

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer Key: Your Moral Compass Quest: A 10th Grade Ethics Challenge

Sophomores analyze complex philosophical conflicts and defend ethical frameworks in this rigorous critical thinking assessment.

1. A state governor is considering a policy that would significantly increase taxes on the top 1% to fund universal pre-K education. Critics argue this violates individual property rights, while supporters argue it creates the most happiness for the most people. Which framework is being utilized by the supporters?

Answer: C) Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism focuses on the 'Greatest Happiness Principle,' evaluating the morality of an action based on its ability to produce the best overall outcome for the largest number of people.

2. In W.D. Ross's ethical framework, 'prima facie duties' are absolute and can never be overridden by other moral obligations, regardless of the context.

Answer: B) False

False. Ross argued that prima facie duties are 'at first sight' obligations that can conflict; in such cases, one must use intuition to determine which duty is more pressing in that specific situation.

3. Immanuel Kant's _____ asserts that you should only act according to maxims that you would want to become universal laws for everyone to follow.

Answer: B) Categorical Imperative

The Categorical Imperative is the central philosophical concept in the deontological moral philosophy of Kant, demanding that moral rules be applied universally without exception.

4. An AI developer discovers that their facial recognition software has a high error rate for certain ethnicities. Fixing it will delay a profitable launch by a year. If the developer chooses to delay because 'a person of integrity would not release a biased product,' which ethical lens are they using?

Answer: C) Virtue Ethics

Virtue Ethics shifts the focus from the action (duty) or the outcome (utility) to the character of the individual making the decision, emphasizing traits like honesty and integrity.

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5. Consider the 'Heinz Dilemma': A man steals medicine he cannot afford to save his dying wife. Someone arguing that the theft is justified because the 'right to life' is a higher moral principle than 'property rights' is operating at which level of Kohlberg's stages of moral development?

Answer: C) Post-conventional

At the post-conventional level, individuals look beyond societal laws to abstract ethical principles and human rights to justify their moral reasoning.

6. To achieve fairness in a society, philosopher John Rawls suggested we should design social systems from behind a '_____,' where we don't know our own status or identity.

Answer: B) Veil of Ignorance

Rawls's 'Veil of Ignorance' is a thought experiment used to determine the morality of a social issue by removing personal bias from the decision-making process.

7. Act Utilitarianism evaluates each individual situation for its consequences, whereas Rule Utilitarianism supports following general rules that typically lead to the best outcomes over time.

Answer: A) True

Correct. Act utilitarianism is situational, while rule utilitarianism seeks to establish a set of moral guidelines based on their long-term utility.

8. In the context of the 'Lifeboat Ethics' thought experiment proposed by Garrett Hardin, what is the primary argument against sharing resources with those in need?

Answer: B) Sharing will lead to the total collapse of the system for everyone (carrying capacity).

Hardin used the lifeboat metaphor to argue that limited resources mean that trying to save everyone may lead to exceeding the 'carrying capacity,' resulting in everyone perishing.

9. The ethical theory known as _____ argues that there are no objective moral truths and that 'right' and 'wrong' are simply matters of cultural or individual opinion.

Answer: B) Moral Relativism

Moral Relativism posits that morality is relative to the norms of one's culture; that is, whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral norms of the society in which it is practiced.

10. Aristotle's 'Golden Mean' suggests that virtue is always found at the extreme end of a behavior, such as being extremely fearless regardless of the danger.

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Answer: B) False

False. Aristotle's 'Golden Mean' is the desirable middle ground between two extremes—one of excess and one of deficiency (e.g., courage is the mean between recklessness and cowardice).