

Preparatory work for AS Level Philosophy and Ethics

TASK 1

You are required to;

- a) Select and research an ethical issue that you have an interest in and to write a report explaining why there could be a moral debate regarding the issue.
- b) Using the provided definitions of absolutist and relativist ethics (and your own research) come to a personal conclusion deciding if the issue you have selected can ever be categorically right or wrong.

This could be an issue that you studied at GCSE or be an issue that has recently featured in the media.

Examples you could choose from include Abortion, Euthanasia, Genetic Engineering or Same Sex Marriage but this is by no means an exclusive list and I would be happy to see research into a range of different areas.

Your report should include the following;

1. A thorough description (with examples of media coverage if appropriate) of the issue you have selected.
2. An explanation of the ethical debate relating to your selected issue.
3. An expression of your own understanding of absolutist and relativist ethics – how would these standpoints reflect on your chosen issue?
4. A personal conclusion reflecting on your own thoughts and beliefs based on your research.

You should aim for about 500 words in total. Please bring your completed report with you to your first lesson and hand to Mrs Collins.

Absolutism is the ethical view that certain actions are always absolutely right or wrong, regardless of other circumstances such as their consequences or the intentions behind them. For example, stealing would always be considered to be immoral even if it took place to promote some other good (e.g. stealing food to feed a starving family) or even if the end consequences promoted goodness.

Relativism is the ethical view that holds that morality is relative to the norms of one's culture and that morals are flexible depending on the situation. That is, whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral norms of the society in which it is practiced and the circumstances under which the action arises. For the ethical relativist, there are no universal moral standards that can be universally applied to all people at all times.

TASK 2

Please write approximately 500 words on the following. You are expected to do some research beforehand and to refer to scholarly debate. You are required to look at both sides of the argument and to come to a conclusion.

“The world around us is not real” Discuss.