

Introduction to utilitarianism

1	Who created Act utilitarianism?	Jeremy Bentham
2	Who created Rule utilitarianism?	John Stuart Mill
3	Who created Preference utilitarianism?	Peter Singer
4	Is it teleological or deontological?	Teleological

The Hedonic Calculus

1	What is the hedonic calculus?	The hedonic calculus is a system of working out the amount of pleasure and pain involved in a situation
2	Intensity means..	How strong is the pleasure or Pain
3	Duration means...	How long will it last?
4	Certainty means...	How likely is it to occur?
5	Propinquity means...	How likely that the pleasure will lead to more pleasure?
6	Fecundity means...	How likely is that pleasure will lead to further pleasure?
7	Purity means...	How likely is it that pain will come from the original pleasure?
8	Extent means...	How many people will be affected?
9	When should you use it?	Bentham argues that when you are faced with a moral decision you should use the above criteria and weigh up whether there would be more overall pleasure or pain

Principles and pleasure

1	What is the principle of utility?	The greatest good for the greatest number
2	What is a higher pleasure?	Pleasure of the mind-intellectual
3	What is a lower pleasure?	Pleasure of the body-sexual pleasure
4	What is hedonism?	Pleasure driven ideas
5	What is consequentialism?	Morality driven by consequences
6	What does the 'greatest good for the greatest number' mean?	The most moral decision is that which benefits the majority of people

Types of Utilitarianism

1	What is Act Utilitarianism?	Utilitarianism weighs up what do at each individual occasion
2	What is Rule Utilitarianism?	Weights up what to do in principle in all occasions of a certain kind
3	What is Preference Utilitarianism?	Based on preference of the person to make moral decisions
4	What is Eudaimonia?	The ultimate end and flourishing
5	Which theory opposes Utilitarianism?	Natural law and Kantian ethics
6	Is utilitarianism secular?	Yes there is no religious teaching in utilitarianism

Key Vocabulary

Principle of utility	The idea that choice brings about the greatest good for the greatest number
Deontological	From the Latin 'duty' focused on the intrinsic rightness or wrongness of actions
Teleological	Looking at the end result (telos) to draw conclusions on what is right or wrong
Hedonic calculus	A system for calculating the amount of pain or pleasure calculated
Consequentialism	Sees morality as driven by consequences, than actions
Hedonistic	Pleasure-driven
Quantitative	Focus on quantity
Qualitative	Focus on quality
Act utilitarianism	Weights up what to do at each individual occasion
Rule utilitarianism	Weights up what to do in principle in all occasions of a certain kind



Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that teaches everything should lead to 'the greatest good for the greatest number'. It judges the rightness and wrongness of an action by the results produced. It is not based on moral rules and is a secular theory as it teaches religion is irrelevant in moral decision making. The theory is associated with Jeremy Bentham (1748) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).

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Bentham was the first great utilitarian thinker and also a great legal and political thinker, as well as a moral philosopher. His interests were with what was good for society and individuals.

Bentham thinks pain and pleasure are our masters. We instinctively seek pleasure and avoid pain. God did not make us and we are not driven by logical reason.

He said the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong

Mill is the second great utilitarian thinker. He keeps to Bentham's ideas but alters it considering the problems in his theory, such as:

- Narrowed focus on pleasure
- Can lead to terrible consequences
- Hedonic calculus is too complex

Link Mill's want to legalise Gay sex.
To sexual ethics

The hedonic calculus is a system of working out the amount of pleasure and pain involved in a situation

Factor	What Bentham means
Intensity	How strong is the pleasure or Pain
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Utility is the idea of usefulness

Bentham argues that when you are faced with a moral decision you should use the above criteria and weigh up whether there would be more overall pleasure or pain

What the specification says

Utility	Use the concept in relation to teleological and relativist approaches to ethics
The hedonic calculus	What it is and how it can be used as a measure of individual pleasure
Act utilitarianism	What it is and its use in promoting the greatest amount of good over evil, or pleasure over pain
Rule utilitarianism	What it is and its use in promoting the common good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether or not it is a good tool for moral decision making • Whether or not an ethical judgement can be made. Based on utility • Whether or not it is possible to measure good or pleasure and then reach a moral decision 	

Applying it:

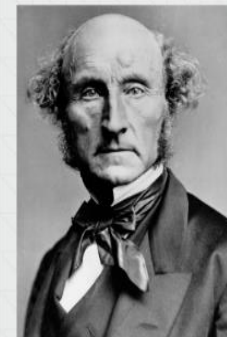
- Trolley problem
- The dying billionaire
- Executing the innocent
 - On sexuality
 - On euthanasia
 - On business ethics

Higher and lower pleasures is Mills support of utility but rejection of the hedonic calculus. He states there are some pleasures higher than others. Intellectual pleasures are higher as are social. Mill's higher pleasures link to Aristotle's **Eudaimonia**.

Its consequential and teleological



Jeremy Bentham



John Stuart Mill

Act utilitarianism - Bentham

Aims to produce a balance of good over evil. Therefore different answers may arise from different situations. It allows flexibility in situations and helps to weigh up complex factors.

Rule utilitarianism - Mill

Aims to create the greatest balance of good over evil but has the common good for society at its core over individuals. It makes it quicker at making decisions involved in a situation. It has common rules, such as 'stealing is normally wrong'. However be aware some rules may clash and we cannot always satisfy both rules in certain situations.