

Mill's Utilitarianism—Study Sheet

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- A. State the utilitarian ethical theory (a.k.a. the principle of utilitarianism).

An act is right just in case

- B. Explain what Mill means when he says that “rules of action ... must take their whole character and color from the end to which they are subservient.”

- C. By using an example, explain how utilitarianism is supposed to help us make everyday moral decisions. (Think here of the example that we provided in class. The example involved three options—A, B, and C—and, for each option, we drew a bar graph representing the resulting proportion of happiness to unhappiness.)

- D. How does Mill conceive of happiness and unhappiness? How does this compare to Aristotle's conception of happiness?

- E. Why is utilitarianism consequentialist?
- F. Why is utilitarianism hedonistic?
- G. Why is utilitarianism non-egoistic?
- H. Why is utilitarianism impartialist?
- I. What is the *first* objection to Mill's utilitarianism?
- J. How does Mill respond to the first objection?
 - 1. Mill first distinguishes two kinds of pleasure. Name those two kinds, and say in your own words what each kind is.
 - 2. How does Mill use the distinction in J1 to show that human beings are different from beasts? (Hint: Mill makes *two* points here.)
 - i.
 - ii.

3. Explain how, according to Mill, we can know that pleasures of the intellect are more desirable than physical pleasures. (Hint: Mill gives us *two* tests to use here.)
- i.
 - ii.
- K. The *second* objection to Mill's utilitarianism is aimed to show that pleasures of the intellect are *not* more desirable than physical pleasures. What *is* the second objection to Mill's utilitarianism?
- L. How does Mill respond to the second objection?
- M. We mentioned two other objections to Mill's utilitarianism in class, and called these objections the third and fourth objections. What is the *third* objection to Mill's utilitarianism?
- N. What is the *fourth* objection to Mill's utilitarianism?