

Answer Key: Categorical Imperatives & Cyber-Ethics: A 12th Grade Philosophical Heist

Defend your moral logic by applying Kantian ethics and Contractualism to modern digital age dilemmas and high-stakes social scenarios.

1. A software engineer discovers a 'backdoor' in a banking app. While using it could redistribute wealth from corrupt executives to the poor, they refuse, citing that a world where all programmers built backdoors would lead to a collapse of digital trust. Which concept does this reflect?

Answer: B) Kant's Categorical Imperative

The engineer is applying the 'Universalizability Test,' a core component of Kant's Categorical Imperative, which asks if an action could be willed as a universal law.

2. According to the philosophy of _____, an action is right only if it is permitted by a set of rules for the general regulation of behavior that no one could reasonably reject.

Answer: C) Contractualism

Contractualism, often associated with T.M. Scanlon, focuses on the 'reasonable rejectability' of moral principles rather than just consequences or pure duties.

3. In W.D. Ross's theory of ethics, 'Prima Facie' duties are absolute obligations that can never be outweighed by other moral considerations.

Answer: B) False

False. Prima Facie duties are 'at first sight' obligations that can conflict; one duty (like saving a life) may override another (like keeping a promise) in specific contexts.

4. In the 'Experience Machine' thought experiment by Robert Nozick, why might someone refuse to plug into a simulated reality of perfect pleasure?

Answer: B) Because authentic connection to reality has intrinsic value

Nozick used this experiment to critique Hedonistic Utilitarianism, arguing that humans value 'doing' and 'being' a certain way over just 'feeling' good.

5. Cultural Relativism asserts that because different cultures have different moral codes, there is no objective 'truth' in morality.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer: A) True

True. Cultural Relativism is the meta-ethical position that morality is relative to the observer's social context and lacks a universal standard.

6. A state implements a mandatory genetic screening program that saves thousands of lives through early intervention but violates individual privacy. A critic argues this treats citizens merely as 'tools for the state's health statistics.' This critic is using which framework?

Answer: C) Kantianism (Formula of Humanity)

Kant's 'Formula of Humanity' dictates that you should never treat people merely as a means to an end, but always as ends in themselves.

7. The concept of the _____, proposed by John Rawls, asks people to design a just society without knowing their own social status, wealth, or talents.

Answer: B) Veil of Ignorance

The 'Veil of Ignorance' is a method of determining the morality of political issues based on objective fairness.

8. If an ethical system argues that the 'rightness' of an action is determined by whether a person with a temperate, courageous, and just character would perform it, which theory is being used?

Answer: C) Virtue Ethics

Virtue Ethics, rooted in Aristotelian thought, focuses on the character of the agent rather than specific rules or consequences.

9. The 'Is-Ought Problem,' identified by David Hume, suggests that you cannot logically derive what should be done solely from a description of what is happening.

Answer: A) True

True. Hume's Law argues that descriptive statements (facts) are fundamentally different from prescriptive statements (values).

10. Peter Singer's argument regarding 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality' suggests that it is a _____ for wealthy individuals to give to the poor, rather than an act of charity.

Answer: B) Moral duty

Name: _____

Date: _____

Singer argues from a utilitarian perspective that if we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we are duty-bound to do so.