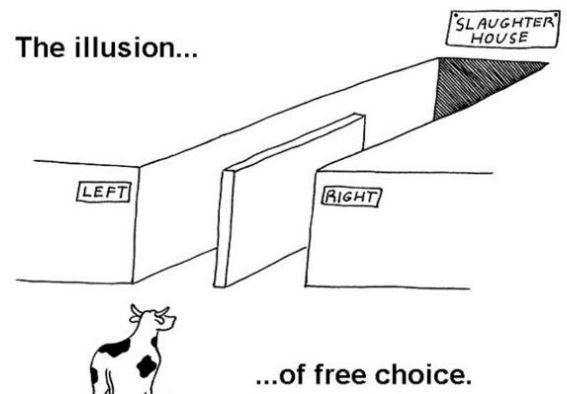




# Philosophy & Ethics

## Induction Booklet



ACHIEVING IN FAITH, WITH LOVE, AS A COMMUNITY

## Welcome to Philosophy & Ethics

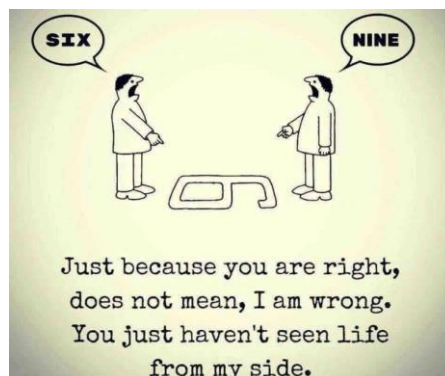
Philosophy & Ethics is a great subject to help you build a wide range of skills, including improving your skills as a **writer**, **speaker** and **thinker**. This booklet is aimed at giving you a head-start to this course.

You can read, watch and listen to interesting ideas and think about the opinions expressed.

How far do they match your own views?

What might someone say if they had a very different opinion?

In this subject, it is important to **be both honest with your opinions, but also open to other viewpoints** (of which you will encounter many!).



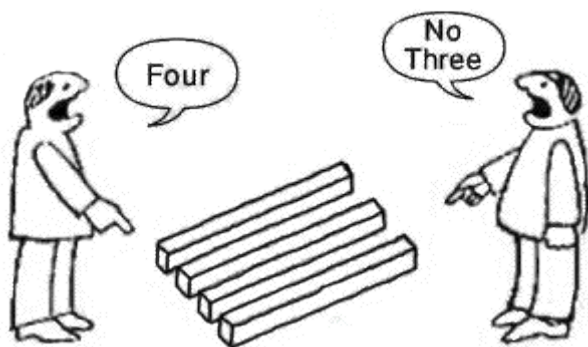
## What exactly is Philosophy and Ethics, and why are the two subjects studied together?

**Philosophy** is concerned with questions such as:

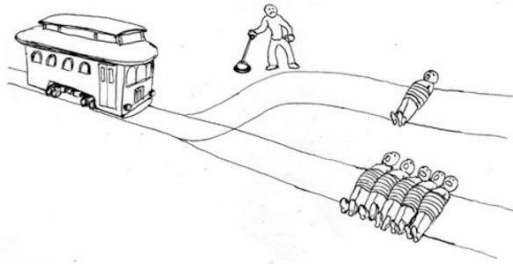
- How did we come into existence?
- Where do we get knowledge from?
- How do we know what is real and what is not real?



... and now that we are here, is there a correct way for us to behave?  
(that is **Ethics**!)



## The Trolley Problem:



Imagine that you're at the controls of a railway switch and there's an out-of-control trolley coming. The tracks branch into two, one track that leads to a group of five people, and the other to one person.

If you do nothing, the trolley will smash into the five people. But if you flip the switch, it'll change tracks and strike the lone person.

**What do you do?**

**Why?**

I think that...\_\_\_\_\_

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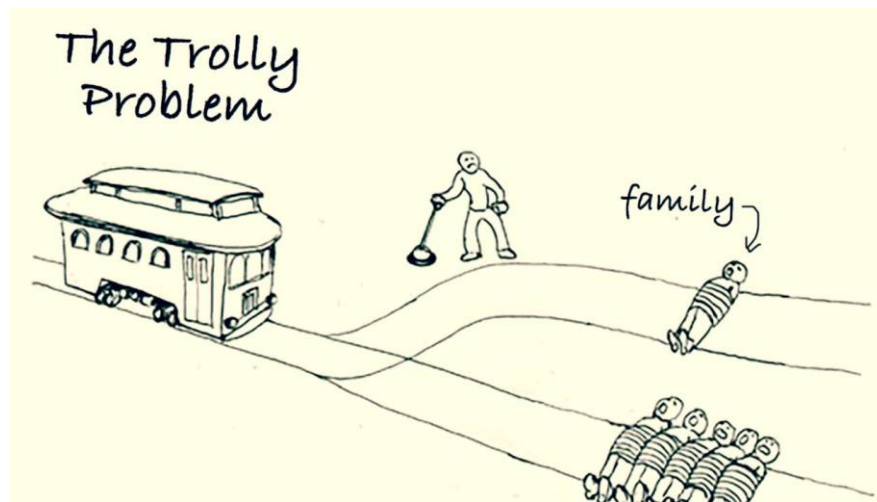
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If the scenario were changed to this, would you change your original decision?



I think that.....

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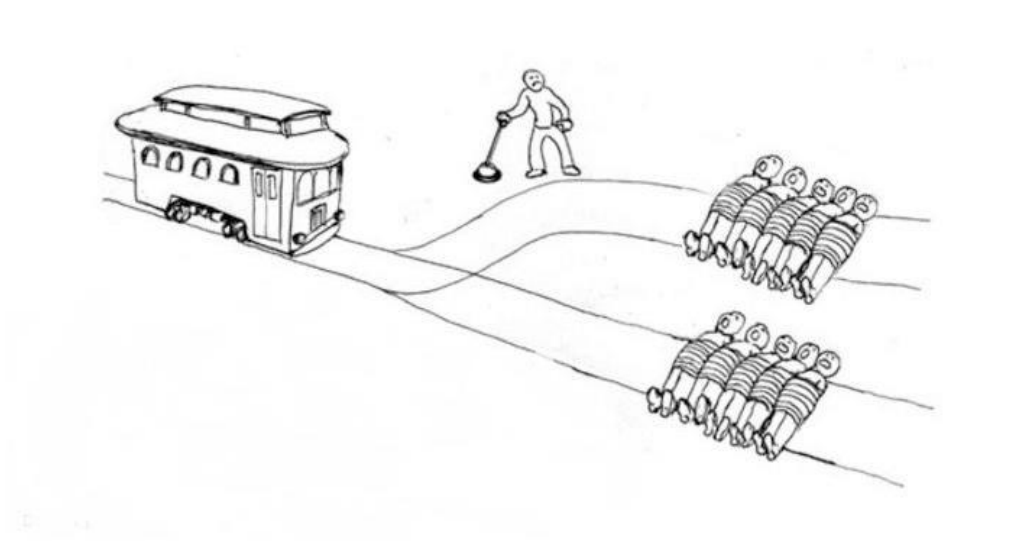
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But what if this were the problem?



I think that.....

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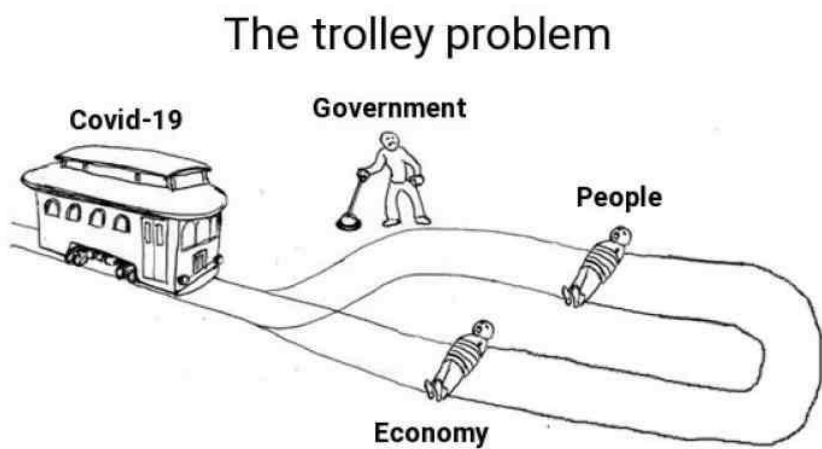
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This scenario can be altered in many different ways... including this:



Is it at all possible for any government in the world to either completely save their people or completely save their economy?

I think that.....

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Now examine the following key terms and try to use as many of them as you can in your earlier answers:

**Utilitarianism:** a utilitarian believes in the greatest good/happiness for the greatest number of people.

**Kantian Ethics:** humans should never be used as a means to an end. Lying is always wrong.

**Situation Ethics:** something is right or wrong depending on the situation. Based on the most loving thing to do.

**Natural Law:** You remember this one from GCSE!

Followers of Natural Law will believe that the following laws are inherent in all humans:

P - Preserve life

O - Order Society

W - Worship God

E - Educate the Young

R - Reproduce

**Thought Experiments:**

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/fatman/>

<http://moralmachine.mit.edu/>

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/9-philosophical-thought-experiments-that-will-keep-you-1340952809>

**Carry out some of the above activities.**

Write a written reflection of the moral questions that each one raises, and how you might respond to these.

[illegible]



Try to list your own "moral code" or "rules for life". Include 5-10 elements.

Can you imagine any exceptions to your own "rules"?

**Moral Code:**

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Exceptions:**

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**Critical thinking skills:**

### Activity 1:

This is the first episode of a documentary about attitudes towards homosexuality.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMPl25oraVc>

This is the first episode of Stephen Fry's series '**Out There**', where he explores attitudes to homosexuality in different parts of the world.



Questions to think about and/or write about - try to support your answers with reasoning:

1. Do you think there is a **'right' attitude** and a **'wrong' attitude** towards homosexuality? What is it that makes these attitudes right or wrong?

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2. Some people might argue that different cultures have different ideas about morality, and that these different cultural beliefs should be respected even if we don't agree with them. **Do you think we should always respect the beliefs and attitudes of cultures different from our own, or should we try to persuade them to adopt our own beliefs instead?**

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3. What do you think are the aims of this television series? Do you think they are good aims? **Do you think this first episode is successful in achieving its aims?**

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4. What religious reasons do people sometimes give for opposing homosexual relationships? **How would you support or oppose these views?**

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## Activity 2:

Watch this documentary, 'Barra Boy'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhGX1YCsvAM>



1. Do you think the story provides **convincing evidence** for reincarnation? Why, or why not?

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2. What do you think counts as 'convincing evidence' for life after death (e.g. scripture, near death experiences, nothing)? **What makes evidence convincing or unconvincing?**

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3. Read the accounts in the gospels of the **resurrection of Jesus** (you could use [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) if you don't have a Bible at home)

Matthew 28:1 - 10

Mark 16: 1 - 8

Luke 24: 1 - 10

John 20: 1 - 18



4. Do you find these stories convincing? Why, or why not?

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5. Do you think the stories contradict each other, or are they just told from different points of view, in your opinion? What might account for the differences and the similarities between the stories?

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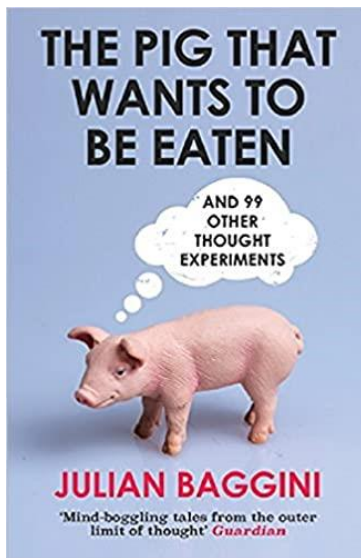
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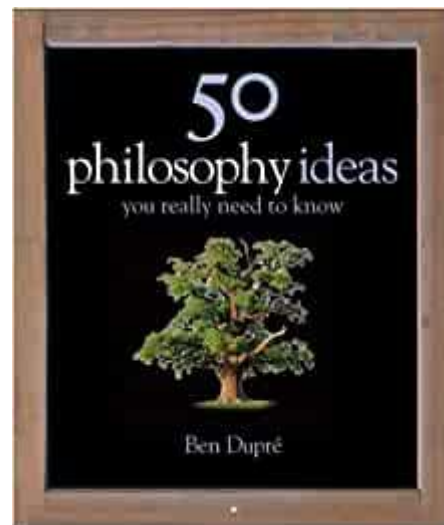
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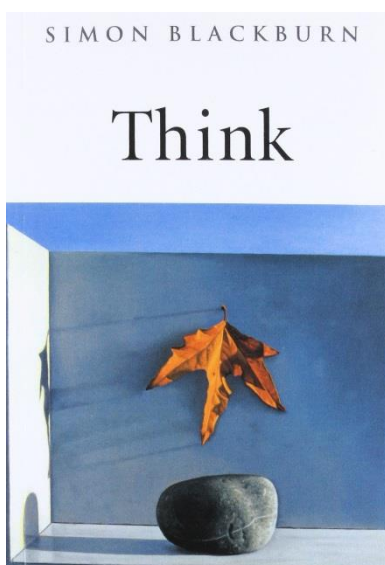
Here are some **books** to help develop your thinking skills:



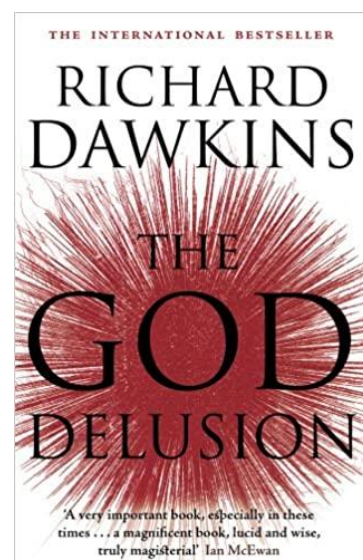
**The pig that  
wants to be eaten  
- Julian Baggini**



**50 Philosophy  
Ideas you must  
know - Ben Dupré**



**Think - Simon  
Blackburn**



**The God Delusion -  
Richard Dawkins**

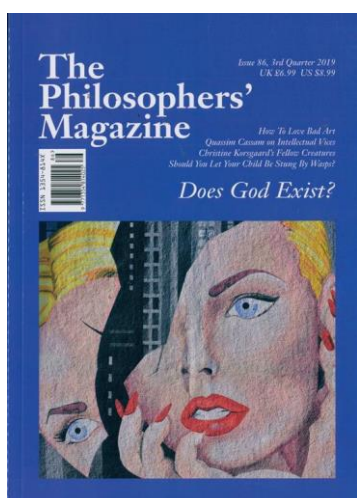


These suggestions are only a few of the very many available, so don't worry if you can't get hold of these specific titles.

Here are some **online resources**:

**The Philosophy Man** - [www.thephilosophyman.com](http://www.thephilosophyman.com)

This website gives you lots of different ideas to think about. Some are for younger children but you could try the 'brainsqueezers'. These are good if you don't have too much time, or if you're finding it difficult to settle to anything more concentrated.



**Philosophers' Magazine** - [www.philosophersmag.com](http://www.philosophersmag.com)

Try the games on this website, and read the commentaries that go with them. Lots to think about!

**Peped** - <https://peped.org/>



This website has a lot of good resources that you might use once you start your A Level course; you could dip in and start exploring some of the ideas you will meet next year.

Some **films/tv programmes** to watch and think about:

All kinds of films and series have philosophical and religious ideas in them, so follow your own interests! You could try these, or choose something else, but try and use them as a stimulus for thinking and writing, rather than just sitting in front of them:

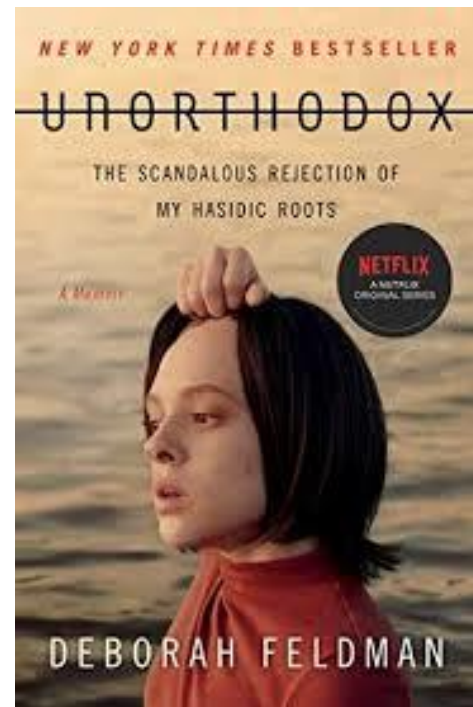


**The Good Place** is an American fantasy comedy television series created by Michael Schur. It focuses on Eleanor Shellstrop (Kristen Bell), who arrives in the afterlife and is welcomed by Michael (Ted Danson) to "the Good Place", a highly selective Heaven-like utopia he designed, as a reward for her righteous life. (... and it's on Netflix!)



**The Matrix** - Neo (Keanu Reeves) believes that Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), an elusive figure considered to be the most dangerous man alive, can answer his question -- What is the Matrix? Neo is contacted by Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), a beautiful stranger who leads him into an underworld where he meets Morpheus. They fight a brutal battle for their lives against a cadre of viciously intelligent secret agents. It is a truth that could cost Neo something more precious than his life.

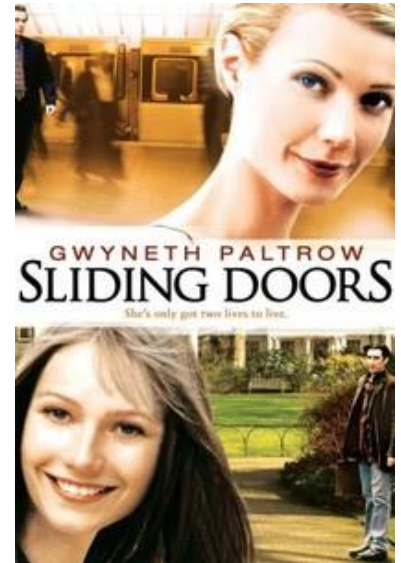
**Unorthodox** - A young Jewish woman flees her ultra-Orthodox community in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and tries to navigate not just a new life in the secular world but her memories of life back home. (... and it's on Netflix!)



**Twelve Angry Men** - Following the closing arguments in a murder trial, the 12 members of the jury must deliberate, with a guilty verdict meaning death for the accused, an inner-city teen. As the dozen men try to reach a unanimous decision while sequestered in a room, one juror (Henry Fonda) casts considerable doubt on elements of the case. Personal issues soon rise to the surface, and conflict threatens to derail the delicate process that will decide one boy's fate.



**Sliding Doors** - When Helen (Gwyneth Paltrow), a London ad executive, is fired from her job and rushes out to catch a train, two scenarios take place. In one, she gets on the train and comes home to find her boyfriend, Gerry (John Lynch), in bed with another woman. In the second, she misses the train and arrives after the woman has left. In the first scenario, Helen dumps Gerry, finds a new man and gradually improves her life. In the second, she becomes suspicious of Gerry's fidelity and grows miserable. **Do you think your life is pre-destined (set out for you) or can you control your own fate?**



**TED talks** - these are usually wonderful, with plenty to stimulate your questioning and reasoning skills.

([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com))

Some favourites:

**Elizabeth Loftus** - how reliable is your memory?

**Dan Gilbert** - why we make bad decisions

**Richard Dawkins** - militant atheism

**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** - We should all be feminists

**Damon Horowitz** - Philosophy in prison

**Tom Honey** - Why Would God Create a Tsunami?

There are loads of talks on here, so use the search engine to find topics that interest you. Practise note-taking; write notes as you listen, just as you would if you were listening to a real-life lecture, and **practise the skill of jotting down key points at speed**. Ask



yourself questions when you get to the end: what were the speaker's key messages? **Do you agree** with the speaker? **What might someone who disagreed say**, and what might their reasons be?

### Research skills:

There are all kinds of resources online and in books to help you, if you want to start to learn a little more about **some of the philosophers you will meet in your A Level course**.

You could do some research about:

Plato

Aristotle

Aquinas

Bentham

Mill

Hume

Kant



Practise using a range of sources to find out about a single person. When you have gathered together range of information, try and synthesise it into a single piece of writing of your own.

The BBC has some great **podcasts** available:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01f0vzr>

(They are quite long and heavyweight, so don't worry if this activity isn't for you)

Practise your note-making skills by pausing and writing a summary of what you've heard so far. **Think about whether you agree with what the philosopher is saying.**

**Listen to whatever takes your interest.** For Philosophy & Ethics specifically, you could concentrate on the ones that are starred, and/or move onto others from this list:

Plato's Republic

**\*\* St Thomas Aquinas**

**\*\* Augustine**

The Ontological Argument

**\*\* The Soul**

**\*\* Redemption**

**\*\* Kant**

**\*\* Relativism**

**\*\* Utilitarianism**

William James

Nietzsche

Al-Ghazali

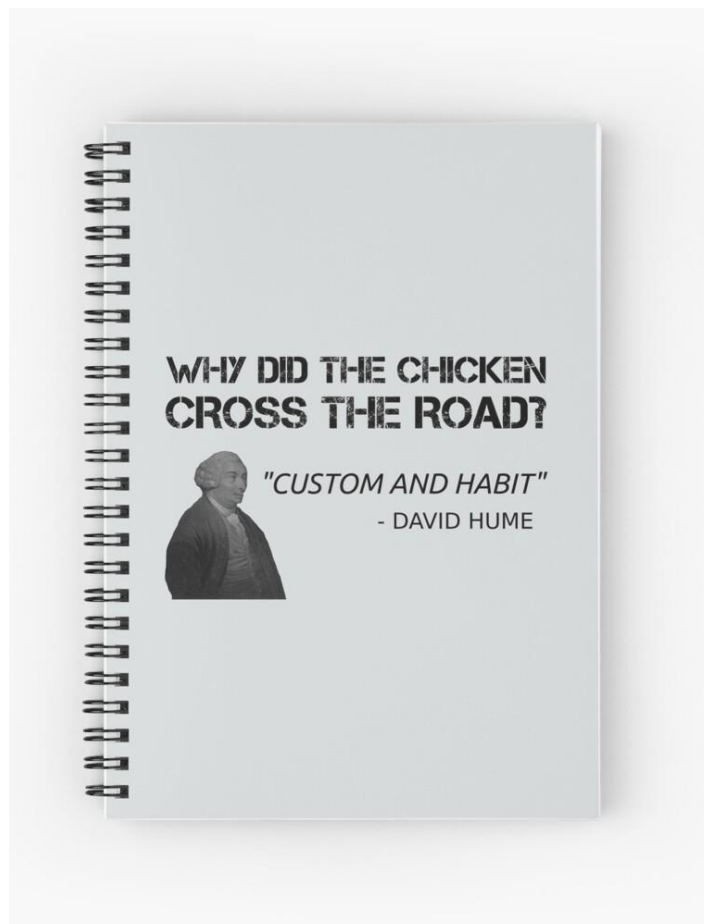
**\*\* Duty**

**\*\* Good and Evil**

Altruism

**\*\* Feminism**

**\*\* Evil**



Empiricism

**\*\*David Hume**

Logical Positivism

**\*\*Mill**

### Written/ Reflection Tasks:

1. Consider your definitions of the following terms:

- Truth
- Reality
- Good
- Evil
- Moral
- God
- Time



**For each concept, try to argue against your own definition. Can you see any flaws in your ideas? How might they be criticised? What conclusions can you reach about how we define these concepts?**

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**4. Create a fact file of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas.** Include pictures, key facts and a brief outline of their philosophical ideas.

➤ Abortion



- Euthanasia
- Capital punishment
- Humans' treatment of animals

**Write a response to the story**, considering several different points of view. To help with this, you could consider the points of view of:

- An atheist (someone who fervently believes that there is no God)
- An agnostic (someone unsure about religion and faith in God)
- A committed Christian
- A dying man
- A child



### Essay Questions:

A. Write your own response to the following question:

**“How should we decide the right thing to do?”**

In your answer you should:

- Include a range of different opinions



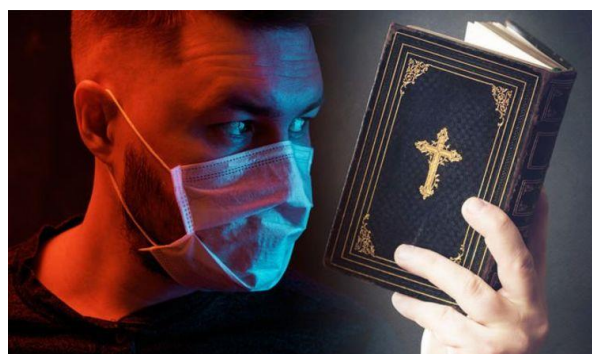
- Conduct your own research to find possible answers from different fields of thinking (philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, etc.)
- Justify your answer with a range of reasons
- Include examples to illustrate your point
- Reach a justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography to demonstrate your own research

B. Write a response to the following question:

**“Should people believe in God?”**

In your answer you should:

- Demonstrate understanding of several different viewpoints
- Show evidence of having discussed the question with at least three other people, and analyse their comments, including similarities and differences
- Give clear reasons for each perspective
- Give examples to justify your answer
- Reach a clear and justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography to demonstrate your own research



## Absolutism and Relativism Transition Work

**Task:** Write down your responses to each moral dilemma, explaining your reasons for each choice.

You are out shopping with one of your friends and you notice she is stealing. You know that this is wrong, but she is your best friend, do you tell her parents?

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Your friend has cheated on their boyfriend and the boyfriend suspects. They ask you whether you know. What do you say?

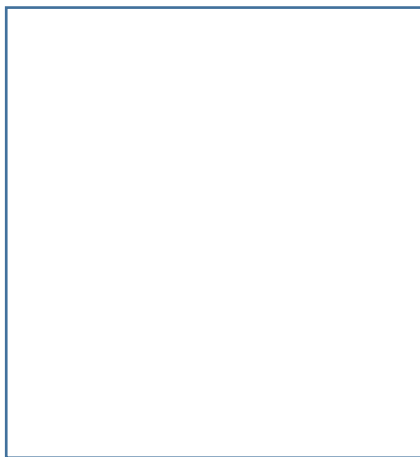
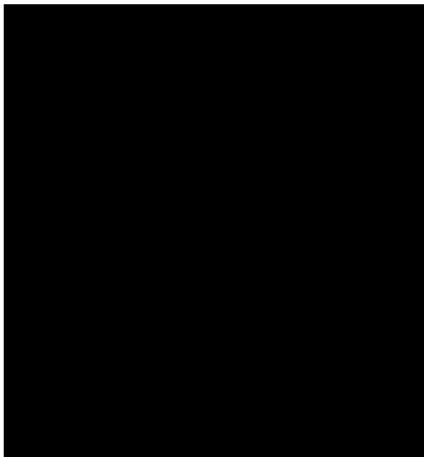
### A Father's Agonizing Choice

You are an inmate in a concentration camp. A sadistic guard is about to hang your son who tried to escape and wants you to pull the chair from underneath him. He says that if you don't he will not only kill your son but some other innocent inmate as well. You don't have any doubt that he means what he says. What should you do?

_____
_____
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**Task:** Using the information on Page 34, write down whether or not each answer you gave is an absolutist or relativist response.

## What is Moral Absolutism?



There is no grey area in Absolute morality - it is always black and white.

Moral absolutism is where an act is either right or wrong and does not change in any situation. It is fixed for all time and all people.

e.g. Killing is always wrong - it does not depend on the situation.

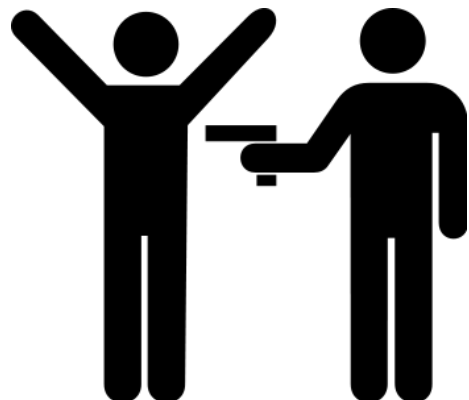
## What is Relativism?

Relative morality is when a person has strong beliefs but they believe that different course of action might be needed in different situations.

e.g. Killing in self-defence, lying to save a life, divorce if it's better for the children.

## Natural Law Transition Work

1. *Is it natural to be violent?*
2. *Is it natural to be prejudice?*
3. *Is it natural to be monogamous?*
4. *Is it natural to commit suicide?*
5. *Is it natural to eat meat?*
6. *Is it natural to use contraception?*



All of these questions raise further questions about our nature and behaviour as humans, these questions are things such as:

1. *Is there a universal or moral code within all people?*
2. *Are human beings essentially good or bad?*
3. *Do all humans have a common purpose, and if so, what is it?*
4. *What makes something wrong, is it the nature of the act or the consequence?*

*Natural Law is a deontological ethical system which centres around a belief that some type of law and purpose exists within humans and their nature which reveals the ultimate goodness for which we can strive for. This law is an eternal, absolute moral law which can be identified through reason.*

**Natural law** - Moral principles and values that are considered to be inherent to all humans.

**Task:** Look at the Primary Precepts and suggest which secondary precepts might fulfil them below.  
Primary Precepts:

D - Do Good

A - Avoid Evil

P - Preservation of Life

O - Order Society

W - Worship God

E - Educate the young

R - Reproduce

### Secondary Precepts:

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-

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- Make every child attend school

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Task: If there were no police, government or religion, do you think that everyone would naturally perform the five primary precepts? Explain your view below.

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### Reading: Plato's Theory of Forms and the Allegory of the Cave

Plato, a student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle, developed many philosophical ideas that have shaped Western thought. One of his central concepts is the Theory of Forms, which he illustrates through the Allegory of the Cave. Here's a summary to get you started:

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### Summary of Plato's Theory of Forms and the Allegory of the Cave:

Plato believed that the world we experience is constantly changing, a concept he borrowed from the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, who said that everything is in a state of "flux." This constant change, according to Plato, makes true knowledge impossible if we rely solely on our sensory experiences (a posteriori knowledge).

Instead, Plato proposed that true, eternal, and unchanging knowledge comes from a different realm, which he called the **World of Forms**. The Forms are perfect, immutable concepts or ideals that exist beyond our sensory experiences. For instance, while we can see many different trees in the world, the Form of "treeness" is the perfect, unchanging concept of what a tree is.



To explain this idea, Plato used the Allegory of the Cave:

1. **The Cave:** Imagine prisoners chained in a dark cave from birth. They can only see the wall in front of them.
2. **Shadows on the Wall:** Behind them is a fire, and between the prisoners and the fire, there are objects being moved. The prisoners see only the shadows of these objects on the wall, mistaking these shadows for reality.
3. **Escape:** One prisoner escapes and, after adjusting to the light outside the cave, sees the real world and realizes the shadows are mere illusions. This represents the philosopher's journey from ignorance to knowledge.
4. **Return to the Cave:** The enlightened prisoner returns to free the others, but they resist, preferring the familiarity of the shadows.

This allegory illustrates Plato's belief that most people live in a state of ignorance, only perceiving shadows of the true reality. Philosophers, through reason and intellectual pursuit (a priori knowledge), can access the World of Forms and gain true knowledge.



1. What do you think Plato means by 'World of Forms?'

I think that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Reflect on the *Allegory of the Cave*. What do you think the cave, shadows, and the journey outside the cave represent in our own lives?

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3. Do you agree with Plato that our sensory experiences cannot provide true knowledge? Why or why not?

I agree/disagree because \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHALLENGE:** An opposing view to mine could be \_\_\_\_\_

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4. In the box below, create a brief diagram of how you see the Cave in your own imagination, based on the summary you have read;

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for a student to draw a diagram of a cave based on a summary they have read.