

Core elements of Kantian ethics

1	What is the good will?	The only truly intrinsically good thing, having good motives and intentions
2	What is duty?	The action that is morally required
3	Is the theory deontological or teleological?	Deontological- its duty based
4	Why should people be motivated by duty?	We must always aim to do the right thing and do 'duty for duty sake'
5	What is autonomy?	'self-ruling' the idea humans are free to make their own decisions
6	What is a maxim?	Moral law or rule

Imperatives

1	Is Kantian ethics absolute or relative?	Absolute- some rules are universal
2	Is what rationality?	Something all humans have to help make moral decisions, it is not God given
3	What is an imperative?	A command
4	What is the hypothetical imperative?	A command we must follow to achieved a certain result
5	What is the categorical imperative?	Command that has to be logically followed. It does not depend on the end result.

Ends

1	What is universal law?	The principles that we should only carry out those acts that we are able to will as a law for everyone all the time
2	What is person as ends?	The idea a human should be treated with dignity and respect, not as objects
3	Kingdom of ends?	A hypothetical or imaginary state where people always act according to the moral rules and treat others as ends
4	What is the summon Bonum?	The ultimate goodness and the most supreme good

The three postulates

1	What are postulates?	Things that have been assumed or are a basis for reasoning
2	What does the postulate of free will mean?	If we do not have genuine free will then there is no moral responsibility
3	What does the immortal postulate mean?	Morality requires an afterlife, we need the reward to achieve perfect virtue
4	What 'God exists' postulate mean?	There must be a God who exists so we can achieve happiness, justice and the summon bonum
5	What is Kant's views on human nature?	Power of human nature is to do good
6	What does he say about original sin?	Humans are not damaged by original sin

Key Vocabulary

Moral law	Binding moral obligation
Maxims	Another word for moral rules
Duty	Duties are created by the moral law
Summon Bonum	The highest, most supreme good
Categorical imperative	An unconditional moral obligation that is always binding irrespective of inclination or purpose
Hypothetical imperative	A moral obligation applied only if a person desires an implied goal
Kingdom of ends	An imagined future in which all people act in accordance to the moral law, the categorical imperative

Kantian ethics is linked with the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant believed there were absolute moral rules that could be worked out rationally; these moral rules apply in all situations. His ethical theory is absolutist and does not rely on the belief in God.



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3	Is the theory deontological or teleological?	
4	Why should people be motivated by duty?	
5	What is autonomy?	
6	What is a maxim?	

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Summum bonum-
the highest good,
where virtue is
rewarded by
happiness

What the specification says...

Duty	Origins of the concept of duty in deontological and absolutist approaches to ethics
The hypothetical imperative	What it is and why it is not the imperative of morality
The categorical imperative and its three formulations	What it is and why it is Imperative of morality
The three postulates	What they are and why in obeying a moral command they are being accepted

- Whether or not Kantian ethics provides a helpful method for moral decision making
- Whether or not ethical judgment about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which duty is best served
- Whether Kantian ethics is too abstract to be practical
- Whether it is so reliant on reason that it unduly rejects the importance of other factors, such as sympathy, empathy and love in moral decision-making.

Duty:

If we have a 'good will' we will platform the right action for the right reason.
Kant says duty is not:

1. Doing the right thing out of self-interest or because of possible consequences is not duty.
2. Doing the right thing out of inclination is not duty.

Kant's three formulations

1. Universal law- the action we propose should be able to be made universal law.
2. Persons as ends- human beings are rationale and autonomous. Duty to treat people as 'ends' in themselves.
3. Kingdom of ends – if we were to live in the perfect world what would our maxims be?

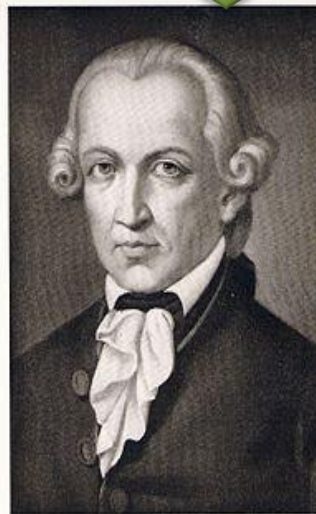
Duty and God:

1. That we have free will
2. That there is an afterlife, we are immortal
3. That God exists

Autonomy:
Self-ruling
and making
our own
decisions

Kant believes there absolute moral duties. He notes an important factor is autonomy. He believes humans are rationale, they are not imposed on by God . Kant argues that whenever we do an action, we are acting upon a maxim.

It's a
deontological
theory



IMMANUEL KANT
From a painting

Maxim:
moral rule or
principle

Postulates: things that have to be assumed or are a basis for reasoning.

Hypothetical Imperative

A command that we would follow in order to achieve an end result.

Categorical Imperative

A command that logically has to be followed.

Examples:

1. That it is wrong to make a lying promise
2. That's it is wrong to commit suicide
3. That it is wrong to neglect one's talent
4. That it is wrong to refrain from helping others

Applying Kantian Ethics

1. Lying to murderers
2. My sisters keeper
3. Charity
4. Business ethics