Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

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TEST BANK

Readings in Moral Philosophy

FIRST EDITION

W. Derek Bowman

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE



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Production Manager: Ashley Horna
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Assistant Digital Media Editor: Ava Bramson

Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

CONTENTS

Preface	v
Part 1: Meta-Ethics	1
Part 2: Normative Ethics	14
Part 3: Applied Ethics	30
Gender Equality	30
Free Speech and Its Limits	37
Sexual Morality	43
Abortion	49
Euthanasia	56
The Death Penalty	61
The Criminalization of Drugs	66
Animal Rights	71
The Environment	78
War	83
Terror and Torture	88
Resistance	93
Racial Justice	99
Economic Justice	106
World Hunger and Foreign Aid	112

Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

PREFACE

The Test Bank is designed to help instructors create their ideal mix of questions for quizzes or exams. Each question assesses a specific reading and is written with clear and concise language that matches the difficulty level of the question. Each reading is assessed with questions across the appropriate levels of Bloom's taxonomy. By asking students questions that vary in both taxonomy and level of difficulty, instructors can evaluate how well students understand specific concepts and how skilled they are at applying these concepts to hypothetical and real-world scenarios.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Every question is labeled with five levels of metadata to allow instructors to assess their students. These metadata tags are:

ANS: This is the correct answer for each question.
DIF: This is the level of difficulty assigned to the problem. For more information, please see "Difficulty Levels" in the following sections.
REF: This is the page number in the textbook reading from which the question is drawn.
TOP: This is the section heading in the textbook reading from which the question is drawn.
MSC: This is the level of Bloom's taxonomy that the question is designed to test. For more information, please see "Bloom's Taxonomy" in the following sections.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

We have focused on the levels of Bloom's taxonomy that are most relevant to philosophy and are most reliably assessed through the types of questions included in this test bank. As a result, we have included five levels of the taxonomy in the metadata.

1. **Remembering** questions test declarative knowledge, including textbook definitions and the relationships between two or more pieces of information. Can students recall or remember the information in the same form it was learned?
2. **Understanding** questions pose problems in a context different from the one in which the material was learned, requiring students to draw from their declarative and/or procedural understanding of important concepts. Can students explain ideas or concepts?
3. **Applying** questions ask students to draw from their prior experience and use critical thinking skills to reason about the real world. Can students use learned information in new situations?
4. **Analyzing** questions test students' ability to break down information and see how different elements relate to each other and to the whole. Can students distinguish among different parts of a process?
5. **Evaluating** questions ask students to assess and judge information. Can students make decisions and distinguish between valid and invalid claims?

DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Along with Bloom's taxonomy, each question is tagged to a level of difficulty so that instructors can choose how to sort and categorize questions. We understand that what one instructor or student finds difficult might not equate with someone else's perspective. However, many instructors do find this basic classification useful as a starting point in balancing their quizzes and exams, so we have tried to be as objective as possible by using the following criteria to decide the level of difficulty for each question.

1. **Easy** questions require students to demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts, definitions, and examples presented in the textbook.
2. **Moderate** questions direct students to use critical thinking skills and to demonstrate a strong understanding of core concepts independent of specific textbook examples or definitions.
3. **Difficult** questions ask students to synthesize textbook concepts to make analytical inferences or to evaluate claims.

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PART 1 Meta-Ethics

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ESSAY

1. Explain how their differing theories of the meanings of moral utterances lead Ayer and Mackie to different ways of denying the truth of typical moral claims.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer must explain (a) Ayer's verificationist theory of meaning and his reasons for thinking moral discourse fails to meet that standard, (b) Mackie's view that moral claims have a meaning that commits them to the existence of objective values, (c) Ayer's conclusion that moral language is purely "emotive," and (d) Mackie's argument from queerness (or from relativity) for the view that there are no such objective values.

   DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 39, 42–44, 50–55 TOP: Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Analyzing

2. Although the argument Socrates offers in Plato's *Euthyphro* is specifically about the virtue of piety, philosophers have taken the same reasoning to apply to morality more generally. Explain how Socrates's arguments can be applied to other moral terms such as *good*, *bad*, *right*, or *wrong*.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer will emphasize the basic question of whether an object has the moral property because of God's attitude, or whether God has the attitude because of the moral property. For example, is something wrong because God forbids it, or does God forbid it because it is wrong? The essence of Socrates's argument is that God (or the gods) approves or disapproves of things for reasons, so those reasons must be something other than the fact of approval or disapproval.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 68–70 TOP: Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Applying

3. Critically evaluate Nietzsche's and Singer's competing accounts of the origins of morality, and explain how these different starting points lead to different conclusions about the nature of morality.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer should include Nietzsche's distinction between master and slave morality, including his admiration for the former and disapproval of the latter. Nietzsche thinks that slave morality is born out of fear and that it is anti-life because it restrains the power of the strong. A sufficient answer should also include an explanation of Singer's evolutionary account of the origins of altruism. Singer approves of altruism and tries to show, contra Nietzsche, that altruistic constraints arise out of the evolutionary development of life, and groups with altruistic behaviors are more likely to survive than those without such internalized motives.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 32–38, 72–82 TOP: Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Evaluating

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4. Explain how Frankfurt uses a fictional story about the nefarious character Black to argue against the principle of alternate possibilities.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer should explain the principle of alternate possibilities and show that the principle applies in the story because Black's plan to interfere ensures that Jones could not have done otherwise. Then it must explain how Jones is nonetheless responsible for his action, because the fact that he couldn't do otherwise is not part of the explanation of why he did what he did.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 61–65 TOP: Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Understanding

5. First, use one or more of Benedict's examples of divergent cultural practices to develop an argument for moral relativism. Then explain how Midgley would respond to that argument.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer should emphasize Benedict's central point that the practice in question only makes sense in the context of its culture, rather than treating it as an isolated practice. It should also explain Midgley's objection that refusal to make moral judgments about other societies leads to "moral isolationism" and an inability even to judge our own societies. A particularly strong answer might point out that Midgely would characterize the process of trying to make sense of the practice in context as a way of trying to understand why it would seem like the right thing to do in that context.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 22–24, 28–31 TOP: Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Evaluating

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Thomas Nagel, Right and Wrong

1. What belief does Nagel characterize as the basis of morality?
   a. You should love your neighbor as yourself.
   b. The rules of society determine what we should and shouldn't do.
   c. Good and harm to particular people is good or bad from a more general point of view.
   d. God loves us and wants us to obey his commands.

   ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: p. 14
   TOP: Thomas Nagel, Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Remembering

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2. Nagel argues that our feelings of resentment when others harm us logically commit us to recognizing that we have reasons not to harm others. Which of the following responses would allow someone to consistently escape Nagel's argument from resentment?
   a. I'm special; what happens to me really is more important than what happens to other people.
   b. I wouldn't like it if someone harmed me, but fortunately I'm the one harming, not the one being harmed.
   c. Just because I harm someone else doesn't mean they'll harm me back.
   d. I can get away with harming others so long as I don't get caught.

   ANS: A DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 12–13
   TOP: Thomas Nagel, Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Evaluating

3. Which of the following is one of Nagel's objections to providing a religious basis for morality?
   a. He does not believe that God exists.
   b. It is impossible to prove whether or not God exists.
   c. Moral behavior should be motivated by concern for others, not by punishment and reward.
   d. Because different people have different religious beliefs, a religious basis would make morality culturally relative.

   ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 11–12
   TOP: Thomas Nagel, Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Understanding

4. How does Nagel answer the question: "Are right and wrong the same for everyone?"
   a. The truth of basic moral principles varies with social standards, and so those principles can require or prohibit different actions in different societies.
   b. The truth of basic moral principles varies with social standards, but in practice those different principles require or prohibit the same actions no matter the society.
   c. The truth of basic moral principles never varies with social standards, and so those principles require and permit the same actions no matter the circumstances.
   d. The truth of basic moral principles never varies with social standards, but the same principle can require or prohibit different actions in different circumstances.

   ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: p. 15
   TOP: Thomas Nagel, Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Understanding

David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason

5. According to Hume, what can be discovered to be true or false through the power of reason?
   a. matters of fact and matters of value
   b. relations of ideas and matters of fact
   c. fact and sentiment
   d. human matters and divine matters

   ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: p. 17
   TOP: David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason | Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Remembering

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6. According to Hume's theory, which of the following would count as a possible instance of the use of reason influencing human conduct?
   a. Consulting my conscience, I can see that stealing my sister's coat would be wrong, so I don't take it.
   b. The thought of stealing my sister's coat fills me with revulsion, so I don't take it.
   c. After logically deducing that stealing my sister's coat would violate self-evident moral principles, I don't take it.
   d. I see that not stealing my sister's coat is the best way to satisfy my desire not to upset her, so I don't take it.

   ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: p. 17
   TOP: David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason | Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Applying

7. Hume claims that there is no difference in the relation of a sapling whose growth destroys its parent tree and a human child who murders her parent, only a difference in the cause of the action.
   a. True b. False

   ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 19–20
   TOP: David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason | Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Understanding

8. Which of the following would Hume criticize as an example of inferring an "ought" from an "is"?
   a. Murder is wrong, therefore you shouldn't do it.
   b. Murder is wrong, therefore committing murder will have bad results.
   c. Murder is destructive to society, therefore committing murder will have bad results.
   d. Murder is destructive to society, therefore you shouldn't do it.

   ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 21–22
   TOP: David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason | Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Applying

Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture

9. Ruth Benedict argues that because of the wide variation in cultural practices, there can be no objective morality.
   a. True b. False

   ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 22–26
   TOP: Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture | Section: Meta-Ethics
   MSC: Understanding

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10. Which of the following is one of Benedict's central criticisms of earlier anthropologists and ethnographers?
    a. They wrongly assumed Western practices are more civilized than those of the tribes they study.
    b. They wrongly assumed the practices of the tribes they studied were more natural than their own Western practices.
    c. They focused almost entirely on chronicling individual practices, rather than studying how those practices fit together to form a whole culture.
    d. They focused almost entirely on the practices of cultural elites, rather than studying the lives of the lower social classes.

    ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 23–25
    TOP: Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

11. How does Benedict characterize the attitude toward killing across different cultures?
    a. There is no universal agreement of cultural practices across different societies, even about matters of killing.
    b. All cultures treat suicide as a serious matter, but they vary in whether they praise it or condemn it.
    c. Despite the wide diversity of cultural practices, all cultures condemn the intentional killing of members of one's own community.
    d. Despite the wide diversity of cultural practices, all cultures prohibit the killing of one's own children.

    ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: pp. 22–23
    TOP: Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

12. Why does Benedict think it is important to study other cultures, particularly those she regards as less developed?
    a. It can help us to better appreciate the advances of modern civilization.
    b. It can help us return to a more natural way of living.
    c. It can help us to understand the development of our own cultural practices.
    d. It can help us understand how to accelerate our own cultural development.

    ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 25–26
    TOP: Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

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Mary Midgely, On Trying Out One's New Sword

13. According to Midgley, what is the ultimate consequence of "moral isolationism" that makes the concept impossible for anyone to genuinely accept?
    a. It would prevent us from making friends with people from other cultures.
    b. It would prevent us from learning about past societies.
    c. It would prevent us from using our moral standards to teach and improve people in other societies.
    d. It would prevent us from using other societies as points of comparison for reasoning about our own moral standards.

    ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 28–29
    TOP: Mary Midgely, On Trying Out One's New Sword | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

14. Which of the following statements could be interpreted as an expression of what Midgley calls "moral isolationism"?
    a. I can't judge Medea's actions because I don't know what her motives were.
    b. I can't judge Medea's actions because I haven't studied her culture.
    c. I can't judge Medea's actions because I'm not from her culture.
    d. I can't judge Medea's actions because I might have done the same thing in her position.

    ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 26, 30–31
    TOP: Mary Midgely, On Trying Out One's New Sword | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Applying

15. Midgley argues that a consistent moral isolationism wouldn't just stop us from criticizing the practices of other cultures, it would prevent us from admiring or praising them as well.
    a. True b. False

    ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: p. 28
    TOP: Mary Midgely, On Trying Out One's New Sword | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

16. Which of the following represents the conclusion Midgley intends the reader to draw from the example of the samurai practice of the "crossroads cut"?
    a. The practice is justified because it embodies ideals of discipline and devotion.
    b. Whatever conclusion we reach, we must evaluate the practice using our own moral standards.
    c. The practice is justified because wayfarers consent to be targeted.
    d. The practice should be condemned because of its obvious brutality.

    ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 29–30
    TOP: Mary Midgely, On Trying Out One's New Sword | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

17. What does Nietzsche describe as the ultimate consequence of the timidity of herd morality, in which its softness finally leads it to side with its enemies?
    a. a reluctance to punish criminals
    b. a desire to punish the strong
    c. fear of the neighbor
    d. fear of the strong

    ANS: A DIF: Difficult REF: p. 33
    TOP: Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

18. Which of the following would Nietzsche identify as a society built around a life-denying principle?
    a. a society of barbarians who frequently invade neighboring groups
    b. an aristocratic society that is willing to sacrifice the lives of commoners for the good of the elite
    c. a democratic society that provides equal rights to all
    d. a warrior society that honors those who are victorious in battle

    ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: p. 35
    TOP: Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Applying

19. According to Nietzsche, what does the "noble type of man" see as the source of value?
    a. God
    b. society
    c. life
    d. himself

    ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: p. 36
    TOP: Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

20. In Nietzsche's account, what is the difference between the concept of "bad" in master morality and the concept of "evil" in slave morality?
    a. "Bad" refers to what is contemptible; "evil" refers to what is fearful.
    b. "Bad" refers to what is fearful; "evil" refers to what is contemptible.
    c. "Bad" refers to what is hated; "evil" refers to what is forbidden by God.
    d. "Bad" refers to what is forbidden by God; "evil" refers to what is hated.

    ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 36–38
    TOP: Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

A. J. Ayer, A Critique of Ethics

21. What criterion does Ayer use to distinguish meaningful statements from pseudo-propositions?
    a. verifiability
    b. trustworthiness
    c. intuitiveness
    d. morality

    ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: p. 39
    TOP: A . J. Ayer, A Critique of Ethics | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Remembering

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22. What argument does Ayer offer against the utilitarian theory of the meanings of ethical terms?
    a. Sometimes doing an act that produces the greatest happiness violates moral duties revealed by "intellectual intuition."
    b. Sometimes doing an act that is generally approved of violates moral duties revealed by "intellectual intuition."
    c. It is not self-contradictory to claim it is wrong to do an act that will produce the greatest happiness.
    d. It is not self-contradictory to claim that it is wrong to do what is generally approved of.

    ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: p. 41
    TOP: A. J. Ayer, A Critique of Ethics | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Understanding

23. What is Ayer's "radical empiricist" theory of statements expressing ethical judgments?
    a. They are all false.
    b. They are expressions of moral feelings.
    c. They are statements describing one's preferences.
    d. They are merely by-products of human evolution.

    ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 42–43
    TOP: A. J. Ayer, A Critique of Ethics | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Understanding

24. How does Ayer respond to the objection that his theory would imply that argument about ethical disagreements is impossible?
    a. He argues that this objection only applies to ordinary subjectivist theories.
    b. He denies that there are ever any significant disagreements about ethical matters.
    c. He compares ethical disagreements to the disagreement between fans of competing sports teams.
    d. He argues that genuine ethical arguments are based on disagreements about the facts of the case, not the underlying values.

    ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 45–46
    TOP: A. J. Ayer, A Critique of Ethics | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Evaluating

J. L. Mackie, Inventing Right and Wrong

25. What does Mackie's error theory say about statements expressing moral judgments?
    a. They are all false.
    b. They are expressions of moral feelings.
    c. They are statements describing one's preferences.
    d. They are merely by-products of human evolution.

    ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: p. 51
    TOP: J. L. Mackie, Inventing Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

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26. According to Mackie, how does the argument from relativity undermine belief in objective morality?
    a. Variation of moral codes from one society to another logically entails moral subjectivism.
    b. Widespread disagreement regarding any subject matter is sufficient to show that it isn't an objective subject.
    c. The best explanation of moral disagreement is that it is caused by different ways of life, rather than different perceptions of a common objective truth.
    d. Objective validity applies only to a small number of general principles that are shared by all societies.

    ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 51–52
    TOP: J. L. Mackie, Inventing Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Evaluating

27. What is the central claim of Mackie's "argument from queerness," designed to show that there are no objective values in the world?
    a. There is no objective way to settle moral disagreements because everyone has their own moral standards.
    b. If they existed, objective values would be metaphysically very strange—different from everything else we know of that exists.
    c. Objective values are too oppressive to those who deviate from society's norms.
    d. Objective values would have to be based on God's commands, but God does not exist.

    ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 53–55
    TOP: J. L. Mackie, Inventing Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

28. Which of the following does Mackie consider the most important challenge to the argument from queerness?
    a. The same argument would apply to knowledge of other basic ideas like number, identity, space and time, power, and causation.
    b. Divine revelation could give us access to objective moral truths.
    c. Plato's theory of Forms explains how objective value is possible.
    d. Objective values can be known by way of the natural properties that instantiate them.

    ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: p. 54
    TOP: J. L. Mackie, Inventing Right and Wrong | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Evaluating

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Harry G. Frankfurt, Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility

29. What does the Principle of Alternate Possibilities claim?
    a. No matter what we decide to do, we can always change our mind to pursue other possibilities.
    b. We are morally responsible for all our actions, because it was always possible for us to act differently than we did.
    c. We are never morally responsible for our actions, because it was never possible for us to act differently than we did.
    d. We are morally responsible for our actions only when we could have acted differently than we did.

    ANS: D DIF: Easy REF: p. 56
    TOP: Harry G. Frankfurt, Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

30. Which story about Jones does Frankfurt use to show that we reject the principle of alternate possibilities while still holding on to the plausible claim that we are not morally responsible for our actions when they are performed because of coercive threats?
    a. Jones is threatened, but he is insensitive to the threat and performs the demanded action for his own reasons.
    b. Jones is threatened, but he is insensitive to the threat and refuses to perform the demanded action.
    c. Jones is threatened, and he would have given in to the threat out of fear, but he had already decided to do the demanded action for his own reasons.
    d. Jones is threatened, and he gives in to the threat out of fear, performing the demanded action.

    ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 58–59
    TOP: Harry G. Frankfurt, Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Analyzing

31. According to Frankfurt, how do Black's plans to manipulate Jones show that the principle of alternate possibilities is false?
    a. Even though Black's plan coerced Jones into doing what he did, it was something Jones wanted to do anyway, so he is still morally responsible for his actions.
    b. Although Black's plan made it impossible for Jones to do otherwise, Black never actually intervened, so Jones is still morally responsible for his actions.
    c. Because Black's plan made it impossible for Jones to do otherwise, Jones is not morally responsible for his actions.
    d. Because Black never actually intervened, it was always possible for Jones to do otherwise, and so he is still morally responsible for his actions.

    ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 61–63
    TOP: Harry G. Frankfurt, Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Evaluation

Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

32. Frankfurt believes that you are not morally responsible for your actions if you performed them only because you could not have done otherwise.
    a. True
    b. False

    ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: p. 65
    TOP: Harry G. Frankfurt, Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

Plato, God and Morality

33. In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Socrates and the title character discuss the definition of which concept?
    a. the moral
    b. the pious
    c. the good
    d. the virtuous

    ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: p. 65
    TOP: Plato, God and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Remembering

34. Which of the following represents a possible response to the *Euthyphro* dilemma for someone who wishes to provide a religious basis for morality?
    a. Because there is only one God, there is no disagreement among the gods.
    b. Divine revelation allows us to know what God wants.
    c. God is omniscient and therefore knows what is good for us.
    d. Moral terms like *goodness* only get their meaning from God's will.

    ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 70–71
    TOP: Plato, God and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Evaluating

35. What initial objection does Socrates raise to Euthyphro's definition?
    a. No one knows the will of the gods.
    b. The gods change their minds from one day to the next.
    c. Different cultures worship different gods.
    d. The gods disagree with one another.

    ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 66–67, 69
    TOP: Plato, God and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Understanding

Peter Singer, Evolution and Morality

36. According to Singer, what is the origin of present-day systems of morality?
    a. rules given by God and interpreted over time by religious authorities
    b. norms of social restraint that arose from group behavior in our prehuman ancestors
    c. a social contract agreed to by independent rational human beings
    d. objective values grasped through the power of intellectual intuition

    ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: pp. 71–72
    TOP: Peter Singer, Evolution and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Remembering

Readings in Moral Philosophy 1st edition Wolff Test Bank

37. How might David Hume object to Singer's discussion of the evolution of altruism?
    a. We cannot logically infer how we ought to behave from historical facts about evolutionary development.
    b. The evolutionary idea of survival of the fittest is incompatible with human moral sentiments.
    c. The focus on nonhuman animals ignores the role of human reason in motivating moral behavior.
    d. The evolutionary account cannot explain our direct intuition of the Form of the Good.

    ANS: A DIF: Difficult REF: pp. 21, 72–73
    TOP: Peter Singer, Evolution and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics; David Hume, Moral Distinctions Not Derived From Reason | Section: Meta-Ethics MSC: Evaluating

38. Why is the practice of altruism puzzling from the standpoint of evolutionary theory?
    a. Species that exhibit altruistic behavior are less likely to survive than species without such restraint.
    b. Social groups that exhibit altruistic behavior are less likely to survive than groups without such restraint.
    c. Individuals who exhibit altruistic behavior for others are less likely to survive than individuals without such restraint.
    d. Ecosystems featuring altruistic behavior are less likely to survive than ecosystems without such restrained behavior.

    ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 74–75
    TOP: Peter Singer, Evolution and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

39. Which of the following factors does Singer appeal to in order to explain the evolution of altruism?
    a. the evolutionary advantage of human socialization practices
    b. the evolutionary advantage of practices of reciprocal aid
    c. the evolutionary advantage of modifying behavior through judicial punishment
    d. the evolutionary advantage of modifying behavior through praise and blame

    ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 76–82
    TOP: Peter Singer, Evolution and Morality | Section: Meta-Ethics
    MSC: Understanding

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PART 2 Normative Ethics

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ESSAY

1. Explain the role happiness plays in Aristotle's ethics, as compared to the utilitarianism of Bentham. What are their definitions of happiness, and how do these lead to different views on the nature of morality?

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer should explain the utilitarian definition of happiness as pleasure, in contrast to Aristotle's account of happiness as an activity of the soul in accord with virtue. The resulting moral theories are the utilitarian aim of producing the greatest happiness for the greatest number versus the Aristotelian aim of cultivating a virtuous disposition to seek the mean.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 132–135, 174–176, 179–180 TOP: Section: Normative Ethics
   MSC: Understanding

2. Explain how Nozick's example of the experience machine can be used as an argument against utilitarianism.

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer will explain that anyone who thinks you shouldn't plug in to the experience machine is thereby committed to the idea that something else matters beyond subjective experience, which directly challenges the utilitarian claim that pleasure is the only ultimate good.

   DIF: Easy REF: pp. 150–152 TOP: Section: Normative Ethics
   MSC: Analyzing

3. Imagine the case of a surgeon who faces the choice of whether to kill one innocent person in order to transplant his organs into five other patients to save their lives. Explain the ways in which Kant and a utilitarian would reason about the case. Would each theory recommend killing the patient? Why or why not?

   ANS:
   Answers will vary.

   A sufficient answer should apply the principle of utility *and* a formulation of Kant's categorical imperative. The utilitarian would endorse the killing if the happiness of five saved lives outweighs the unhappiness of one life lost, while the Kantian might reject it because it treats the victim as a mere means. Other answers are possible if more factors are included in the utilitarian calculation.

   DIF: Moderate REF: pp. 132–135, 140–144, 154–160 TOP: Section: Normative Ethics
   MSC: Applying

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