



Utilitarianism: Worksheet

1. In your own words, explain the Greatest Happiness Principle.

2. You've just invented a new water filtration system that will allow millions of people to access clean water. According to utilitarianism, what should you do with your invention?
 - a. Auction it off to the water company who bids the most money so you can buy a boat.
 - b. Sell it to a company that will implement it widely and effectively for just enough money you need to survive.
 - c. Patent it and refuse to let anyone use the model unless you approve their character.
 - d. Give it to a town you visited in an underdeveloped country.

3. Explain your answer to question 2.

4. You agree to take your coworker's shift at work. Which of the following would a utilitarian consider to determine whether your action was good or bad?
 - a. You want more hours at your job.
 - b. Your coworker is your friend.
 - c. How you would spend your free time/money earned from working vs. your coworker.
 - d. Your coworker needs to drive several hours to the hospital to visit her sick relative and has taken shifts for you in the past.

5. Explain your answer to question 4.



6. It's the weekend! Which of the following activities would utilitarianism *not* recommend that you do?
 - a. Volunteer at your local food bank.
 - b. Donate your blood and one of your kidneys to strangers who need them.
 - c. Evaluate a list of charities to see which would be the most effective to donate to.
 - d. Take your family on a trip to the amusement park.

7. The answer to question 6 encapsulates which criticism of utilitarianism?
 - a. Lack of partiality to loved ones/personal desires
 - b. Violation of rights
 - c. Lack of justice
 - d. Sacrificing one life for many

8. You go to the grocery store and use a plastic bag instead of a reusable one. Why would a utilitarian condemn your action?
 - a. The convenience of using a plastic bag is less than the harm it will cause by ending up in a landfill or the ocean.
 - b. The convenience of using a plastic bag is more than the harm it will cause by ending up in a landfill or the ocean.
 - c. Even though your individual action is small, individual harmful actions add up.
 - d. Your use of plastic bags shows that you do not care about the environment.