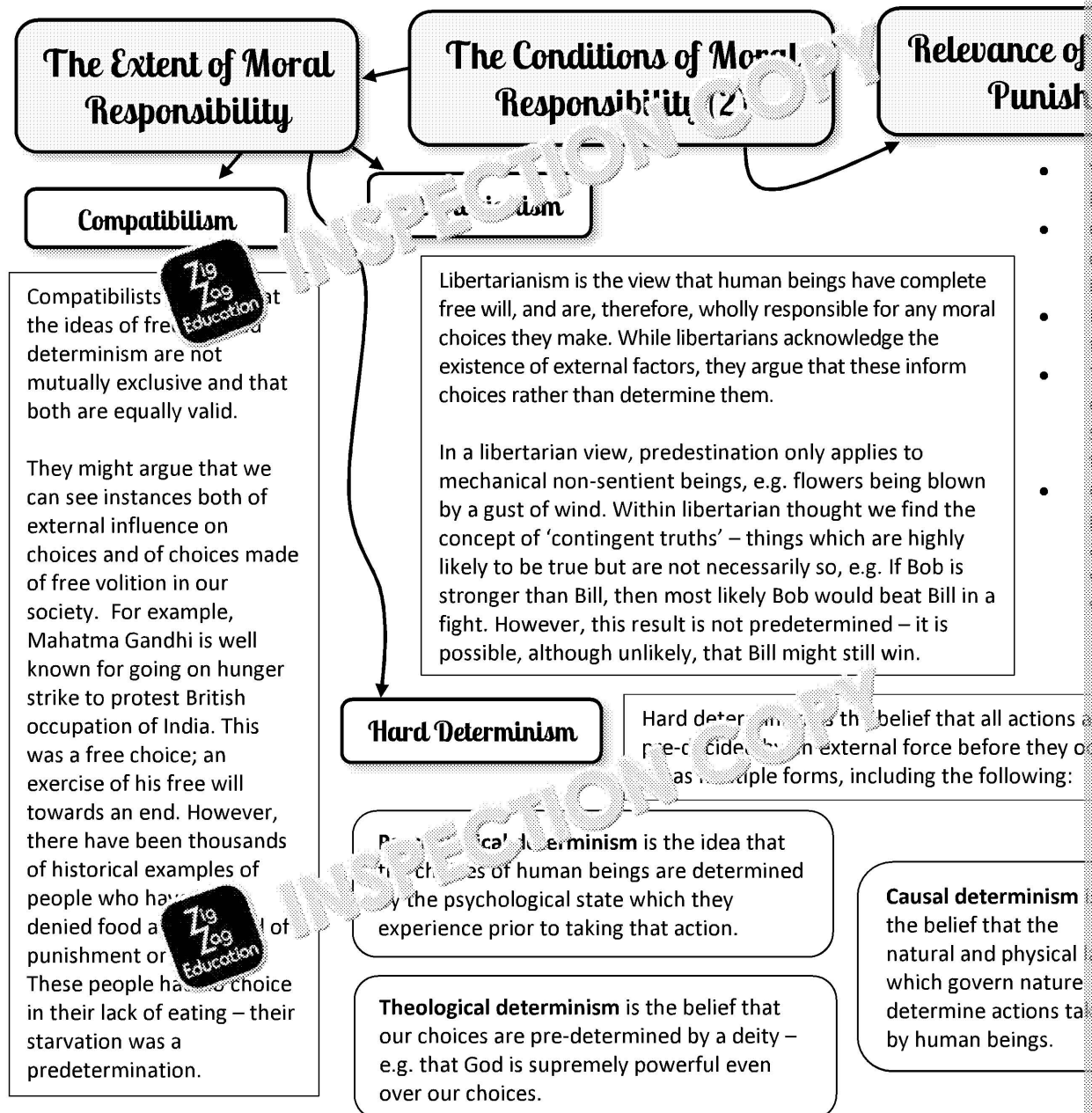
Moral Responsibility: This is the ability to make choices, and if a person is held responsible for their actions on this basis that they are morally responsible.

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Free Will and Moral Responsibility (2)



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Conscience (1)

Religious Ideas of Conscience

Aquinas' Ideas of Conscience

Aquinas' ideas about conscience are closely tied to his ideas about natural law. He believed that every human being is born with an instinctive conscience that is given to them by God and it is from this instinct that we decipher what is right and wrong. There are some key concepts in Aquinas' thought, which are as follows:

Aquinas believed that there were two approaches to moral choices. Firstly, knowing that an action is wrong (i.e. against the Bible) and knowingly doing it anyway. Secondly, acting against your conscience.

In order to make a correct choice, human beings have wisdom, which Aquinas considered to be a virtue. Using reason to make a correct choice is known as 'prudence'. Using prudence in order to find a moral action is known as *practica ratio* – the practical application of human reason to decipher the correct moral choice.

Conscientia: this is the conscience, which is able to decipher what is good and evil and use this knowledge to make a correct judgement in a moral choice.

Synderesis: the correct moral reason; choosing to do what is right and rejecting what is evil.

The Value of Conscience as a Moral Guide

Modern psychology has the view that our choices are free, as we would assume, but are strongly influenced by outside stimuli which we are not aware of. If this is the case, then our choices do not necessarily be relied upon when making moral choices as we are not always aware of the factors that influence our choices rather than programmed reactions.

Aquinas believed that conscience is the voice of God within us, which gives us autonomy over their choices.

However, Aquinas made an emphasis between what he termed 'vincible' and 'invincible' errors.

- A vincible error is when an individual makes a mistake without the knowledge that it is wrong.
- An invincible error is when an individual makes a mistake without the knowledge that it is wrong.

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Conscience (2)

Emile Durkheim was a French sociologist, who believed that conscience was the result of social conditioning. He believed that a guilty conscience was the result of an action conflicting with a learned moral value which is established within society. These reactions are not a result of an innate moral object or rule, but rather a reaction against what they have learned is morally wrong.

He addresses a gap ignored by the other theories – that some people appear to have no conscience. Such people, he argues, have not fully learned the moral values of a society, for a number of possible reasons (e.g. biology/upbringing).

He also put forward the idea of the collective conscience. This is Durkheim's idea that the sphere of beliefs and values shared by a society is part of this society's collective conscience. It is a participation in a conscience.

Durkheim also notes that the conscience experienced by collectives could be an evolutionary trait – providing a kind of social scaffolding for groups of people to identify with.

**Durkheim's
Sociological Idea
of Conscience**

**Non-religious
Ideas of Conscience**

**Freud's Psychological
Idea of Conscience**

Sigmund Freud believed that conscience could be explained psychologically. He proposed that the human mind is made up of three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. He argued that the id is the part of the human psyche driven by the base instincts and desires, and the superego is formed of the boundaries placed on human beings by society. The conscience is the result of friction between these two parts of the mind. When a person has to make a moral choice which the superego has learned is wrong, we experience a guilty conscience.

Freud refers to internalisation – we have taken moral codes from outside ourselves and brought them inside ourselves. Internalisation is the result of repeated exposure and socialisation experiences in childhood, leading to an acceptance of these values in adulthood. This posits a degree of free will, as it does stipulate that we are able to acknowledge these ideas and break free of them; however, it does limit free will in other ways – e.g. psychological determinism.

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Conscience (3)

Aquinas believed that adultery was wrong because it is directly outlawed in the Bible. He would argue that a person committing adultery would experience guilt because they have prioritised an 'apparent' good (sexual pleasure) over a 'real' good (keeping marriage vows and not breaking their promise made on their wedding day).



Freud believed that the guilt someone feels when committing adultery is because throughout childhood they have been told that it is wrong and they have internalised this. By this measure, someone who has not been raised to view adultery negatively would not experience guilt for breaking their wedding vows/promises.

Marriage and Adultery

The Application of Conscience to Ethics

Aquinas would view the choice to lie as being fundamentally irrational – this is because it goes against the rational conscience. Aquinas believes we all have a conscience that goes against the lie that lying is set out in the Ten Commandments, as well as disrupting the order of society. The same is true of breaking a promise as, by breaking a promise, the promise itself becomes a lie.



Freud believed that lying would only impact an individual's conscience if they were raised to believe that lying is wrong. Should our parents or sources of moral influence have viewed lying in a neutral manner, then so would we. In this school of thought, lying has no moral value. The exact same logic can be applied to maintaining promises.

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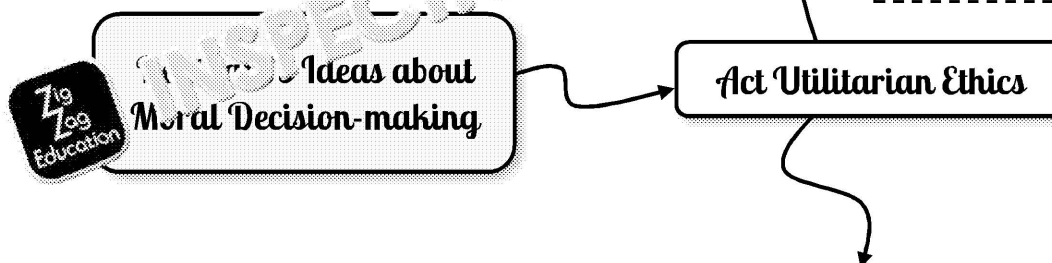
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Bentham and Kant (1)

Act Utilitarianism: theory which holds that the right *action* is the one which maximises pleasure and minimises pain.

Utilitarianism is the one which maximises pleasure and minimises pain and this was put forward by Bentham



J Bentham argued that humans are ruled by pain and pleasure. He developed the ethical theory of utilitarianism. It is the idea that the most ethical thing to do fulfils the principle of utility – creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number. He developed the **hedonic** calculus in order to measure this to judge actions.

For Bentham, and utilitarian ethicists, the way to approach a moral decision is based on the amount of happiness it can generate. The hedonic calculus is used in order to make a moral decision. This measures how much pleasure would be generated by a decision. It is a mathematical, quantitative way of measuring happiness by gauging how much happiness it would create by different criteria. Hedonic comes from the word 'hedone' (Greek), which means pleasure. The hedonic calculus includes a list of **seven criteria** by which an action can be judged to determine how much happiness it will create quantitatively. These include:

- 'intensity' (the strength of the pleasure)
- 'duration' (the length of time the pleasure lasts)
- 'felicity' (how likely one pleasure is to lead to more pleasures)
- 'certainty' (how likely the action is to create pleasure)
- 'propinquity' (how near the pleasure is)
- 'purity' (how removed the action is from pain)
- 'extent' (the number of people who will experience pleasure)

Unlike Kant, Bentham believed that the consequences of an action are what justify the action. This can be seen in the fact that we can see that an action is justified if it creates the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

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Bentham and Kant (2)

For **Immanuel Kant**, reason governs morality. Doing the right thing is our duty as rational beings. Rationality for Kant requires a good which is absolutely good. From this standpoint, Kant derives his entire system of **deontological** ethics, meaning that Kantian ethics is based on duty. He makes up his ethics with a mix of both hypothetical and categorical imperatives. His thought was greatly influenced by the social, political and cultural environment of the enlightenment period.

Hypothetical imperatives: usually look like this: 'You ought to do x if you want to get y'.

Categorical imperatives: are usually of the form, 'You ought to do x'.



Kantian Ethics

Kant's Ideas about Moral Decision-making

The Third Form: The Kingdom of Ends For his final formulation of the categorical imperative, Kant envisions a utopian kingdom of ends where all people share the same moral vision, desiring the same goods and sharing the same ends.

It builds upon the two previous formulations. In the hypothetical kingdom, members of the kingdom would devise and agree on a 'universal law of nature' and 'humanity' formula. In the categorical kingdom, moral rules constructed must be universalisable. 'Corruption is wrong' and 'treat people as ends, never means'.

The third form is a political component to Kant's theory: he is trying to tell us how society would be governed if all people were to accept his deontological ethics. When acting individually, we should then try to imagine whether our action would be acceptable in the 'kingdom of ends', in the hope that by doing so, we might bring it closer to reality.

The Second Form: Humanity as an End utilitarianism was its only rival. It remains on the table. So, a multitude may be permitted.

Kant takes the opposite philosophy – the so-called categorical imperative – can never be used as a means to an end.

Torturing an innocent person in Piccadilly Circus can never be justified for some other purpose. It is unsettling about another person's value you, or even love. Kant recognised this, and this, Kant said, because we deserve respect, and the

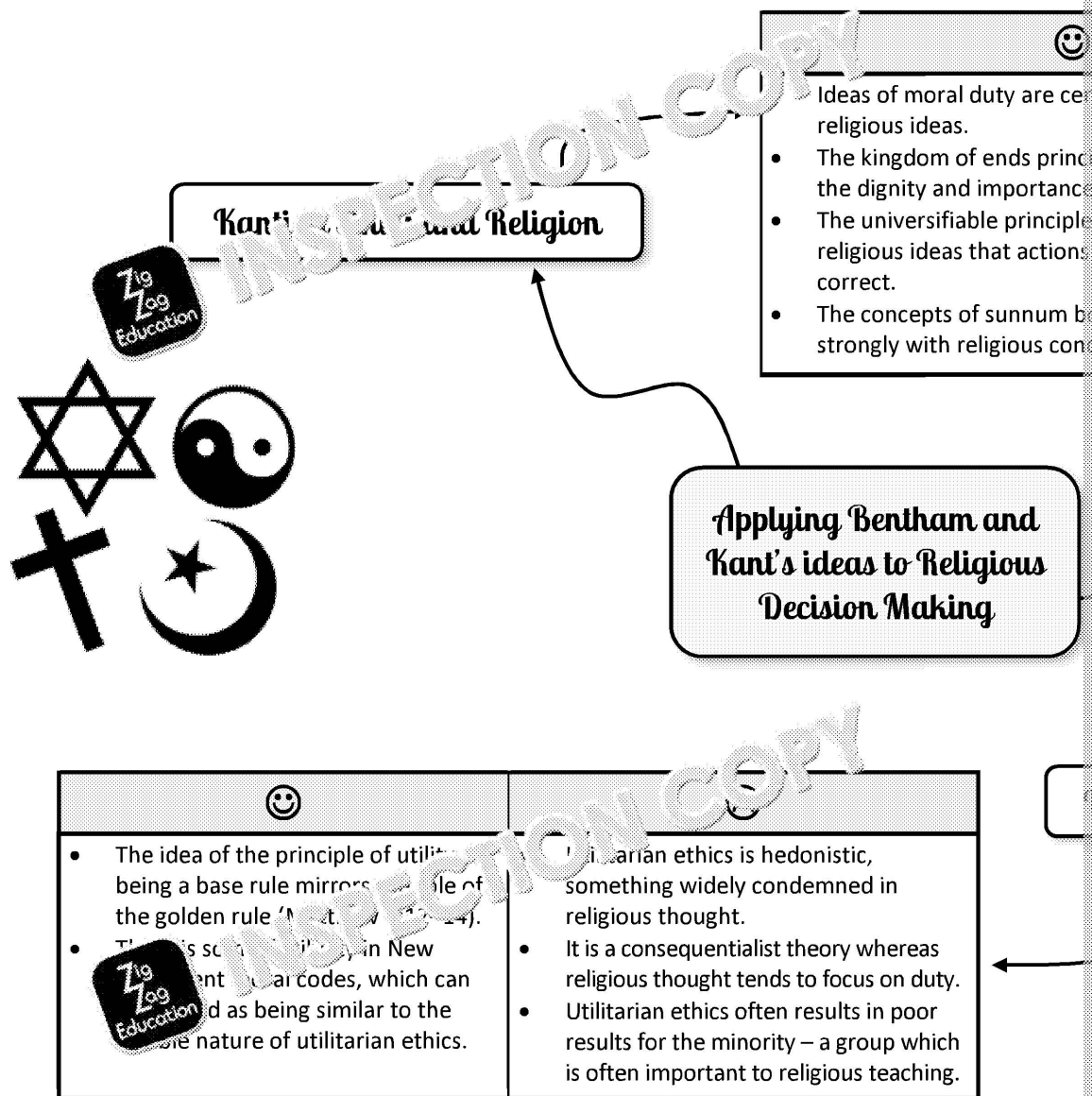
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Bentham and Kant (3)



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Answers

Mark Scheme

Level	Levels of Response (AO1)
5 (9–10 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will communicate a strong knowledge base showing nuanced and fully relevant information included. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases. Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases.
4 (7–8 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will communicate a good knowledge base showing nuanced and mostly relevant information included. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied accurately, demonstrating appropriate context and meaning of these phrases. Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating appropriate context and meaning of these phrases.
3 (5–6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will communicate an adequate knowledge base showing some relevant information included. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases.
2 (3–4 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will communicate a limited knowledge base showing understanding of relevant information included. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases.
1 (1–2 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will communicate a poor knowledge base showing very limited understanding with little relevant information included. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. Use of specific language will not be applied, or if it is it will be applied inaccurately.
0 marks	0 marks awarded for incorrect or irrelevant content, or no answer provided.

Level	Levels of Response (AO2)
6 (13–15 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will display outstanding analysis and evaluation of the content. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases. A strong argument will be displayed showing nuanced and balanced understanding. Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases.
4 (10–12 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will display above average analysis and evaluation of the content. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied accurately, demonstrating appropriate context and meaning of these phrases. An above average argument will be displayed showing balanced understanding. Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating appropriate context and meaning of these phrases.
3 (7–9 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will display sufficient analysis and evaluation of the content. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. A sufficient argument will be displayed showing some balanced understanding. Use of specific language will be applied sufficiently, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases.
2 (4–6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will display fairly basic analysis and evaluation of the content. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. A basic argument will be displayed showing some understanding. Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases.
1 (1–3 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer will display poor and lacking analysis and evaluation of the content. Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases. A poor argument will be displayed showing limited understanding. Use of specific language will not be applied, or if it is it will be applied inaccurately.
0 marks	0 marks awarded for incorrect or irrelevant content, or no answer provided.

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1. Meta-ethics

1. **Meta-ethics** literally means '**beyond ethics**' and is concerned with **language** and **reason**.
2. A) God D) Ten Commandments
B) Scripture E) wholly good
C) Bible F) wholly good
3. Students should be able to give a version of Euthyphro's dilemma in their own words: *Are acts moral in and of themselves, and, therefore, commanded by God, or do acts good because God has commanded them?*
4. Students should be able to give a basic definition of ethical naturalism and explain:
 - Ethical naturalism is a cognitive theory which holds a belief that decisions can be arrived at through discovery of the natural world and human nature.
 - For example, utilitarianism is a form of naturalism. In utilitarianism, an action is right if it produces happiness for the greatest number.
 - An action can be right or wrong if it fulfils the intended produces. Human nature is a fact of the natural world and can be assessed and empirically tested.
5. Students could give any three strengths of utilitarianism as a naturalist theory.
 - It appeals to human reason.
 - Largely naturalistic theories appeal to our experience of the world – we have to avoid what is unpleasant, so it is natural to assume that it would be good to avoid it.
 - What is good is tied to morality in human discourse, therefore this fits well.
6. Students could give any three of the following weaknesses of utilitarianism as a naturalist theory.
 - The main weakness is known as the 'is-ought' gap, which means proponents cannot bridge the gap between what is with what ought to be.
 - Bentham's classification of what is painful and what is pleasurable is criticised.
 - Many argue that it is also reductionist.
7. Answers should be marked against the A Level AO1 mark scheme.
Examine the effectiveness of intuitionism as a meta-ethical theory.
 - Intuitionism is a non-naturalist idea that things which cause pleasure or happiness are good with being good.
 - Intuitionism is the idea that moral ideas or truths cannot be defined – how we know moral truth.
 - G E Moore first put forward this viewpoint, using the example of the colour yellow. We can tell what is good by our intuition just as we can intuitively tell what is yellow.
 - Yellow cannot be defined, it simply is yellow. In the same way, Moore argues that moral truths are not adequately defined, they simply are truths.
 - These truths are independent of human existence and would continue to be true even if humans cease to exist.
 - Humans can, in Moore's logic, use their reason in order to gain knowledge of moral truths.
 - Moore's use of the colour yellow is particularly effective – it appeals highly to our senses.
 - It gives a relatively straightforward and clear method of finding moral goods without the need to think in a logical way.
 - Moore's intuitionism is a response to the naturalistic fallacy while still maintaining that moral truths are objective simply by stating this and refusing to budge.
 - However, it offers no explanation of how we are to recognise goodness or how we are to arrive at logical conclusions about morality, absolutely no basis for moral reasoning.
 - Two people may come to different moral conclusions as a result of their separate intuitions.
 - Even if there are moral absolutes there is no reason or motivation given as to why we should follow them.

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- Free will is the belief that human beings have the freedom and ability to make moral choices and agency. Moral responsibility is widely considered to be a consequence of free will; when the results of that decision are their responsibility. This works in both a positive and negative way: a good moral choice means that an individual will deal with a positive result (the reward of a good choice), while a bad moral choice means that an individual has the responsibility to be accountable for the results of their choice.*

Arguments for:

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Arguments against:

- If someone argues that we do actually have free will then they would disagree with this statement.
- Such a person might consider this to be a form of copout – to claim that one has no moral responsibility is to shift the responsibility for your own actions from yourself to someone else.
- This is often used as criticism of theological determinism – it can be viewed as a way of avoiding responsibility for immoral actions by blaming these choices on a greater being.
- A libertarian would disagree with this statement strongly – libertarians believe in free will and as a result they should make their decisions accordingly. In such a world, people are held accountable for their actions as the condition of free will.
- A compatibilist might argue that this statement is somewhat true, but is not the whole picture. They would argue that even in a situation where there is no choice (for example, being forced to commit a crime at gunpoint, or to save a life) then this might be considered to be excusable.

3. Conscience

1. A) natural law E) prudence
B) Good E) practica ratio
C) synderesis G) vincible
D) conscientia H) invincible
2. Sigmund Freud believed that conscience could be explained by psychology. He proposed that the mind is made up of three parts: the id, the ego and the superego. He argues that the id is driven by the base, animalistic desires, and the superego is formed of the boundaries of society. The conscience is the result of friction between these two parts of the mind. When a moral choice which the superego has learned is wrong, we experience guilt. Freud argues that we have taken moral codes from outside ourselves and brought them inside ourselves as a result of repeated exposure to socialisation experiences in childhood, leading to the formation of the superego in adulthood. This posits a degree of free will, as it does stipulate that we are able to break free of them. However, it does limit free will in other ways – e.g. psychological determinism.
3. Conscience has traditionally been regarded as a moral guide; however, not all people agree. Modern psychology clearly shows that he would consider conscience to be a sound moral guide. However, people such as Freud, would consider conscience to be of little value as a moral guide beyond what is taught by our society or influences consider to be acceptable. Modern psychology has generally argued that our choices are not necessarily free as we would assume, but rather strongly influenced by external stimuli which we cannot control. If this is the case, then our conscience cannot necessarily be relied upon in making moral choices as they are little more than programmed reactions to stimuli. If the conscience is correct, then the value of a conscience is high. In this line of thinking, it is viewed as a moral guide. For human beings to work out what is and what is not moral. This gives us other potential arguments for the concept of moral responsibility, which plays a large role in today's legal system.
4. Lying:
 - **Aquinas** – Aquinas would view the choice to lie as being fundamentally irrational. He would argue against the rational conscience that Aquinas believes we all innately have. He would argue that lying is against the rational conscience set out in the Ten Commandments, as well as disrupting the order of society.
 - **Freud** – Freud believed that the superego could only impact an individual's conscience if they have internalised that lying is wrong. If their parents or sources of moral influence have not taught them that lying is wrong, then according to this school of thought, lying has no moral value.
 - **Durkheim** – Durkheim would argue that lying is wrong purely because it weakens the social fabric. A society in which individuals could never trust the words of each other would never function. In Durkheim's view, lying is wrong because of the collective conscience it would cause.

Marriage and Adultery:

- **Aquinas** – Aquinas believed that adultery was wrong because it is directly against the natural law. He would argue that a person committing adultery would experience guilt because they are choosing a 'false' good (sexual pleasure) over a 'real' good (keeping marriage vows).
- **Freud** – Freud believed that the guilt someone feels when they commit adultery is a result of the superego. If in childhood they have been told that it is wrong, and they have internalised this, then they would experience guilt. If they have not been raised to view adultery negatively they would not experience guilt.

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- **Durkheim** – Durkheim would argue that the threat to society posed by cheating is not the act itself being immoral. Should a society not have a moral code, the act of cheating and the resulting infidelity would not be a moral issue in the view of Durkheim.

5. Examine the ideas of Durkheim regarding the conscience.
 - Emile Durkheim was a French sociologist, who believed that conscience was a result of socialisation.
 - He believed that a guilty conscience was the result of an action conflicting with the moral values established within society.
 - People's reactions are not a result of an innate moral objection to an action, but rather something they have learned is morally wrong.
 - He addresses the issue ignored by the other theories – that some people appear to have a conscience. Such people, he argues, have not fully learned the moral values of a society or have different reasons (e.g. biology/upbringing).
 - He also puts forward the idea of the collective conscience.
 - This is Durkheim's idea that the sphere of beliefs and values shared by a society is the collective conscience. It is a part of the conscience.
 - Durkheim also notes that the conscience experienced by collectives could be a kind of social conscience for groups of people to identify with.

4. Bentham and Kant

1. Immanuel Kant believed that reason was completely central to ethics.
2. Students should be able to communicate the ideas from the course in their own words.
 - First Form: This is sometimes known as 'The Formula of the Universal Law of morality' (i.e. laws which apply to everybody) of morality must be kept in mind when making moral decisions.
 - Second Form: This is known as the 'The Humanity Formula'; it refers to how we should treat others when making moral decisions.
 - Third Form: This is known as 'The Kingdom of Ends Formula'; it refers to how we should treat others as an ideal moral society.
3. The principle at the heart of utilitarian ethics in Bentham's thought is the utility principle. The choice is to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
4. The hedonic calculus is a practical method by which utilitarians are able to gauge the moral value of a choice. Therefore, it is very influential in the utilitarian ethical method. It is a practical means of applying the ethical theory. This is a list of seven criteria by which we can determine how much happiness it would create quantitatively. These criteria include 'intensity' (the pleasure), 'duration' (the length of the pleasure) and 'fecundity' (how likely one is to have more pleasures). Because the principle of utility could be viewed as being very flexible, the hedonic calculus gave more structure to making such decisions.
5. Students could give any two of the following:

Reasons for:

 - Idea of moral duty is central to both.
 - The kingdom of ends principle fits well with ideas of the dignity and importance of the individual.
 - The universalisable principle fits well with some religious ideas that actions should be based on moral principles.
 - The concepts of sunnium bonnum and immorality tie in strongly with religious ideas.
 - Sunnium bonnum is a good idea of an afterlife.

Reasons against:

 - If religious teachings conflict, then the universalisable principle does not work.
 - Reason is the most important thing in Kantian ethics – this might be considered as a weakness.

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6. Answers should be marked against the A Level AO2 Mark Scheme.

'Utilitarian ethics fits better with religious ideas than Kantian ethics.'

Evaluate this statement.

- Utilitarianism is the ethical view which posits that the most ethical, moral actions are those that garner the greatest happiness for the greatest number. There are various forms of utilitarianism, but the most common form is known as act utilitarianism, and this was put forward by Jeremy Bentham.
- Kantian ethics is a duty-based ethical system developed through Immanuel Kant. It is based on the idea of the categorical imperative in the form of two kinds of imperative – categorical and hypothetical. The categorical imperative is a moral law that applies to all rational beings. Kant posits that categorical imperatives are moral duties that are not contingent on any particular circumstances or desires.

Arguments for:

- One of the main ways in which utilitarian ethics fits with religious ideas is if utility mirrors other religious codes – for example, the Golden Rule from the Bible.
- The ease of the overarching rule to govern moral decisions is the same in both utilitarianism and the Golden Rule. Utilitarianism states that the most moral action is to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. The Golden Rule stating that you should treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Utilitarian ethics has a great deal of flexibility. This can also be argued to grow out of the fact that, unlike the rules of the New Testament are far less legalistic than the laws adhered to by the Pharisaic Jews of first-century Judea.
- Furthermore, Kantian ethics has issues when held up to religious principles and utilitarian ideas. For example, there is a conflict between certain different moral texts (such as the Bible) and the universifiable principle in Kantian ethics.
- When religious teachings conflict, then the universifiable principle does not apply.
- Furthermore, within Kantian ethics there is a huge emphasis on the importance of the moral principle. The most important thing in Kantian ethics – this might be considered to subvert God. To subvert or take the place of God is a sin and morally wrong.

Arguments against:

- It can be argued that Kantian ethics marries better with religious teachings than utilitarianism for a number of reasons.
- In the first instance, within both schools of thought, ideas of moral duty are central. In Kantian ethics that you should act morally out of duty to yourself, and other people (and in utilitarianism the ethics is consequentialist, meaning that how ethical a statement is can be gauged by the consequences of the action).
- The universalisable principle fits well with some religious ideas that actions such as lying and cheating are always wrong, cheating is always wrong.
- Furthermore, the Kantian principle of the kingdom of ends fits well with ideas of human dignity. The idea of human beings; this is something which can occasionally be lacking within utilitarianism. Kant gives value and importance to all human beings.
- Utilitarian ethics often results in poor results for the minority – a group which is often the subject of religious teaching.
- The concepts of summum bonum and immorality tie in strongly with religious ideas. Summum bonum is a concept which is only present in Kantian ethics – there is no reference to it in utilitarianism.
- Utilitarian ethics is egoistic, something widely condemned in religious thought.

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