

НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
«КИЄВО-МОГИЛЯНСЬКА АКАДЕМІЯ»

**Мальвіна Гусар
Наталія Комлик**

ETHICAL VALUES

Навчальний посібник
з англійської мови
для студентів НаУКМА

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Анотація

Навчальний посібник "*Ethical Values*" призначений для студентів Національного університету «Києво-Могилянська академія» та спрямований на розгляд питань етичних цінностей у контексті вивчення англійської мови. Він охоплює актуальні морально-етичні проблеми та стимулює критичне мислення студентів.

Посібник складається з семи тематичних уроків, які досліджують різні аспекти етики, зокрема причини злочинності, необхідність зла для добра, питання булінгу, сутність щастя, сенс життя, основні релігії світу та питання альтруїзму. Кожен розділ містить завдання з аудіювання, читання, словниковий розділ, дискусійні питання та вправи для розвитку мовленнєвих навичок.

Особливістю посібника є його інтерактивний формат, що передбачає використання відео- та аудіо-матеріалів, обговорень та письмових рефлексій, що сприяє розвитку комунікативних навичок англійською мовою. Також у посібнику подано різноманітні філософські та соціологічні підходи до аналізу моральних дилем, що допомагає студентам глибше осмислювати проблеми сучасного суспільства.

Розглянуті теми стимулюють студентів до самостійного аналізу та обговорення фундаментальних етичних принципів, формуючи їхню здатність висловлювати аргументовані думки англійською мовою. Крім того, структуровані завдання сприяють розвитку критичного мислення, що є важливим у сучасному освітньому процесі.

Посібник буде корисним не лише студентам, які вивчають англійську мову, а й усім, хто цікавиться етикою, філософією та суспільними науками.

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LESSON 1. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE COMMIT CRIMES?

Task 1. Listening

What are the main reasons why people commit crimes?

a) Listen to three extracts from interviews with criminals. Which of the reasons you thought of above are mentioned?

b) Listen to the extracts again. Complete the table with information from the interviews.

	1 Carlos	2 Frank	3 Gina
1 Crime?			
2 Age of criminal?			
3 Reasons for crime?			
4 Plans for the future?			

Task 2. Reading

a) Read the text and match one of the three causes of crime mentioned in the text (genetic, environment, choice) with each speaker from Exercise 1b.

b) Read the text again. Look at the summary statements below and match them with one of the causes in the text (genetic, environment, choice).

- 1 Anti-social adults often produce anti-social children.
- 2 Criminals think carefully before they decide on a life of crime.
- 3 Young people who behave badly tend to become criminals.
- 4 People used to think that someone's physical features were a cause of crime.
- 5 Some experts now believe that people commit crimes because of their genes.
- 6 Criminals consider what they can lose and gain by committing a crime.

c) Which reason in the text do you think is the most common cause of crime?

WHY DO WE COMMIT CRIMES?

All adults at some time or another commit a crime, sometimes by accident, but why do some people intentionally commit crimes? Here are three theories that try to explain the causes of criminal behaviour.

GENETIC CAUSES

The idea that some people commit crimes because of biological factors has a long tradition. This theory suggests that criminals are born, not made. In the 19th century some people even thought brain sizes and skull shapes could explain criminal behaviour. Although experts today no longer believe this, they do argue that human behaviour can be linked to an individual's genes. Studies of adopted children who show criminal behaviour suggest that their behaviour is more similar to their biological parents' behaviour than their adoptive parents', showing a genetic link.

ENVIRONMENT

This theory states that a person's surroundings influence their behaviour. Just as children learn good behaviour from their parents and siblings, so children can learn bad behaviour from their families and other close relationships. Researchers in this area argue that early anti-social behaviour in childhood *often leads to a future of criminal* behaviour. It is a vicious circle, as one expert states: 'Problem children tend to grow up into problem adults, and problem *adults tend to produce more* problem children.'

CHOICE

The central idea of this theory is that crime is a career decision, an alternative way of making a living. The theory argues that most criminals are rational people, who know what they want and the different ways of getting it, i.e. work or crime. They are able to balance the risks of committing a crime, such as going to prison, against its benefits, i.e. what they gain if they aren't caught. The conclusion is: if there are more benefits than risks, do it, but if there are more risks than benefits, don't do it.

Research is continuing into people's motivation for committing crimes as understanding this may help us apply the correct punishments for crime. It is important to understand the causes of crime. With more knowledge, it will be easier to prevent crime and to help criminals to lead a more useful life.

Task 3. Vocabulary

a) *Find words in the text that can be used with the nouns below.*

1 behaviour (x5) _____

2. _____ tradition

3. _____ link

4. _____ relationships

5. _____ decision

6. _____ circle

b) *Complete the sentences with phrases from exercise (a)*

1. He spent many years in prison because of his _____

2. Her parents *were away from* the house so often that she was unable to form _____
with either of them.

3. The United States has _____ of allowing citizens to own guns.
4. There are some teenagers in our town whose _____ is beginning to annoy us - they write on walls and shout at *people all* the time.
5. Some people make a _____ at an early age, but others need time to decide what to do in their lives

Task 4. Speaking

In groups, discuss the following:

- 1 Criminals are born, not made.
- 2 Most criminals are either greedy or lazy.
- 3 Crime doesn't pay.
- 4 Petty crimes lead to serious crimes.
- 5 Once a criminal, always a criminal.
- 6 Television programmes are a major cause of crime.

LESSON 2. EVIL IS NECESSARY FOR GOOD

Task 1. Discussion

What is evil? How do you understand the utterance: “Evil is necessary for good”?

Do you agree or disagree?

Task 2. Reading

- a) Read the article talking about the Leibnizian view of evil. Complete the gaps with the words given in the box.

appreciation defenders amount depictions benefits existence contrast attempt kindness evil
--

Evil As Contrast Necessary For the Good

Another 1. _____ to account for evil is the Leibnizian view that recognizes its reality but argues that the evil that exists is the minimum necessary for the 2. _____ of the good, which far outweighs the 3. _____ of evil there is. Evil is thus seen as the cost of the great 4. _____ the good provides. The assumption behind this view is that the good could exist only in 5. _____ with evil. But whatever is true of phenomena requiring contrasting aspects, it is not true of good and evil. It is absurd to suppose that there can be 6. _____ only if there is cruelty, or freedom only if there is tyranny. 7. _____ of this view therefore tend towards an epistemological sense of the contrast: evil is said to be required so that the good could be appreciated as good. The difficulty with this is that even if a contrast were necessary for 8. _____, drawing it would not require the existence of evil. The good could be properly appreciated even in contrast with imaginative 9. _____ of evil. It is, for instance, unnecessary to have people actually drawn and quartered in order to maintain a lively appreciation of one’s good health. Nor is it required for the appreciation of the good that it be contrasted with 10. _____, since the neutral or the indifferent would serve as a contrast just as well. People’s dying in their sleep, without being tortured to death, is sufficient to enhance one’s appreciation of the good of being alive.

Task 3. Watching a video

- a) Watch a video “*The Problem of Evil: Is God Good?*” and answer the following questions:

1. What are God’s three divine attributes threatened by the problem of evil?
2. Which philosopher said that our world is the best of all possible worlds?
3. What is one typical defence that reconciles God with evil?

- b) Watch a video again and say whether the statements are true or false.

1. The prayer in the text emphasizes that God provides resources for survival yet acknowledges

the existence of global starvation.

2. The three divine attributes of the Christian God are importance, omniscience, and omnibenevolence. (F)
3. The problem of evil suggests that the existence of evil contradicts at least one of God's essential attributes.
4. Gottfried Leibniz believed that God created a world where no evil exists. (F)
5. The free will defence argues that human freedom is more valuable than the complete absence of evil in the world.
6. Natural evils, such as hurricanes and droughts, can be explained by the free will defence. (F)
7. The problem of evil concludes that God cannot exist if free will is present in the world. (F)

Task 4. Post-video discussion:

1. Do you think it is plausible that this world is the best world that can exist?
2. How is the existence of evil necessary for God?
3. Is it possible to have a world without evil?
4. Would we have a concept of God and believe in him if there was no evil?
5. What are other possible responses to the problem of evil?

Task 5. Post-video activities:

1. Which philosopher said that our world was the best of all possible worlds?

a. Aquinas b. Kant c. Aristotle d. Leibniz

2. Which three of God's attributes are said to be logically inconsistent with the existence of evil?

1) _____; 2) _____; 3) _____.

3. Explain why our world would be the best of all possible worlds, assuming that God has all three divine attributes.

4. Fill in the blanks with the words [omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent] to reconstruct the logical problem of evil.

a. If God is _____, then he knows about the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____, then he will want to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____, or have the power to stop it.

b. If God is _____, then he has the power to stop the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____, then he will want to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____, or know about the evil.

c. If God is _____, then knows about the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____, then he has the power to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____, or

want to stop it.

5. How can a theist claim that God's goodness and the existence of evil are compatible?

6. Essay prompt: What solution to the problem of evil do you find most compelling? Do you even think it can be solved? Explain your logic.

LESSON 3. PEER PRESSURE

Task 1. Discussion

1. What do you understand by peer pressure?
2. Which of these are examples of it?
 - wearing fashionable clothes
 - joining in with bullying
 - doing something dangerous because your friends are doing it
 - going to a party when you don't feel like it
 - lying about your real opinion to fit in

Task 2. Reading

- a) **Read the leaflet quickly, then briefly answer the four questions in the text from memory.**

WHAT IS PEER PRESSURE AND WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

We all want to be part of a group and feel like we belong in our community. Peer pressure can happen when we are influenced to do something we would not usually do because we want to be accepted by our peers, i.e. groups of friends who are about the same age and share the same interests. Children and young adults especially feel social pressure to conform to the peer group with whom they socialize. Conformity, which is the most common form of social influence, is usually defined as the tendency to think or act like other members of a group.

How does peer pressure affect people?

Peer pressure can influence how people dress, how they talk, what music they listen to, what attitudes they adopt and how they behave. Teenagers want to belong, and it is hard to do so if you are always going against the grain. They want to be liked, to fit in and to be accepted, which means peer pressure can be powerful and hard to resist. People never want to be looked down upon or made fun of. This means that people who are low on confidence and unsure of themselves may be more likely to seek their peers' approval by going along with risky suggestions. Peer pressure can lead people to do things they would not normally do on their own. In one study, a student who knew the correct answer to a question actually

Can peer pressure lead to bullying?

Peer pressure definitely plays a role in bullying. If a teenager is generally seen as weak or different by the majority of their peers, they can become a safe target for bullies. Bullies pick easy targets, people that the group are unlikely to defend or get upset over. Unfortunately, some bullies are popular and liked by many of their peers, which means others are less likely to call the behaviour bullying. These popular bullies can act appropriately towards teachers and adults, so the problem often goes unnoticed. Many victims of bullies feel very lonely, have low self-esteem and become depressed.

Understandably, parents are often deeply worried when their children are being bullied.

What can parents do about it?

To achieve peace of mind, parents need to know with whom their children are associating. They need to encourage children to stay out of situations in which they know they would be pressured and uncomfortable. Children should learn to feel comfortable saying 'no', to choose their friends wisely, to talk to someone they trust, to think about the consequences of their actions and to be true to themselves.

b) Read the text again and answer the following questions

1. What sort of people will probably give in more easily to peer pressure?
2. What example is given of giving in to peer pressure?
3. Are bullies always unpopular people?
4. How do the victims of bullying feel?
5. What advice does the writer give to parents, and to children? Do you agree with that advice?

c) Do you agree with the leaflet that peer pressure is so strong?

Task 3. Vocabulary: idioms with *mind*

a) Match the idioms on the left with their meanings. Use a dictionary to help you.

1 peace of mind	a) unable to decide what to do
2 keep an open mind	b) a feeling of calm and not being worried
3 make up(your) mind	c) decide
4 out of (your) mind	d) deliberately not form a definite opinion
5 in two minds	e) crazy, insane

b) Complete the statements with the idioms.

1. I can't _____ about what to do with the money.
2. Having insurance often gives you _____
3. It is important to _____ when you are on a jury.
4. You must be _____ to give up such a good job.
5. I was _____ about applying for the job.

Task 4. Listening

a) Lead in:

- a) How serious is bullying?
- b) Why do people bully others?
- c) Should bullying be a crime?

b) Listen to the report on the study about bullying and say whether the statements are true or false.

- a) A study says bullies at schools have mental health problems.
- b) The study says bullied children are more likely to get depressed.
- c) Bullied children are more likely to get depressed than abused children.
- d) A researcher said bullying is a normal part of growing up.
- e) The study says that there are 16,000 bullies in the UK.
- f) The study said that the exam results of bullies can suffer.
- g) Bullied children can have problems focusing and keeping a job.
- h) An expert said parents should teach their kids communication skills

c) Discuss the following questions:

- a) What should parents do about bullying?
- b) How can we teach bullies that their actions are wrong?
- c) What advice would you have for someone who is bullied?
- d) Should bullied children just learn how to deal with bullies?

LESSON 4. HAPPINESS

Task 1. Discussion

1. What is happiness?
2. What makes you happy? What makes you unhappy?
3. Are you generally a happy person or an unhappy person?
4. What made you happy this week? What made you unhappy this week?
5. What happy memories do you have of your childhood?
6. What was the happiest moment in your life?
7. Are you happy in your job?
8. What changes could you make in your life that would make you feel happier?

Task 2. Vocabulary

a) *Learn the idioms about happiness*

- money can't buy happiness (idiom) – used to say wealth or material possessions will not give a person happiness.
- (to be) down in the dumps (idiom) – depressed or unhappy.
- to let one's hair down (idiom) – to have fun or act in an unreserved way.
- happy-go-lucky (adjective) – carefree, cheerful, and unconcerned about the future.
- (in a) good mood / bad mood (nouns) – mood is the current state of mind or emotional state.
- (to be) over the moon / on cloud nine / in seventh heaven (idioms) – to be very happy.

b) *Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):*

1. I was _____ when my wife told me she was pregnant.
2. I had such a _____ attitude when I was your age. I didn't have a care in the world.
3. He's _____ because his football team lost. Again.
4. For the first time in months, Carla was able to _____ and go out dancing with her friends.
5. He was the richest man in the town, yet he never found a woman who loved him. Well, you know what they say: _____ .
6. She's been feeling _____ since her boyfriend left her.

Task 3. Watching a video

You are going to watch a video by WatchMojo called "Top 10 Happiest Countries in The World."

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. Which international organisation produces the World Happiness Report?
a) The European Union b) The League of Nations c) The United Nations
2. Which of the following was not mentioned as a criterion for the report?
a) liberty b) wealth c) crime
3. How would you describe Australia's population density?
a) high b) low c) very high
4. What was not mentioned about why Sweden is a tourist's dream location?
a) freedom b) lively cities c) beautiful landscapes

Sentence completion

5. One of the best things about New Zealand is that it is _____, allowing it to escape problems like overcrowding and pollution.
6. In Canada, the average income is _____.
7. The Netherlands has one of the lowest _____ in the world.
8. Switzerland's economy could be described as _____.

Short answer

9. What is the average annual income of Iceland? _____
10. Denmark has a low rate of what? _____
11. How much is university and healthcare in Norway? _____
12. How many saunas are there in Finland? _____

Task 4. Discussion

1. Do you think poor people or rich people are happiest?
2. Do you think single people are happier than those in a relationship?
3. Which nationalities are the happiest? Which nationalities are the unhappiest?
4. Which professions are the happiest? Which are the unhappiest?
5. Are happy people healthier than unhappy people?
6. Is the state of being happy the same for everyone, or do different people experience happiness differently?
7. Does real happiness come from making other people happy?
8. Is happiness just something that exists in our minds?

LESSON 5. THE MEANING OF LIFE

Task 1. Discussion

1. What do you think gives life meaning, and how do personal experiences shape this perspective?
2. How do you define "being human," and what aspects do you think contribute to a fulfilling life?
3. Why do you think attention plays a role in shaping our experiences and emotions?
4. Do you believe people have a predetermined purpose in life or meaning is something they create for themselves?
5. How does society influence our understanding of happiness and suffering?

Task 2. Vocabulary

Embodiment – A tangible or visible expression of an idea, quality, or feeling.

Interacting – Engaging with others through communication or shared experiences.

Esoteric terminology – Specialized language understood by a small, specific group.

Abstract senses – Intuitive perceptions that do not rely on physical sensory organs, such as intuition or a sense of time.

Conscious direction – The intentional focus of awareness or attention toward something.

Intricate functions – Complex and detailed processes, especially within a system like the human body.

Automatic conditioning – The unconscious training or programming of the mind to react in a specific way.

Tactile interactions – Physical contact or touch-based communication between individuals.

Predispositions – Natural tendencies or inclinations toward certain behaviors or traits.

Sensory variability – Differences in how individuals perceive and experience sensory input

Task 3. Reading

a) Read and entitle the text

The Meaning of Life may be living your life through experiencing your unique feelings and emotions and interacting with others.

In fact, this should be the end of the article. But we will try to explain why it is so, without using religious or esoteric terminology.

If you look a little deeper, it can be just being. And that's it. There is no idea to change the world or people, save someone, or achieve something. It's just being.

In order to explore the Meaning of Life for Human, let's try to understand what Human is, as only

then we will be able to understand the meaning of life more easily. After all, you must agree that this meaning will be different for different forms of life. Human is one of the most complex forms of life. Hence, there are many versions and different interpretations.

What is the Human?

A human being is made up of many aspects:

- Physical body.
- Senses, ordinary senses: vision, smell, hearing, taste, tactile sensations, and so on. While these senses are integral to our physical body, they are noteworthy due to their variability and their profound influence on our experience of the world.
- Abstract Senses—the ability to feel people, the ability to feel time, place, beauty, honesty, intuition. These are senses for which we have no specific organs of perception.
- Mind. The mind is our tool, much like the hands are to the physical body. The mind is the space where we can observe thoughts. It is the receiver of thoughts, functioning like an airport where millions of thoughts arrive and depart every second. Some thoughts stay with us, some we use, and others we store for future use.
- Attention. Attention binds all the parts of Human together, making us whole. Currently, for most people, attention is automatically directed to the mind and thoughts. From childhood, we are conditioned to focus our attention primarily on our thoughts. This automatic direction can lead to an imbalance, causing chaos in the mind. This chaos often results in suffering, as our reactions, behaviors, and emotional states are largely determined by these unmanaged thoughts.

To achieve a fuller experience of life and to embody the essence of being human, we must take control of our attention and direct it consciously to:

- Attention itself: Focus on understanding where our attention is directed, observe our attention;
- Physical body: Focus on the needs of our body, feel its sensations, and be aware of what is happening with the body;
- Perception of surroundings: Focus on the external environment, actively listening, seeing, and smelling, touching, and tasting;
- Observation of the mind and thoughts: Focus on observing our mind, including the thoughts that come and go. It allows us to control our mind and thoughts.

To truly perceive the fullness of life, we must engage with multiple objects at the same time. The more aspects we can feel and experience at once, the richer our lives become. This implies that being a human requires us to direct our attention across various aspects at the same time, as the quality of our life depends on this balance. In total, there are body, senses, abstract senses, mind and attention. And all this is a human being, not only a physical body.

It's crucial to train to connect with our true selves, to take control of our lives, to experience life to its fullest, and find happiness. We develop our attention to manage our lives, find happiness, and

embrace all aspects of ourselves at the same time. This approach allows us to perceive the world not through a narrow lens but with open eyes, breathing deeply—a true embodiment of what it means to be human.

Consider the many processes occurring within the human body, they are billions of intricate functions that sustain life and sensation. When do we start to feel truly? It's when we direct our attention towards our senses. For instance, right now, you can focus on the smells or tastes in your mouth, making them vivid and real in your world. These sensations are uniquely ours; no one else experiences them exactly as we do. What's fascinating is our varied emotional responses to these sensations, which are influenced by our individual thought patterns and evaluations. This diversity is where the beauty lies. Humans also have ways to connect and communicate with each other, through spoken words, tactile interactions, artistic creations like paintings or poetry. In this unique way of experiencing feelings, emotions, sensations, and interacting with one another lies the meaning of life for human beings. We emphasize the word "unique." There's no purpose in living someone else's life; the true essence lies in living our own, unique existence.

Thus, the meaning of life is defined as living our own life fully, experiencing it deeply, and engaging in meaningful interactions with others.

How does one truly live his or her life? It's through directing attention into one's experiences, into feeling the diverse sensations, emotions, and sentiments that life presents. To live fully requires the active use of attention. To make life fuller, attention must be divided into several aspects, such as being aware of bodily sensations, observing our surroundings, understanding the flow of thoughts in the mind, and continuously monitoring where our attention is. Developing and training attention, sensitivity, and understanding of attention, thoughts, and the mind are essential for this purpose. Experiencing something requires noticing it, and noticing requires directing our attention there intentionally, it doesn't happen automatically. Therefore, we must independently use our attention. Bringing all these aspects together, the meaning of life lies in Being Human, to live one's life fully. Often, alongside the question of the meaning of life, arises another one, "*What is my purpose?*". Is there indeed a grand purpose, a goal for which people live, beyond simply experiencing and interacting in their unique human life? Perhaps we should first undertake one action: to begin living without suffering. There can be no purpose in suffering, it is merely manipulation. Only after living entirely free from suffering can we entertain the idea of purpose.

To our mind, there is no predetermined destiny. The meaning lies in simply existing, in doing what you cannot avoid doing right now. Live your life fully, with your unique feelings, emotions, and sensations. Certainly, everyone possesses different predispositions and talents, which make life easier when pursued. So why doesn't everyone follow what they like and are good at? Because many believe they derive pleasure from suffering and are convinced they should suffer. This is how society and its governing systems operate, it's not good or bad, but driven by the pursuit of well-being for every

component within the system.

To achieve this, you must begin using your attention, as it is the most valuable resource. Training your attention muscles is essential for this. Think like a happy person, and you will be happy. To be happy, that is the meaning of life!

b) Read the sentences and define if they are true or false. Correct the false ones

1. The meaning of life is about achieving success and changing the world.
2. A human being consists of a physical body, senses, abstract senses, mind, and attention.
3. The mind is described as a tool, similar to hands for the body.
4. Attention is not important in experiencing life fully.
5. People naturally direct their attention toward bodily sensations rather than thoughts.
6. Experiencing life fully requires focusing attention on multiple aspects at once.
7. Suffering is necessary to find the meaning of life.
8. The text argues that every person has a predetermined destiny they must follow.
9. Humans connect and communicate through various means, such as speech, touch, and art.
10. You have to be happy, that is the meaning of life.

c) Complete the sentences

1. A human being is made up of many aspects, including the physical body, senses, abstract senses, mind, and...
2. The mind is the space where we can observe thoughts; it functions like an airport where...
3. Currently, for most people, attention is automatically directed to the mind and thoughts, which can lead to...
4. To achieve a fuller experience of life and embody the essence of being human, we must take control of our attention and...
5. The more aspects we can feel and experience at once, the richer...
6. In this unique way of experiencing feelings, emotions, sensations, and interacting with one another lies...
7. To live fully requires the active use of attention, meaning we must intentionally...
8. Often, alongside the question of the meaning of life, arises another one, which is...
9. Because many believe they derive pleasure from suffering and are convinced they should suffer, they...
10. The meaning of life is ...

d) Answer the questions

1. What is the main definition of the meaning of life?
2. How is the concept of "Just being" described?
3. Why is it important to understand what a human is before exploring the meaning of life?
4. What are the different aspects that make up a human being according to the text?
5. How does attention play a role in living a full human experience?
6. Why are the uniqueness of individual experiences and interactions emphasized?
7. What is the connection between suffering and the search for purpose?
8. How is our ability to fully experience life suggested to be developed?

Task 4. Watching a video

Watch the video and answer the questions

<https://youtu.be/Ebt0X5ybm9Y>

1. What main activities can lead to finding the meaning of life?
2. Why are social connections so important in life?
3. What is the role of understating in finding the life sense?
4. Why can services be beneficial for human happiness?
5. What is the meaning of life formula according to the video?

Task 5. After-class activity

1. Keep a one-week journal where you reflect daily on what gives your life meaning. Focus on experiences, emotions, and interactions that feel significant to you.
2. Debate Preparation: prepare arguments for and against the idea that life has an inherent meaning. Be ready to defend your position in a class debate using philosophical and personal reasoning.

LESSON 6. MAJOR RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

Task 1. Vocabulary

Monotheism – The belief in a single God (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Judaism).

Polytheism – The belief in multiple gods (e.g., Hinduism, ancient Greek religion).

Sacred – Something considered holy or divine in religious traditions.

Doctrine – A set of beliefs held and taught by a religion.

Worship – Acts of devotion, prayer, or rituals directed toward a deity.

Clergy – Religious leaders, such as priests, imams, or rabbis.

Pilgrimage – A religious journey to a sacred place (e.g., Mecca for Muslims).

Sect – A subgroup within a larger religious tradition.

Tolerance – Acceptance of different religious beliefs and practices.

Persecution – Harassment or oppression of people due to their religion.

Theism – Belief in the existence of one or more gods.

Atheism – The rejection or lack of belief in the existence of gods.

Deity – A supernatural being worshipped in a religion, such as a god or a goddess.

Scripture – Sacred religious texts, such as the Bible, Quran, or Vedas.

Ritual – A formal religious ceremony or practice.

Salvation – The concept of being saved or liberated in a religious sense.

Reincarnation – The belief in the rebirth of a soul into a new body after death.

Prophet – A person who is believed to communicate divine messages, such as Muhammad or Moses.

Temple – A place of worship for certain religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

Synagogue – A Jewish place of worship and religious study.

Mosque – A place of worship in Islam.

Denomination – A distinct branch or group within a larger religious tradition.

b) Use the words from the vocabulary to answer the questions

1. What core beliefs distinguish the major religions from each other?
2. How do the practices of major religions shape cultural and social norms in different societies?
3. How have the major religions evolved over time, and what factors have influenced these changes?
4. How do different religions view the concept of religious freedom?
5. What are the major challenges to religious freedom in various parts of the world?
6. How do governments balance protecting religious freedom with maintaining social order?
7. What role does interfaith dialogue play in promoting religious freedom?
8. How do historical contexts influence current attitudes toward religious freedom?

Task 3. Reading

a) Read and entitle the text

Christianity is the world's largest religion, based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It originated in the 1st century CE in the region of Palestine. Christians believe in one God and that Jesus is the Son of God and the savior of humanity. The Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is their sacred scripture. Christianity has three main branches: Catholicism, which is led by the Pope and emphasizes tradition and sacraments; Protestantism, which emerged in the 16th century and focuses on the authority of the Bible; and Eastern Orthodoxy, known for its continuation of early Christian traditions. Christianity has played a significant role in shaping Western civilization and has a wide range of cultural and theological diversity.

Islam is a monotheistic religion that originated in the 7th century CE in Mecca, now part of modern-day Saudi Arabia. It was founded by the Prophet Muhammad, who is considered the last prophet in a line that includes figures like Abraham and Moses. The Quran is the holy book of Islam, and Muslims follow the Five Pillars: the declaration of faith (Shahada), prayer (Salah), almsgiving (Zakat), fasting during Ramadan (Sawm), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). Islam has two major branches: Sunni, which is the largest, and Shia, which has its own distinct practices and beliefs. Islam emphasizes submission to the will of Allah and has a rich tradition of scholarship and culture.

Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions, originating in the Indian subcontinent. It has no single founder and encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices. Hindus worship multiple deities, with Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva being among the most important. Hinduism emphasizes concepts like dharma (duty), karma (action and its consequences), and samsara (rebirth). The ultimate goal is moksha, or liberation from the cycle of rebirth. The Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Ramayana are key texts. It's diverse, with various philosophies and practices.

Buddhism, founded by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) in the 5th century BCE, focuses on overcoming suffering through the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. It teaches that life is filled with suffering caused by desire and attachment, and that enlightenment, or Nirvana, can be achieved through meditation, ethical conduct, and wisdom. Major branches include Theravada, which focuses on the earliest teachings, and Mahayana, which includes a broader range of texts and emphasizes the Bodhisattva path.

Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions, originating with the covenant between God and Abraham. It centers on the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), especially the Torah. Jews believe in one God and follow a set of laws and ethical guidelines. Major branches include Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism. It emphasizes the importance of community, tradition, and ethical living.

b) Read the sentences and determine if they are true or false. Correct the false ones

1. Christianity originated in the 1st century CE in Palestine.
2. The Bible consists only of the New Testament.
3. Islam was founded in the 7th century CE in Mecca.
4. The Five Pillars of Islam include fasting during Ramadan.
5. Hinduism has a single founder.
6. The Vedas and Upanishads are sacred texts in Hinduism.
7. Buddhism was founded by the Prophet Muhammad.
8. The Four Noble Truths are a central teaching in Buddhism.
9. Judaism is a polytheistic religion.
10. The Torah is an important part of the Hebrew Bible.

c) Complete the sentences

1. Christianity originated in the ___ century CE in ___.
2. The three main branches of Christianity are ___, ___, and ___.
3. The Five Pillars of Islam include Shahada, Salah, Zakat, ___, and ___.
4. The holy book of Islam is the ___.
5. Hinduism emphasizes key concepts such as dharma, karma, and ___, with the ultimate goal being ___.
6. Buddhism was founded by ___ in the ___ century BCE.
7. The two major branches of Buddhism are ___ and ___.
8. Judaism is based on the covenant between God and ___ and follows the sacred text called ___.
9. The major branches of Judaism include Orthodox, ___, and ___.
10. Christianity has significantly influenced ___ civilization.

Task 4. Discussion

Answer the questions

1. Where and when did Christianity originate?
2. What is the holy book of Christianity, and what are its two main parts?
3. What are the Five Pillars of Islam?
4. Who is considered the final prophet in Islam?
5. What are some key concepts in Hinduism, and what is the ultimate goal?
6. Who founded Buddhism, and what are its core teachings?
7. What are the major branches of Buddhism, and how do they differ?
8. What is the significance of the Torah in Judaism?
9. What are the major branches of Judaism?
10. How has Christianity influenced Western civilization?

Task 5. Watching a video

- a) Watch the video.*
- b) Characterize each religion, and say what they have in common*

<https://youtu.be/Byc0dPPr8ec?si=gRUwSeYykVjurvKR>

Task 6. After-class activity

1. **Comparative Religion Chart** – Research and create a chart comparing at least five major world religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism). Include key aspects like core beliefs, sacred texts, places of worship, major holidays, and number of followers worldwide.
2. **Religious Freedom Case Study** – Choose a country and analyze how religious freedom is practised there. Discuss the laws protecting or restricting religious expression and provide real-life examples. Include at least one historical and one contemporary example.

LESSON 7. WHAT MAKES A DECENT SOCIETY? IS ALTRUISM POSSIBLE?

Task 1. Vocabulary

Altruism: Selfless concern for the well-being of others.

Justice: The quality of being fair and reasonable.

Fairness: Impartial and just treatment without favouritism.

Ethically: In a manner that is morally right.

Dignity: The state of being worthy of honour or respect.

Harmony: A state of peaceful coexistence and agreement.

Compassion: Sympathy and concern for the suffering of others.

Institutions: Established laws, practices, and organizations in a society.

Transparency: Openness and accountability in actions and policies.

Equity: Fairness and impartiality, especially in justice and opportunities.

Humanitarian: Concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare.

Reciprocal: Given, felt, or done in return.

Survival: The act of continuing to exist despite hardships.

Empathy: The ability to understand and share the feelings of others.

Welfare: The health, happiness, and fortunes of a person or group.

b) Use the words from the vocabulary to answer the questions

1. What are the key characteristics of a decent society?
2. How do fairness and justice contribute to a well-functioning society?
3. Can a society be decent without altruism? Why or why not?
4. Is true altruism possible, or do all acts of kindness have some self-interest?
5. How do cultural and social values influence the level of altruism in a society?
6. What role do governments and institutions play in promoting a decent society?
7. How does empathy contribute to social harmony and cooperation?
8. Can altruism be taught and encouraged, or is it purely instinctive?

Task 3. Reading

a) Read and entitle the text

A decent society is one that upholds fairness, justice, and the well-being of all its members. It fosters respect for human rights, equality, and social harmony while ensuring that institutions function transparently and ethically. Such a society values the dignity of individuals, provides opportunities for advancement, and ensures that basic needs like education, healthcare, and security are accessible

to all. However, the foundation of a decent society is not merely institutional but also relies on the moral compass of its citizens. Altruism is selfless concern for the well-being of others, it is often considered a key component in achieving and maintaining such a society. But is true altruism possible?

Altruism, in its purest form, involves self-sacrifice without expectation of personal gain. Some argue that genuine altruism is a myth, as even acts of kindness often yield indirect benefits, such as social approval, personal satisfaction, or reciprocal favors. Evolutionary biology suggests that altruistic behavior may stem from genetic survival mechanisms, particularly kin selection and reciprocal altruism. In this view, people help others primarily because it strengthens social bonds and enhances the survival of the group, ultimately benefiting the individual in some way.

Despite this skepticism, history offers numerous examples of individuals who have risked or sacrificed their own well-being for others with no apparent reward. Humanitarians like Mother Teresa, civil rights activists like Martin Luther King Jr., and countless anonymous volunteers demonstrate that selflessness can exist beyond immediate personal gain. While some level of intrinsic motivation may always be present, it does not necessarily diminish the value of the act itself. Even if a person feels good after helping another, does that make the kindness any less genuine?

A decent society encourages and nurtures altruism through cultural values, education, and policies that promote social responsibility. Systems of cooperation, charity, and mutual aid reinforce the idea that helping others is both a moral duty and a societal expectation. Furthermore, in societies that emphasize community over individualism, altruism is often more visible and ingrained in daily life. Governments and institutions can also play a role in fostering altruistic behavior by incentivizing public service, supporting welfare programs, and promoting ethical leadership.

All in all, a decent society is one where justice, equity, and compassion are central principles. While pure altruism may be rare or even unattainable in an absolute sense, acts of generosity and selflessness undeniably contribute to the betterment of society. Whether motivated by empathy, duty, or an internal sense of fulfillment, altruistic behaviour remains essential in shaping a world that prioritizes human dignity and collective well-being.

b) Read the sentences and define if they are true or false. Correct the false ones

1. A decent society is defined by fairness, justice, and the well-being of all its members.
2. The text argues that altruism always leads to personal benefits and is never selfless.
3. Evolutionary biology suggests that altruism may have roots in survival mechanisms like kin selection and reciprocal altruism.
4. The text claims that historical figures like Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King Jr. acted purely for personal gain.
5. A decent society does not require institutions to function transparently and ethically.
6. The text suggests that even if altruistic acts bring personal satisfaction, they can still be genuine.

7. Governments and institutions can play a role in fostering altruistic behavior through policies and incentives.
8. The text argues that altruism is only possible in societies that emphasize community over individualism.
9. Social approval, personal satisfaction, and reciprocal favors are mentioned as potential indirect benefits of altruism.
10. The conclusion states that while pure altruism may be rare, acts of generosity and selflessness still benefit society.

c) Complete the sentences

1. A decent society is one that upholds fairness, justice, and _____.
2. Such a society values the dignity of individuals, provides opportunities for advancement, and ensures that basic needs like _____, _____, and security are accessible to all.
3. Altruism, in its purest form, involves self-sacrifice without _____.
4. Some argue that genuine altruism is a myth, as even acts of kindness often yield indirect benefits, such as _____, _____, or reciprocal favors.
5. Evolutionary biology suggests that altruistic behavior may stem from genetic survival mechanisms, particularly _____ and _____.
6. Despite this skepticism, history offers numerous examples of individuals who have risked or sacrificed their own well-being for others with _____.
7. A decent society encourages and nurtures altruism through _____, _____, and policies that promote social responsibility.
8. Governments and institutions can also play a role in fostering altruistic behavior by incentive's _____, supporting _____, and promoting _____.
9. In conclusion, a decent society is one where _____, _____, and _____ are central principles.
10. Whether motivated by _____, _____, or an internal sense of fulfilment, altruistic behaviour remains essential in shaping a world that prioritizes human dignity and collective well-being.

Task 4. Discussion

Answer the questions

1. What are the key principles that define a decent society?
2. How does the text describe the role of institutions in maintaining a decent society?
3. What is the definition of altruism given in the text?
4. Why do some argue that true altruism is a myth?
5. How does evolutionary biology explain altruistic behaviour?
6. What historical examples of altruistic individuals are mentioned in the text?

7. How can a society encourage and nurture altruism?
8. What role do governments and institutions play in promoting altruistic behaviour?
9. Does the text argue that pure altruism is possible or impossible? Why?
10. What is the overall conclusion of the text regarding the importance of altruism in a decent society?

Task 5. Watching a video

Watch the video and answer the questions

<https://youtu.be/wyHLLzmNje0?si=9dEs6s-I3iN39v2o>

1. What is the “veil of ignorance”?
2. Describe the main principles of the new kind of fair democracy offered by John Rawls.
3. How did John Rawls characterize primary goods?
4. What is fair equality of opportunity?
5. What is said about the difference principle?
6. Outline property-owning democracy.
7. In your opinion, what must a fair society truly look like?

Task 6. After-class activity

a) Reflective Essay:

Prompt: Reflect on what you believe makes a society decent. Discuss whether you think altruism is possible in today's world. Support your argument with examples from history, current events, or personal experiences. (500-700 words)

b) Analytical Report:

Prompt: Research an organization or individual known for altruistic actions. Write a report analyzing how their efforts contribute to building a decent society. Evaluate whether their actions are truly selfless or driven by other motives. (600-800 words)

Keys

Lesson 1.

Task 1

b)

	1 Carlos	2 Frank	3 Gina
1 Crime?	Hit someone in a club, attacked a policeman	Organised a robbery at the airport, gold worth over £10 million	Stealing from shops, houses, and cash machines
2 Age of criminal?		51	21
3 Reason for crime?	He lost his temper - hadn't learned to control it as a child, like his dad, a violent man	Easy way to make a living, he enjoyed planning big robberies	Poor background, no money, no job
4 Plans for future?	Keep out of trouble, settle down, lead a normal life	Retire to a villa in Spain	Move out of the area and start a new life (maybe get some qualifications)

Task 2

a) Genetic causes: 1 Carlos; Environment: 3 Gina; Choice: 2 Frank

b) 1 genetic causes; 2 choice; 3 environment; 4 genetic causes; 5 genetic causes; 6 choice

Task 3.

a) 1. criminal, human, good, bad, anti-social;

2. long;
3. genetic;
4. close;
5. career;
6. vicious

b) 1. criminal behaviour;

2. close relationships;
3. long tradition;
4. anti-social behaviour;
5. career decision

Lesson 2.

Task 2

- a) 1. attempt;
2. existence;
 3. amount;
 4. benefits;
 5. contrast;
 6. kindness;

- 7. Defenders;
- 8. appreciation;
- 9. depictions;
- 10. evil.

Task 3.

b)

- 1. True
- 2. False
- 3. True
- 4. False
- 5. True
- 6. False
- 7. False

Task 5.

1. d (Leibniz)

2. 1) omnipotence, 2) omniscience, 3) omnibenevolence

4. a. If God is _____ *omniscient* _____, then he knows about the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____ *omnibenevolent* _____, then he will want to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____ *omnibenevolent* _____, or have the power to stop it.

b. If God is _____ *omnipotent* _____, then he has the power to stop the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____ *omnibenevolent* _____, then he will want to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____ *omnibenevolent* _____, or know about the evil.

c. If God is _____ *omniscient* _____, then knows about the evil going on in the world, and if he is _____ *omnipotent* _____, then he has the power to stop it. However, there is evil in the world. Therefore, God must not be _____ *omnipotent* _____, or want to stop it.

Lesson 3.

Task 3. Vocabulary

a)

1. b; 2. d; 3. c; 4. e; 5. a.

b)

- 1. I can't _____ about what to do with the money.
- 2. Having insurance often gives you _____
- 3. It is important to _____ when you are on a jury.
- 4. You must be _____ to give up such a good job.
- 5. I was _____ about applying for the job.

Task 4. Listening

- b)
- a) false
- b) true
- c) true
- d) false
- e) false
- f) false
- g) true
- h) true

Lesson 4.

Task 2.

b)

1. *over the moon*
2. *happy-go-lucky*
3. *in a bad mood*
4. *let her hair down*
5. *money can't buy happiness*
6. *down in the dumps*

Task 3. Watching a video

Multiple choice

1. c) The United Nations
2. c) crime
3. b) low
4. a) freedom

Sentence completion

5. isolated
6. \$49,000.
7. murder rates
8. stable

Short answer

9. \$73,000

10. Poverty
11. Free
12. More than 3 million

Lesson 5.

Task 3.

b) True or False:

1. **False** – The meaning of life is about fully experiencing one's unique life, not about success or changing the world.
2. **True**
3. **True**
4. **False** – Attention is crucial for experiencing life fully.
5. **False** – People are conditioned to direct their attention primarily to thoughts rather than bodily sensations.
6. **True**
7. **False** – Suffering is seen as unnecessary and even a form of manipulation.
8. **False** – The text states there is no predetermined destiny.
9. **True**
10. **True**

c) Complete the sentences:

1. ... attention.
2. ... millions of thoughts arrive and depart every second.
3. ... an imbalance that can cause suffering.
4. ... direct it consciously.
5. ... our lives become.
6. ... the meaning of life for human beings.
7. ... focus on bodily sensations, surroundings, and thoughts.
8. ... "What is my purpose?"
9. ... do not follow what they like or are good at.
10. ... living life fully with unique experiences and emotions.

d) Answer the questions:

1. The meaning of life is living fully by experiencing one's unique feelings, emotions, and interactions.
2. "Just being" means existing without the need for change, achievement, or external validation.
3. Understanding what a human is helps in grasping the complexity of human experiences and perspectives on life.
4. A human consists of a physical body, senses, abstract senses, mind, and attention.
5. Attention binds all aspects of human experience and allows for a richer, more conscious life.
6. Because no one else can experience life in the exact same way, making individual experiences uniquely valuable.
7. Suffering is viewed as unnecessary; only after freeing oneself from suffering can purpose be considered.
8. By training and consciously directing attention to various aspects of life.

Lesson 6.

Task 1: Vocabulary (b)

1. What core beliefs distinguish the major religions from each other?

- 1. Monotheism vs. Polytheism:** Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are monotheistic, while Hinduism is polytheistic. Buddhism does not emphasize a belief in gods.
 - 2. Sacred Texts:** Christianity has the **Bible**, Islam follows the **Quran**, Hinduism has the **Vedas and Upanishads**, Buddhism has the **Tripitaka**, and Judaism follows the **Torah**.
 - 3. Salvation & Afterlife:** Christianity and Islam emphasize salvation through faith and obedience, while Hinduism and Buddhism focus on **karma and reincarnation**.
 - 4. Prophets & Founders:** Islam follows Muhammad as the **final prophet**, Christianity is based on Jesus as the **Son of God**, Judaism follows the teachings of Moses, Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, and Hinduism has no single founder.
- ### 2. How do the practices of major religions shape cultural and social norms in different societies?
- 1. Worship and Rituals:** Religious **rituals** like Christian **prayer**, Muslim **Salah**, and Hindu **puja** shape daily life.
 - 2. Moral Values:** Religious **doctrines** influence laws and social values, such as Islamic **Zakat** (charity) or Jewish **Sabbath** traditions.
 - 3. Holidays & Pilgrimage:** Christian **Christmas**, Muslim **Hajj**, Hindu **Diwali**, and Jewish **Yom Kippur** shape cultural traditions.
- ### 3. How have the major religions evolved over time, and what factors have influenced these changes?
- 1. Historical events** like the Protestant Reformation reshaped Christianity.
 - 2. Colonialism and globalization** influenced the spread and adaptation of religions.
 - 3. Modernization** led to the rise of secularism and interfaith dialogue.
- ### 4. How do different religions view the concept of religious freedom?
1. Christianity and Islam historically had periods of **religious tolerance and persecution**.
 2. Hinduism and Buddhism emphasize **personal spiritual journeys** and tend to be more pluralistic.
 3. Judaism has historically sought religious freedom due to persecution.
- ### 5. What are the major challenges to religious freedom in various parts of the world?
- 1. Religious Persecution** (e.g., discrimination against minorities in some countries).
 - 2. Government restrictions** (e.g., laws against converting in some Hindu-majority nations).
 - 3. Social intolerance** (e.g., conflicts between religious sects).
- ### 6. How do governments balance protecting religious freedom with maintaining social order?
1. By enforcing **secular laws** while allowing religious expression.
 2. Some governments **restrict religious symbols** in public spaces to promote neutrality.
- ### 7. What role does interfaith dialogue play in promoting religious freedom?
1. It fosters **tolerance** and reduces religious conflicts.
 2. Helps in creating **laws** that protect minority religions.
- ### 8. How do historical contexts influence current attitudes toward religious freedom?

1. Countries with a history of **religious conflict** may have **stricter laws** on religious expression.
 2. Former colonies often have **diverse religious traditions** due to past rulers' influence.
-

Task 3: Reading

(b) True or False

1. **True** – Christianity originated in the 1st century CE in Palestine.
2. **False** – The Bible consists of the **Old and New Testaments**.
3. **True** – Islam was founded in the 7th century CE in Mecca.
4. **True** – The Five Pillars of Islam include fasting during Ramadan.
5. **False** – Hinduism **has no single founder**.
6. **True** – The Vedas and Upanishads are sacred texts in Hinduism.
7. **False** – Buddhism was founded by **Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)**, not Muhammad.
8. **True** – The Four Noble Truths are a central teaching in Buddhism.
9. **False** – Judaism is **monotheistic**, not polytheistic.
10. **True** – The Torah is an important part of the Hebrew Bible.

(c) Complete the Sentences

1. Christianity originated in the **1st** century CE in **Palestine**.
 2. The three main branches of Christianity are **Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy**.
 3. The Five Pillars of Islam include Shahada, Salah, Zakat, **Sawm (fasting during Ramadan)**, and **Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)**.
 4. The holy book of Islam is the **Quran**.
 5. Hinduism emphasizes key concepts such as dharma, karma, and **samsara**, with the ultimate goal being **moksha**.
 6. Buddhism was founded by **Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)** in the **5th century BCE**.
 7. The two major branches of Buddhism are **Theravada** and **Mahayana**.
 8. Judaism is based on the covenant between God and **Abraham** and follows the sacred text called **the Torah**.
 9. The major branches of Judaism include Orthodox, **Conservative**, and **Reform**.
 10. Christianity has significantly influenced **Western** civilization.
-

Task 4: Discussion Questions

1. **Where and when did Christianity originate?**

In **1st century CE Palestine**, based on the teachings of **Jesus Christ**.

2. **What is the holy book of Christianity, and what are its two main parts?**

The **Bible**, consisting of the **Old Testament** and the **New Testament**.

3. **What are the Five Pillars of Islam?**

Shahada (Faith), Salah (Prayer), Zakat (Charity), Sawm (Fasting), and Hajj (Pilgrimage).

4. **Who is considered the final prophet in Islam?**

Prophet Muhammad.

5. **What are some key concepts in Hinduism, and what is the ultimate goal?**

Dharma (duty), karma (action and consequence), samsara (rebirth), and moksha (liberation from rebirth).

6. **Who founded Buddhism, and what are its core teachings?**

Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), and its core teachings are the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

7. **What are the major branches of Buddhism, and how do they differ?**

Theravada (focuses on early teachings) and **Mahayana** (more inclusive, Bodhisattva path).

8. **What is the significance of the Torah in Judaism?**

The **Torah** is the **foundation of Jewish law and tradition**, containing the laws given to Moses.

9. **What are the major branches of Judaism?**

Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism.

10. **How has Christianity influenced Western civilization?**

Shaped laws, culture, art, and education. Many Western moral values and traditions stem from Christian teachings.

Lesson 7

Task 1b: Vocabulary Questions

1. A decent society is characterized by **justice, fairness, transparency, dignity, and empathy**, ensuring well-being for all.
2. **Fairness and justice** create trust, social harmony, and equal opportunities, making a society stable and functional.
3. A society can function without **altruism**, but it may lack **compassion and humanitarian values**, reducing social cohesion.
4. Some argue that **true altruism** is impossible because acts of kindness often have indirect benefits, like **social approval or personal satisfaction**.
5. Cultural values shape **altruism** by emphasizing **reciprocal relationships, social responsibility, and ethical behavior**.
6. **Governments and institutions** ensure justice, equity, and welfare through laws, policies, and social programs.
7. **Empathy** fosters **compassion, cooperation, and mutual understanding**, reducing conflicts and promoting social welfare.

8. **Altruism can be taught** through education, role models, and social norms that promote ethical behavior.
-

Task 3b: True or False

1. **True**
 2. **False** – The text suggests altruism can have personal benefits but does not claim it is never selfless.
 3. **True**
 4. **False** – The text presents them as examples of altruistic individuals, not as people seeking personal gain.
 5. **False** – The text states that transparent and ethical institutions are essential for a decent society.
 6. **True**
 7. **True**
 8. **False** – The text suggests altruism is encouraged in community-focused societies but does not claim it is exclusive to them.
 9. **True**
 10. **True**
-

Task 3c: Fill in the Blanks

1. well-being of all its members.
 2. education, healthcare.
 3. expectation of personal gain.
 4. social approval, personal satisfaction.
 5. kin selection, reciprocal altruism.
 6. no apparent reward.
 7. cultural values, education.
 8. public service, welfare programs, ethical leadership.
 9. justice, equity, compassion.
 10. empathy, duty.
-

Task 4: Discussion Answers

1. **Justice, fairness, transparency, dignity, empathy, and social responsibility** define a decent society.
2. Institutions ensure **fairness, transparency, and ethical governance**, protecting rights and welfare.
3. Altruism is **selfless concern for others**, sometimes with indirect benefits.
4. Some argue **true altruism is a myth** because acts of kindness often bring **social or emotional rewards**.
5. Evolutionary biology sees **altruism** as a survival mechanism through **kin selection and reciprocal aid**.
6. **Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr.**, and anonymous volunteers are historical examples.
7. Societies promote altruism through **education, cultural values, and welfare programs**.

8. Governments encourage altruism via **incentives for public service, social policies, and ethical leadership**.
 9. The text suggests **pure altruism is rare** but does not diminish the value of altruistic acts.
 10. Altruism remains **essential for a decent society**, promoting human dignity and well-being.
-

Task 5: Video Questions

1. The **veil of ignorance** is a thought experiment where people design a just society without knowing their own social position.
2. Rawls' fair democracy emphasizes **equal rights, opportunities, and fair distribution of resources**.
3. **Primary goods** are basic necessities like **freedom, education, and economic resources** that all should have.
4. **Fair equality of opportunity** means **people with similar talents should have equal chances to succeed**.
5. The **difference principle** allows inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged.
6. **Property-owning democracy** ensures fair wealth distribution through **public policies and economic structures**.
7. A fair society must ensure **justice, equity, and opportunity for all**, minimizing inequality.

Audio and Video Scripts

Lesson 1

What makes young people commit crimes?

1

It's no surprise I'm in prison. I'm just like my dad. He was a big man, and he had a very quick temper. He was violent at home, always hitting me and my mum, and he was violent outside the home, always picking up arguments and fighting with people, so he was in and out of prison all the time. I'm the same. That's why I'm in jail at the moment. Me and some mates, we went to a club, someone said something I didn't like and I hit him. Really hard, so he was badly injured. The police came and took me off to the station.

In the corridor of the police station, I did something really stupid. I lost my temper with a police officer and attacked him. I'm sorry now, of course. If I had learned to control my temper when I was a kid, I wouldn't have hit the police officer. You just can't do that. In prison, I attend a class on how to control your anger. I'm learning a lot from the instructor and the other people in the class. I think it'll be useful when I come out of prison, I'll be able to control my temper better. Actually, all I want to do now is keep out of trouble, settle down and lead a normal life.

2

The newspapers called me 'Mr. Big'. I liked that, but I didn't like the sentence I got, 20 years in prison. I didn't expect to be caught. You see, I plan crimes, but I don't actually commit them. I get other people to do that. I know I'm very intelligent - everyone says so. If I had wanted to, I could have become a top businessman or maybe a lawyer. But early on, I decided to follow a life of crime. It was an easy way to make money. And later, I started planning really big robberies. That's what I really enjoyed. I organised some big robberies, and we made lots of money. But then I planned a robbery at the airport - gold bullion, worth over £10 million. Unfortunately, my team of robbers made a mistake. They stayed at the airport too long. If they had done the job more quickly, they would have left in time, and the police wouldn't have caught them. One of my gang gave my name to the police, and I was arrested. I'm 51 now. When I get out of prison, I'll buy a villa in Spain and retire there. Plenty of my friends are already over there.

3

My parents didn't have much money, but they were good to me. We lived in a poor area in Glasgow. A lot of people were unemployed, and the crime rate was high. When I was about eight years old, I joined a gang of girls, and we used to go shoplifting - you know, stealing things from shops and stores. It was great fun until we got caught. I'll never forget my mum's face when the police officer came to our door. Then, when I was a teenager, I started stealing from houses, and when they caught me, I was sent to Reform School - that's where they put young people who commit crimes. When I came out, I couldn't get a job and I was unemployed for over a year. So, what choice did I have? If I hadn't been unemployed, I wouldn't have started robbing cash machines. I was sent to prison for two years. I'm 21 now, and I don't want to go back to prison. I think I've been so unlucky in my life. If I had lived in a different area, I wouldn't have become a criminal. And, I might have tried harder if I hadn't been unemployed. So, my life would have been totally different. I would have studied at night school if I had found a good job, and got some qualifications. Anyway, now I'm going to move out of the area and make a new start somewhere else.

Lesson 2

The Problem of Evil Is God Good – Philosophy of Religion Academy 4 Social Change

Academy for Social Change presents The Problem of Evil. There's a popular dinnertime prayer that goes, God is good, God is great, let us thank him for our food. By his hands we may be fed, give us, Lord, our daily bread.

According to this prayer, God is an omnibenevolent being that provides his creations with resources for survival. But wait, not everyone has food. In America and around the world, millions are without proper nourishment.

How can God be good if there are so many people starving? Philosophers typically identify three divine attributes of the Christian God. Omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence. The existence of evils, such as a lack of food, seems to threaten one of these attributes.

If God is good and all-knowing, but there is evil in the world, then he must not have the power to stop it. If God is good and all-powerful, but there is evil in the world, then he must not know that evil is happening. However, if God is both all-knowing and all-powerful, but there is evil in the world, then God must not be completely good.

Accepting any of these conditions leads theists into an inescapable and intolerable problem. If God is not omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent, then he lacks his three essential properties and wouldn't be God. The problem of evil requires theists to explain why there is evil in the world, while still retaining God's divine attributes.

Although he was not the first person to talk about the problem of evil, it's enlightening to consider how 17th century German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz imagined God's creation of the world. Leibniz believed that since God is omnipotent, he had the power to create any possible world. Since he is omniscient, he knew what every possible world contained, and since he is omnibenevolent, he chose to create the best of all possible worlds.

It was as if God flipped through a catalogue of worlds and actualised the very best one, which of course, is the one in which we live. There would be no possible reason for God to make a less-than-maximally-optimal world if he is all-knowing, all-powerful, and perfectly good. However, it's probably disheartening to think that our world is the best of all possible worlds.

Surely, there must be something better than this, a world without the looming threat of climate change perhaps, or at least one where you can eat as much cake as you want without getting sick. Furthermore, some things in the world, like cancer, genocide, or natural disasters, are not just non-optimal, they're simply evil. If God exists and has the three divine attributes, he knows of the evil in the world, he can stop it, and he will stop it.

Yet, there is still evil in the world. Atheists argue that there is a logical contradiction between the existence of God and the existence of evil, therefore, God does not exist. Theists must respond to the problem of evil by arguing that the existence of God and the existence of evil are compatible.

To do this, theists simply typically use the free will defence to reconcile God with evil, which argues that evil exists on account of human beings making bad choices due to their free will. Human freedom is better than the absence of evil in the world. Therefore, when God was chosen to create a world, he prioritised free will instead of perfect goodness.

Human freedom, but not the idea of God, is incompatible with the absence of evil. Although the free will response may cover God's allowance of human evils, it says nothing concerning natural evils. What is the purpose of tornadoes, hurricanes, and drafts? Human free will has nothing to do with these occurrences.

A broader reply to the problem of evil that can account for the existence of natural evils is that some evil is necessary for God's ultimate plan. For example, consider that your ultimate goal is to get a good grade on a test. However, in order to earn a good grade, you must endure the plan of studying.

A good grade on the test is more important than the pain of studying, so you study. In the same way, God must allow some evil in order to achieve his ultimate goal. The problem of evil continues to trouble theologians.

If the appeal to the greater good explains the existence of evil, one must wonder if our present world is also the greatest good, or as Leibniz said, the best of all possible worlds. Yet, it certainly seems that the world might be a tiny bit better without disrupting the entire chain of justifying evils. Did a loved one really have to get sick in order for God to actualise his greatest good? The theists would argue, however, that the necessity of each evil is for God to know and for us to trust and find out.

Now it's your turn to think further. Do you think it is plausible that this world is the best world that can exist?

Lesson 3

Bullied kids at higher risk of mental health problems

1st May, 2015

A new study says that children who are bullied by other kids could have mental health problems when they are adults. The study found that bullied children are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety in adulthood than children who suffered child abuse. Researchers found that the children who experienced only bullying were 1.6 times more likely than those who experienced only child abuse to have mental health problems or to have tried to harm themselves. Researcher Dr Dieter Wolke said society often thinks bullying is a normal part of childhood. He said: "Being bullied is not a harmless rite of passage or an inevitable part of growing up; it has serious long-term consequences." Bullying is a big problem around the world. In Britain, about 16,000 children stay at home and do not go to school because they are often bullied. Their exam results suffer and so do their chances of going to university or getting good jobs. Bullied children may also suffer from other problems. They can have serious illnesses, an inability to focus on one thing for a long time, poor social skills, and have trouble holding down a job or staying in a relationship. Catherine Bradshaw, an expert on youth violence, said parents and schools needed to do more about recognising and preventing bullying. She said parents needed to teach their children how to communicate well with other children.

Sources: LiveScience.com / MedicalDaily / HealthLine.com

Lesson 4

Top 10 Happiest Countries In The World

Before we begin, we publish new videos every day, so be sure to subscribe for more great content. For this list, we're breaking down the happiest countries in the world according to the 2018 instalment of the annual United Nations World Happiness Report, which judges countries based on factors like health, freedom, income and education. Of course, people in Australia are happy; it's basically summer all year round.

Okay, that may play a part, but Australians are probably more excited by the fact that their country is incredibly large but sparsely populated, loaded with great civic programmes and filled with, for the most part, smiling faces that are more likely to say g'day mate and invite you in for a pint than try to mug you. Sure, there are a lot of things that can kill you there, but there are also koalas, wombats and kangaroos. That evens things out in our books.

The first of multiple Nordic countries to crack our list, Sweden has been loitering on the United Nations World Happiness Report for years. The list ranks countries on a slew of factors, such as freedom, good governance, health and income. So after that quick summary, you should be dying to visit Sweden.

The country is loaded with a healthy mixture of bustling metropolises and scenic views, making it a tourist's dream location. Okay, it's a little pricey, but when healthcare and university are practically free, the scales tend to balance themselves out. This may come as a surprise, but New Zealand is much more than just a stand-in for Middle Earth.

In fact, the country has managed to score a spot on the World Happiness Report multiple times. Yes, it's a little isolated, but isn't that kind of a good thing? It's managed to keep the country away from many of the problems that have plagued other parts of the world for years, such as overcrowding and pollution. Tack on the fact that it's home to not just some of the most epic vistas known to man, but also an incredibly high average income, and you have one sweet place to live.

Number 7, Canada. Obviously, people are happy in Canada; that's where WatchMojo's head office is located. Okay, that's not the only cool thing the country has going for it.

Healthcare is free, coffee is everywhere, and people are so darn polite that they apologise to you whenever you do something to them. We'll admit it gets pretty cold in certain areas, but that's just another excuse to have a little fun in the snow, something Canadians love to do. National parks are all over the place, the quality of life is stupendous, and the average income is roughly \$49,000.

What's not to like? Number 6, the Netherlands. Cue the weed jokes. The Netherlands is much, much more than just a safe haven for marijuana smokers.

The country has the 6th highest average income in the world, one of the lowest murder rates, and the highest rates of physical activity. That last one probably has a lot to do with the fact that riding bicycles is the go-to means of transportation. However, one thing that definitely puts a smile on the faces of the country's citizens day in and day out is the sheer beauty of the place.

From scenic canals to rustic villages, the Netherlands is stacked when it comes to awesome things to look at. Number 5, Switzerland. The country came in at number 5 in 2018, but Switzerland has topped the list of the world's happiest countries before, and while it may have fallen a couple of spots, it is still an incredible place to call home.

A stable economy, a plethora of free civic services, and an insanely high average income make Switzerland one of Europe's best countries. All that freedom is perfect for a place that's home to some of the most beautiful mountains on the planet, and boy did the Swiss make the most of it, paragliding and skiing all year long. Number 4, Iceland.

Despite its fear-inducing name, Iceland is an exceptionally nice place to live. Much like New Zealand, it benefits from its isolation, but the fact that it's an island is not the only reason why it's one of the happiest countries on Earth. Iceland is home to universal healthcare, stunning views, and an average annual income of \$73,000.

Ever since it got slammed in the financial crash of 2008, the country has been doing incredibly well. It apparently, quote, brought the communities closer together, while also bringing in a tonne of tourism. Too bad that didn't happen everywhere else.

Number 3, Denmark. Nordic country alert, Denmark is consistently ranked among the happiest countries in the world. In fact, in 2017, it was the happiest, and while we'd love to say it's due to their numerous free public services, we think it has more to do with them being surrounded by other super happy countries.

From the Netherlands and Finland to Sweden and Norway, Denmark is ensconced in happiness. But let's not give all the praise to its neighbours. The Nordic country is home to fantastic healthcare, low poverty rates, and a great sense of community.

Basically, it's a utopia. Number 2, Norway. Yes, we are talking about another Nordic country, but don't worry, they totally deserve the praise.

Norway does not charge its citizens tuition fees in order to receive a higher education, nor does it charge for healthcare. Both are free. It also boasts one of the world's lowest murder rates, and one of the highest average incomes.

That definitely comes in handy in a place overflowing with breathtaking mountains to climb and beautiful lakes to swim in. It should come as no surprise that Norway has stolen the top spot on the UN's list of the world's happiest countries before. Number 1, Finland.

Yes, it's true. The Finns are the happiest people on the planet. Finland has been making it onto the World Happiness Report since its inception, and it probably has a lot to do with the fact that it's clean, safe, and full of friendly people.

The latter is no doubt tied to the wickedly awesome statistic that there are only 5.5 million people living there, in more than 3 million saunas. That's roughly half a sauna per person. Oh, and don't forget that there are no tuition fees in Finland, and that healthcare is 100% free.

What's more, like many of the countries that made this list, immigrants to Finland are pretty much as happy as those born there. Feel like moving yet?

Lesson 5

The Meaning of Life

People nowadays often say, sometimes in a sad way, other times more aggressively and cynically, that life just has no meaning. Two reasons are often given for this. The first has to do with religion.

Once upon a time, so the story goes, life had a clear meaning, given to us by God. It was about worshipping him. But as religious belief has declined, not only has God supposedly died, but along with him, the meaning he once guaranteed.

Modern science is the second cause of the current crisis of meaning. Scientists tell us that life, which emerged from a random interplay of chemicals and gases, does have meaning, but it's of a rather bleak, relentless and narrow sort. For humans, as for all other living things, like amoeba, the meaning of life is survival and the propagation of one's genetic material.

It sounds very true and at the same time distinctly futile and melancholy. Here, we want to argue as follows. To wonder about the meaning of life is an extremely important activity.

Life does have substantial meaning and there are, in fact, a range of practical steps we can take to ensure we end up leading lives of maximal meaningfulness. We should start by saying that there is no meaning in life outside of that which we can find by ourselves as a species. There isn't any kind of objective meaning written in the stars, in a holy book or in sequences of DNA.

What seems to prompt people to complain that life lacks meaning are particular varieties of unhappiness. Let's consider some central examples. You're in a relationship, but the intensity you experienced at the start is long gone.

You don't seem to talk about anything important anymore or share vulnerable feelings and ideas. It feels, as you put it, meaningless. Or else you're single and though you have many friends, every time you see them, the conversation seems shallow and trivial.

Or you're at university, studying for a degree. You signed up for the course in part because you often feel confused about who you are and what you want. You thought that reading books and going to lectures would shine a light on things, but the topics are dull and disconnected from your confusion.

You complain that it feels meaningless. Or you're working in a large profitable company and earning a decent sum every week, but the work doesn't seem in the grander scheme important, by which you mean two things, that you don't seem to be making any great difference to anyone's life and also that there's no profound part of you that you're able to bring to or incorporate in your work. It might as well be done by a robot.

From these strands, we can start to extrapolate a theory of meaning. Meaning is to be found in three activities in particular, communication, understanding and service. Let's look at communication first.

We are, by nature, isolated creatures and it appears that some of our most meaningful moments are to do with instances of connection, with a lover, for example, when we reveal our intimate physical and psychological selves or when we form friendships where substantial truths about our respective lives can be shared or on a journey to a new country, when we strike up a conversation with a stranger and feel a thrilling sense of victory over linguistic and cultural barriers. Then there's the meaning that emerges via understanding. This is about the pleasure that can be felt whenever we correct confusion and puzzlement about ourselves or the world.

We might be scientific researchers or economists, poets or patients in psychotherapy. The pleasure of our activities stems from a common ability to map and make sense of what was once painfully unfamiliar and strange. Thirdly, there's service.

One of the most meaningful things we can do is to serve other people, to try to improve their lives either by alleviating sources of suffering or else by generating new sources of pleasure. That includes medical professionals but also people who bake cakes, write songs or dance for a living. We're often told to think of ourselves as inherently selfish but some of the most meaningful moments come when we can transcend our egos and put ourselves at the service of others or the planet.

One should add that in order for service to feel meaningful, it has to be in sync with our own native sincere interests. It's a case of knowing enough about ourselves to find a particular path to service. Armed with such ideas, we can move towards defining nothing less than the meaning of life.

The meaning of life is to pursue human flourishing through communication, understanding and

service. We may not have meaningful lives yet but it's central to affirm that the concept of a meaningful life is eminently plausible and that it comprises elements that can be clearly named and gradually fought for.

Lesson 6

All Major Religions Explained in 6 Minutes: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism

Five of the world's most widespread and influential religions are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. And most people only know a little about the religion they may have been born into. But I think it's important to know the basics of something that, for many people, defines their life and informs their morals.

These will be quick descriptions so they're not meant to be comprehensive, but to know something about them is better than knowing nothing. So, here's a quick summary of each in alphabetical order. Buddhism.

The chief problem in life is suffering, and it is caused by desiring worldly things. Suffering can be eliminated by getting rid of material desires. This will help you realise nirvana, the state of bliss characterised by freedom from rebirths.

Buddhists do not worship any god. Buddha was not a god, but a person who realised spiritual enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Most Buddhists believe a person has countless rebirths, which leads to suffering.

To end these rebirths, the goal of a Buddhist is to purify one's heart and let go of all yearning and sensual desires and material attachment. Through practise meditation, a person may reach nirvana, the ridding of desires and freedom from reincarnations. Christianity.

God is a loving god who offers everyone a personal relationship with him now in this life. All people are born in sin. God sent his son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins.

Faith in Jesus Christ can deliver you from your sins. Biblically speaking, Christians are those who are forgiven of their sins and who have entered a personal relationship with the almighty God through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus was tortured and gave his life on the cross at the crucifixion.

Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, the resurrection, and proved his deity. The holy book of Christianity is the Bible, consisting of the Jewish Old Testament and New Testament. Followers of Jesus regard the bible as God's written message to humankind, in addition to being a historical record of Jesus's life and miracles.

Hinduism. The world is an illusion and the goal of humanity is to free the soul from constant rebirth and reincarnations and to be absorbed into the cosmic consciousness called Brahman. Central to Hindu belief is the concept of karma, where past deeds are responsible for present circumstances.

If a person's behaviour in the past or in a past life was evil, they might justifiably experience hardships in this life. Hindus believe that godly consciousness is present in everyone and everything. So, if God is present in everything, then to a Hindu, worshipping an idol in the form of deities, gurus, rivers, or animals is equivalent.

In its truest sense, Hinduism is monotheistic, but it is regarded by many as polytheistic because of the various representations of the one Brahman that Hindus might worship. Most Hindus agree that the root of their philosophy comes from a set of books called the Vedas, which translates to books of knowledge. Islam.

Life is to be lived in subordination to God's will. Devotional life centres on the confession that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Allah is the sole and sovereign ruler of the evil.

Everything that happens is Allah's will. Muhammad is considered the last prophet and his words and lifestyle are to be followed and emulated. To be a Muslim, one must follow five religious duties.

One, repeat a creed about Allah and Muhammad. Two, recite certain prayers in Arabic five times a day. Three, give to the needy.

Four, one month each year, fast from food, drink, sex, smoking, from sunrise to sunset. Pilgrimage once in your lifetime to worship at the shrine in Mecca in Saudi Arabia. At death based on one's faithfulness to these duties, a Muslim hopes to enter paradise.

If not, they will be eternally punished in hell. The scripture of Islam is called the Quran. God's word dictated to Muhammad over a period of 22 years.

Judaism. There is a single god who not only created the universe but who continues to rule it. Jews are the chosen people of God with whom he has a covenant to set an example of holiness and ethical behaviour in the world.

Judaism establishes a relationship between Israelites, the children of Israel, and God. Judaism says that death is not the end of the world and that a new world is yet to come into existence. The Ten Commandments are the basis for serving God and for relating to others.

Jews also follow the Talmud, a collection of rabbinical interpretations of the Torah. Salvation comes by following God's will and fulfilling his commandments. Sabbath observance is the foundation of Jewish worship.

The 24 hours from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday are designated as a time of worship and rest from work. Two major events in the 20th century have influenced the Jews. The holocaust, the Nazis' destruction of millions of Jews, and Israel's reconstitution in 1948.

The Torah or Old Testament, the five books of the Hebrew Bible, form the most important constituent. Hindus acknowledge the one Brahman who can manifest in multitudes of gods and goddesses. Buddhists say there is no deity.

Muslims believe in a powerful but unknowable God. Christians believe in a loving God who created us to know him. Jews believe God continues to rule the world and has a covenant with them to keep his laws in the world in exchange for the good deeds he does.

What do these religions have in common? They all require faith that its teachings and practises will result in everlasting happiness for the human soul. In that sense, all these five religions serve a common purpose and have a common goal in mind. So you have to ask the question, if every pilgrim is after the same result for the human soul, why do we all keep fighting on our way to get there?

Lesson 7

Picture a perfect society. What does it look like?

Joseph Lacey

1. You and a group of strangers have been gathered to design a just society. And to ensure none of

you rigged the system to benefit yourself, you've all been placed under a veil of ignorance. Under this veil, you're blind to certain information about each other and yourselves.

You don't know your age or sex, your profession or natural talents, how much wealth you have, or your religious or philosophical beliefs. So according to political philosopher John Rawls, you should be motivated to consider what's most fair for all your society's citizens. When Rawls published this thought experiment, known as the Original Position, in his 1971 opus, *A Theory of Justice*, he was trying to identify principles to support a realistic utopia.

This visionary society would ensure everyone had the resources and opportunities required to freely pursue their goals. Rawls was confident these principles could only be realised in a democracy. But he felt existing social structures weren't the right path forward.

He believed free market philosophies and welfare capitalism led to unjust accumulations of wealth and power. And he saw models inspired by Marxism as extreme reactions to capitalism's flaws, with unrealistic assumptions about economies and human nature. So, Rawls proposed a new kind of democracy, one where no person was considered less valuable than another, and all citizens could live according to their own wills.

And while the details of this vision can seem radical, Rawls believed that under the veil of ignorance, free and equal people would unanimously agree to his fair society. So let's play out this thought experiment. The first step in designing our society is deciding how to distribute what Rawls called primary goods.

These include the basic liberties, opportunities, and wealth necessary for pursuing most goals. Rawls believed our justice architects would agree to an equal scheme of basic liberties for all, including freedom of speech and the freedom to associate with whoever they choose. After all, without the freedom to pursue one's goals, resources like wealth and job opportunities lose their value.

Citizens would also have equal political liberties to vote and run for office. Next, Rawls believes the architects would establish what he calls fair equality of opportunity. This means society must be arranged so no one is unfairly deprived of the resources necessary to compete for valued jobs and other positions.

However, after agreeing upon equality of liberty and opportunity, Rawls believes our justice architects would see the benefits of allowing for some wealth inequalities. For example, greater profits can incentivise innovation, productivity, and investment. But Rawls also believes our designers would want to limit differences in wealth with what he calls the difference principle.

This states that wealth inequalities are only acceptable when they benefit the least advantaged citizens, making them better off than they'd be under conditions of strict equality. These tenets form the foundation of Rawls' just society, and he believed they could be achieved through what he called property-owning democracy. This model would guarantee equal access to education and healthcare, and rely on government regulation to ensure a just distribution of property and wealth.

Rawls knew fully adopting this approach would require major changes for existing democracies, but he believed his principles could at least inspire some immediate improvements. For example, Rawls advocated for limits on campaign spending and political contributions to reduce the influence of wealth on politics. He also endorsed policies fighting discrimination and generous social safety nets like unemployment benefits to ensure a good situation for the worst off.

Some philosophers have critiqued Rawls' work. Ronald Dworkin argues that the difference principle

unfairly tethers society's progress to the status of the worst off, even if they're in that position because of their own choices. Meanwhile, Martha Neusbaum believes Rawls' thought experiment overlooks real-life particulars.

For example, the special needs of a person with disabilities might not be satisfied by the standard distribution of primary goods. And more generally, some argue the architects in Rawls' harmonious thought experiment are simply too different from the competing interests in building real societies. But since its publication, this thought experiment has inspired some very real consequences.

Rawls' rallying cry for social and political equality and a more justly regulated form of capitalism has impacted countless political philosophers, activists, and policymakers. And this new school of thought about justice continues to challenge people to look past their biases and consider what a fairer society might truly look like.

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