

# Argument Essay #1: The Good vs. The Right

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**Due** Saturday by 11:59pm      **Points** 100      **Submitting** a file upload

Before doing this assignment, make sure to review the two Moral Frameworks The Good-- which is Utilitarianism (Morality based on Good or Bad Consequences)-- and The Right-- which is Deontology (Morality based on Duty and Rights). **DO NOT USE OUTSIDE SOURCES FOR THIS ESSAY.** In addition read, "[Appendix B: How to Write a Philosophy Paper](#)" pp. 415-424.

**Objective of this assignment:** To put theories into conversation with each other, in order to appreciate that:

- Ideas are not isolated or made in a vacuum, but are created by real people grappling with real issues in conversation with others.
- Disagreements aren't just matters of opinion, but rather can reveal underlying value frameworks. For instance, by analyzing the underlying frameworks of Mill's Utilitarianism and Kant's Deontology, we see that Mill and Kant don't merely disagree with what is moral or not, but they also seem to THINK about morality differently.

This matters because it allows us to see that perspectives that are unfamiliar (or that we disagree with) are often nevertheless rooted in value systems that can be shared or at least understood. Recognizing underlying value systems is one of the first and best ways to move forward when people who disagree deeply are at an impasse.

## Other Objectives:

- Learn to express your ideas clearly and concisely in writing.
- Learn the argument essay format.
- Practice critical thinking by evaluating moral theories and constructing your own argument.

## Assignment Instructions:

For this assignment we will use a thought experiment like the Trolley problem that you read on [philosophyexperiments.com](http://philosophyexperiments.com) and discussed in Weekly Discussion #7.

*Suppose you are a train conductor on a runaway train. The train heads straight for five men who will not have time to get out of the way, and your train will kill them. But! You notice there is a track going to the right, and you have just enough time to pull the lever and turn onto that track. There is one person on that track who will die just as assuredly as the five would if you stayed on their track. Should you head to the right?*

You will write an essay of approximately 1000 words which describes what you think John Stuart Mill would recommend that you do in the train scenario, what Kant would do in the train scenario, and what you would do in the train scenario and why you would choose to do that. This paper requires that you use in-text citations for any quotations you include and that you create a references page citing all of the references that you quote in the paper. You may use MLA style citations ([a guide to these can be found here](#)) or APA style citations ([a guide to these can be found here](#)). **DO NOT USE OUTSIDE SOURCES FOR THIS PAPER.** Your textbook and the excerpts from Kant and Mill in your text should be sufficient.

Use the following guidelines to structure your paper. This is a kind of fill-in-the-blanks guide to writing this paper. Include the sentences in bold italic word for word in your paper. You will need several of your own sentences in addition to those provided below.

## Introduction (1 or 2 paragraphs):

Your introductory paragraph should have the following (not necessarily in this order).

A. Thesis statement- You should state what you think is best to do in the situation described by the scenario. ***I think I should \_\_\_\_\_.*** Fill in the blank with either ***divert the train to the right killing one person*** or ***not divert the train to the right even though this will result in the death of five people.***

B. Background for the thesis. This should include mentioning that you will be evaluating what Utilitarianism and Deontology say about this thought experiment and a brief description of the thought experiment.

C. Plan of the Paper. It might help your reader to tell them how your paper will go. Something like: "I will begin by describing what John Stuart Mill would have me do in this situation. Next, I will contrast that with what Kant's moral theory

#### Body Part I:

- **John Stuart Mill would probably want me to \_\_\_\_\_,**
- **because** [explain one or more of the primary principles of Utilitarianism and how he would apply it to the train scenario to decide what I should do].
- **As he says,** "[pick a quote from Mill's text that illustrates that specific principle]" (cite it too) and explain what the quote means in your own words.
- **His reasoning here plants him firmly within the Moral Framework called "The \_\_\_\_\_," where morality is judged by looking at \_\_\_\_\_**

[Hint: the first blank should be either "good" or "right" and the second blank ought to be "consequences of our actions" or "what we have a duty to do."]

#### Body Part II:

- **On the other hand, Kant reasons from framework called "The \_\_\_\_\_," where morality is measured by considering \_\_\_\_\_**
- [Hint: the first blank above should be either "good" or "right" and the second blank ought to be "consequences of our actions" or "what we have a duty to do."]
- **Thus, he would most likely tell me to \_\_\_\_\_**
- **For one thing, Kant's moral theory requires us to follow the Categorical Imperative:** [pick one of the formulations of the CI and offer Kant's statement of it]" (cite it too).
- **What Kant means here is \_\_\_\_\_**
- **So, you can see that he is primarily concerned about \_\_\_\_\_ and he would probably conclude that I should \_\_\_\_\_.**

#### Body Part III:

- **Personally, I think I should \_\_\_\_\_**
- **Even though I might share some of the values underlying \_\_\_\_\_'s position, like \_\_\_\_\_,**
- **I nevertheless would decide to \_\_\_\_\_**
- **because \_\_\_\_\_.**
- **My reasoning here seems to fall under the framework called "The \_\_\_\_\_" (or neither) because I am primarily focused on \_\_\_\_\_**

#### Argument Essay Rubric

| Criteria                                               | Ratings                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                                        | Pts      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Addresses the Question                                 | 20.0 pts<br>Thoroughly addresses all parts of the essay question.                                                 | 14.0 pts<br>Addresses most aspects of the essay question.                          | 8.0 pts<br>Addresses parts of the essay question.                                                       | 0.0 pts<br>Fails to address any parts of the essay question.           | 20.0 pts |
| Explanation of the philosopher's position and argument | 20.0 pts<br>Accurately characterizes the philosopher's position and the argument made in its favor.               | 14.0 pts<br>Mostly accurate in describing the philosopher's position and argument. | 8.0 pts<br>Tries to be accurate, but shows some confusion.                                              | 0.0 pts<br>Entirely inaccurate.                                        | 20.0 pts |
| Student's Argument                                     | 20.0 pts<br>Students takes a clear position and defends it with an argument. Avoids clear fallacies in reasoning. | 14.0 pts<br>Student takes clear position and supports it with reasons.             | 8.0 pts<br>Student takes a clear position, but does not support it well with arguments.                 | 0.0 pts<br>Student's position is unclear and not supported by reasons. | 20.0 pts |
| Organization and Clarity                               | 20.0 pts<br>Extremely well organized, clear and concise through ought.                                            | 14.0 pts<br>Organized and clear.                                                   | 8.0 pts<br>Attempts organization, but unclear in places or missing elements such as a thesis statement. | 0.0 pts<br>Lacks organization/unclear                                  | 20.0 pts |
| Professionalism (Spelling, Grammar, and Citations)     | 20.0 pts<br>Reflects careful editing, includes citations and work's cited page.                                   | 14.0 pts<br>A few errors present, but they do not distract.                        | 8.0 pts<br>Several errors distract at times and/or missing citations.                                   | 0.0 pts<br>Errors throughout. Missing citations and work's cite page.  | 20.0 pts |
| Total Points: 100.0                                    |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                                        |          |