

# Year 9 Philosophy and Ethics Knowledge Organiser: Ethics

## What is ethics?

- 🔑 **Ethics**- The study of morality.
- 🔑 **Laws**- Rules that are made by parliament and enforced by the police.
- 🔑 **Morality**- Our idea of right and wrong.
- 🔑 **Absolutism**- Unchanging moral code, you stick to that idea for every situation.
- 🔑 **Relativism**- Morality which depends on the situation, so it is changeable.
- 🔑 **Utilitarianism**- The theory that the best outcome is that which creates the most happiness for the most people.



## Runaway Train Experiment

You are standing on a railway bridge. A train is hurtling towards 5 workers on a train track. Next to you is a lever. If you pull it, the train will be diverted and the workers saved. However, the train will go onto a separate track with one worker on it, who will then die. What do you do?

## The Law on the Death Penalty

- 🔑 **Death penalty**- where a criminal is put to death for their crime. This has been sanctioned by the government.

It was abolished in the UK in 1969 and was fully abolished in 1998. The most common method of execution was hanging. The last executions in the UK took place in 1964. The case of Derek Bentley (1953) helped to get the death penalty abolished.

Countries with the death penalty: some US states, India.

Countries without the death penalty: France, Germany.

## Abortion and the Law

- 🔑 **Abortion**- the deliberate removal of a foetus from the womb in order to end a pregnancy before the child is born.
- 🔑 **Pro-choice**- Support abortion.
- 🔑 **Pro-life**- Do not support abortion.



Abortion was legalised in the UK in 1967. An abortion can happen in the UK in a licensed clinic if two doctors agree there is a risk to the physical or mental health of the mother, the baby, or existing children in the family.

The 1990 Human Fertility and Embryology Act ruled that an abortion can only take place during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. It is only in exceptional circumstances that an abortion can happen after 24 weeks. There have been some debates to lower this to 20 weeks.

Abortion was legalised in America in 1973 in a case called Roe vs. Wade. However, in 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned this. This decision ended the constitutional right to an abortion for millions of women.



## Attitudes towards Abortion

- 🔑 **Sanctity of life**- The Christian belief that life is precious and sacred and belongs to God.
- 🔑 **Quality of life**- Life is pleasurable, meaningful and free from pain.



Arguments for	Arguments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the mother or baby will have a poor quality of life, then it should be allowed.</li><li>• Christianity- 'love your neighbour' (Mark 12:31)- if it is the most loving thing to do.</li><li>• Buddhism- believe in metta (loving-kindness) and karuna (showing compassion).</li><li>• Islam- 'if there are serious problems, Allah sometimes doesn't require his creatures to practice his law' (Grand Ayatollah Yusuf Saanei, an Islamic leader, 2000).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is the mother's choice- if she isn't ready, she should be able to have an abortion.</li><li>• Christianity- God has a plan for everyone and each person matters- only He can take life away.</li><li>• Christianity- sanctity of life- all humans are sacred.</li><li>• Buddhism- first moral precept says not to kill.</li><li>• Islam- 'whosoever has spared the life of a soul, it is as though he has spared the life of all people' (Qur'an 5:32).</li><li>• Sikhism- life begins at conception so abortion would be like murder.</li></ul>

## Attitudes towards the Death Penalty

Arguments for	Arguments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilitarianism- the best outcome is that which creates the most happiness for the most people.</li> <li>Christianity: 'whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed' (Genesis 9:6).</li> <li>Christianity: 'life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth' (Exodus 21:23-24)</li> <li>Thailand, a largely Buddhist country, has the death penalty for over 30 crimes.</li> <li>Islam- if someone has taken life, then they have forfeited their right to live.</li> <li>Removes the criminal from society so it protects society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buddhism- the first moral precept says not to kill or harm anything.</li> <li>Christianity- 'love your neighbour'.</li> <li>Christianity- sanctity of life.</li> <li>Sikhism- we shouldn't take life in a brutal way.</li> <li>Life in prison is still a harsh punishment.</li> <li>Move towards reforming criminals rather than seeking retribution (revenge) on them. Trying to change their behaviour so they do not commit those crimes again.</li> <li>Derek Bentley case 1953- 'let him have it'. What if you execute the wrong person?</li> </ul>

## Attitudes towards euthanasia

**Palliative care-** care for the terminally ill and their families e.g. hospice care like LOROS.

LOROS is a charity in Leicestershire that helps over 2,500 people each year. They provide end-of-life care, day therapy and counselling.

In 2015, the 'Right to Die' bill was given to Parliament to legalise euthanasia. However, it was rejected.



Arguments for	Arguments against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the individual will have a poor quality of life, then it should be allowed.</li> <li>Loss of independence and relying on others.</li> <li>Keeping life support machines on is expensive.</li> <li>Christianity- God gave humans free will (the ability to make their own choices).</li> <li>Buddhism- Buddhists try to show metta (loving-kindness) and karuna to all- they are concerned for the suffering of others and want to relieve that suffering.</li> <li>Hinduism and Sikhism- euthanasia is performing a good deed by helping to end a painful life. They believe it results in good karma and a better rebirth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a big ask of family and friends to be part of it.</li> <li>There are alternatives e.g. palliative care such as LOROS.</li> <li>Euthanasia removes future opportunities.</li> <li>Christianity- 'thou shall not kill' (Exodus)- one of the Ten Commandments.</li> <li>Christianity- the Story of Job teaches that suffering is a test of faith from God and that if you suffer but keep your faith in God, you will be rewarded in the afterlife.</li> <li>Buddhism- first moral precept says not to kill.</li> <li>Islam- 'do not take life, which Allah has made sacred' (Qur'an 17:33).</li> <li>Islam- 'And no person can ever die except by Allah's leave and at an appointed term' (Qur'an 3:145).</li> </ul>

## Euthanasia and the Law



**Euthanasia-** A gentle and easy death. Used to describe the deliberate ending of a person's life for compassionate reasons.

**Terminally ill-** When someone is suffering from a disease or illness that cannot be cured and will likely lead to their death.

**Assisted suicide-** Deliberately helping someone to end their life. Illegal in the UK- can get up to 14 years' in prison.

### Types of euthanasia

<b>Active euthanasia</b>	Providing medication or assisting someone in a gentle and easy death.
<b>Passive euthanasia</b>	Allowing someone to die by withdrawing the medication that is keeping them alive.
<b>Voluntary euthanasia</b>	When someone asks for assistance to die.
<b>Non-voluntary euthanasia</b>	Helping someone to die when they are incapable of making the decision for themselves.

In the UK, passive, non-voluntary euthanasia is allowed (e.g. taking away medication or switching off a life-support machine). UK law doesn't recognise it as euthanasia.

Active euthanasia is illegal and if found guilty, you could get life in prison. It is also illegal in France and Australia.

However, it is legal in the Netherlands, Colombia, Belgium and Switzerland.

Tony Bland was an 18-year-old whose ribs were crushed and lungs punctured during the Hillsborough Disaster in 1989. He relied on food and fluids fed through tubes to keep him alive. His family and the hospital petitioned to take the fluids and food away as his quality of life was poor. The UK government allowed this in 1993. However, some people disagreed with the decision.

