

## Student activity: Using ethical frameworks

To use this worksheet (see next page), enter your own ethical issue, choose one or more of the ethical frameworks and have students answer the questions individually or in groups.

Before attempting this activity, it is recommended that you explore the ethical issue and ethical thinking with your students to establish a foundation for informed decision-making. It's also important to establish a classroom environment that supports students in sharing their perspectives and listening to others with respect.

Resources on the Hub that provide ideas and guidance for teaching ethics include:

- [Frameworks for ethical analysis](#)
- [Using ethical frameworks in the classroom](#)
- [Ethics and the curriculum](#)
- [Teaching ethics](#)

## Ethical issue

### Ethical approach: Consequentialism

Consequentialism is to do with the consequences of actions. Using this ethical approach, we weigh the benefits and harms resulting from our actions.

1. Who/what is affected by this issue?
2. What are the possible benefits for those affected?
3. What are the possible harms for those affected?
4. Which option(s) will produce the most good and least harm?
5. If one is harmed and another benefits, how do you decide who or what matters most?

### Ethical approach: Rights and responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities are closely related: the rights of one imply the responsibilities (or duties) of another to ensure those rights.

1. Who/what is affected by this issue?
2. Which groups have rights associated with this issue? What are their rights?
3. Do these same groups also have responsibilities? What are their responsibilities?
4. Do we value some rights more than others? Whose rights do we want to protect?
5. Do any codes, declarations and/or conventions relate to this issue?

## Ethical approach: Autonomy

Autonomy recognises the right to choose for yourself.

1. Who/what is affected by this issue?
2. What effects might my choice have on others?
3. What effects might others' choices have on me?
4. Does everyone have to do the same thing? Will this cause problems?
5. What is informed consent? Is it important here?

## Ethical approach: Virtue ethics

A virtue is something that the community accepts as being 'good', such as honesty, kindness and patience. Virtue ethics emphasise decisions that are in line with these characteristics.

1. Who/what is affected by this issue?
2. What qualities make someone a 'good' or virtuous person?
3. What decisions/actions in relation to this issue would make you a 'good' person?
4. What people would agree that these decisions/actions are 'good'?
5. What people would disagree that these decisions/actions are 'good'?

## Ethical approach: Multiple perspectives

Ethical decisions are viewed differently by different people. When considering an issue, it is important to explore a range of world views and respect diversity, for example, cultural, socioeconomic and spiritual or religious diversity.

1. Which groups have opinions about this issue? What are their opinions?
2. Why do groups of people think this way? Have they always thought this way?
3. Which groups voice opinions about this issue? (Not all groups that have an opinion voice them in a public forum.)
4. Do the opinions of all groups have equal weighting? How do you decide?
5. Can all the groups agree, and do they need to?

## Consider your options

Consider your answers to the earlier questions and list five possible responses (actions/decisions) to this issue. Rank these responses from 1 (the one you think is most important) to 5 (the one you think is the least important).

	Rank
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## Explain your decision

What do you think?
The reason for my decision is...
The ethical approach I have given priority to is...
Three reasons why others might not agree with me are...
The ethical approaches they may be using are...