

LESSON PLAN (60 Minutes)

Topic: Utilitarianism

Grade Level: Year 9

Objectives:

To understand the basic concepts and principles of utilitarianism.

To analyze the applications of utilitarianism in various ethical dilemmas.

To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism as a moral theory.

Materials:

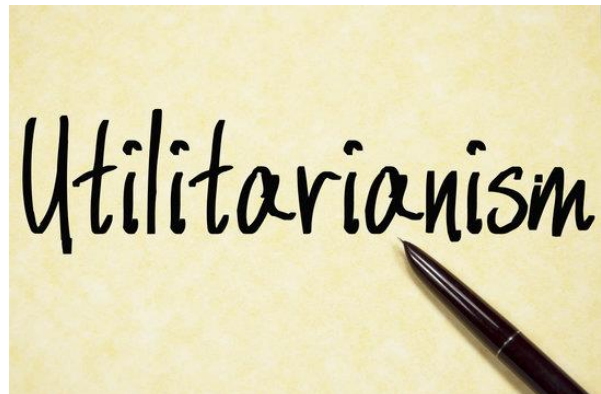
Whiteboard and markers

Data Projector with audio to show short video.

Handouts on the basic principles of utilitarianism
(See below)

Examples of ethical dilemmas- See below

Video clips-(See link in lesson plan)



Introduction (10 minutes):

Greet students and introduce the topic of utilitarianism.

Ask students if they have heard of utilitarianism before, and if so, to share what they know.

Provide a brief overview of the lesson objectives and explain why utilitarianism is an important ethical theory to study.

Lesson Body (35 minutes):

Define utilitarianism and explain the basic principles, including the greatest happiness principle and the idea of maximizing overall happiness.

Give examples of how utilitarianism can be applied in various ethical dilemmas, such as healthcare rationing or environmental conservation.

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism, such as its emphasis on the common good and its potential to overlook individual rights.

Use case studies or real-life examples to illustrate how utilitarianism has been applied in various contexts, such as disaster relief or public policy.

Activity (15 minutes):

Show the short video on Utilitarianism - [\(39\) Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36 - YouTube](#)

Divide students into small groups.

Provide each group with an ethical dilemma to analyze and apply the principles of utilitarianism to.

Ask each group to present their analysis and discuss how they arrived at their conclusion.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

Summarize the key concepts of utilitarianism and how it can be applied in ethical decision-making.

Ask students to reflect on their own moral values and whether utilitarianism aligns with their personal beliefs.

Encourage students to continue exploring different ethical theories and applying them to real-life situations.

Assessment:

Class participation and engagement in the group activity.

Quality of the group presentation and analysis of the ethical dilemma.

Completion of a reflection paper on whether utilitarianism aligns with their personal moral values.

Handout: Utilitarianism - Basic Principles

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that emphasizes the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It is a consequentialist theory, which means that it evaluates the morality of an action based on its consequences.

The basic principles of utilitarianism are as follows:

The Greatest Happiness Principle: This principle states that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and wrong as they tend to produce the opposite of happiness. The goal of utilitarianism is to maximize overall happiness and minimize overall suffering.

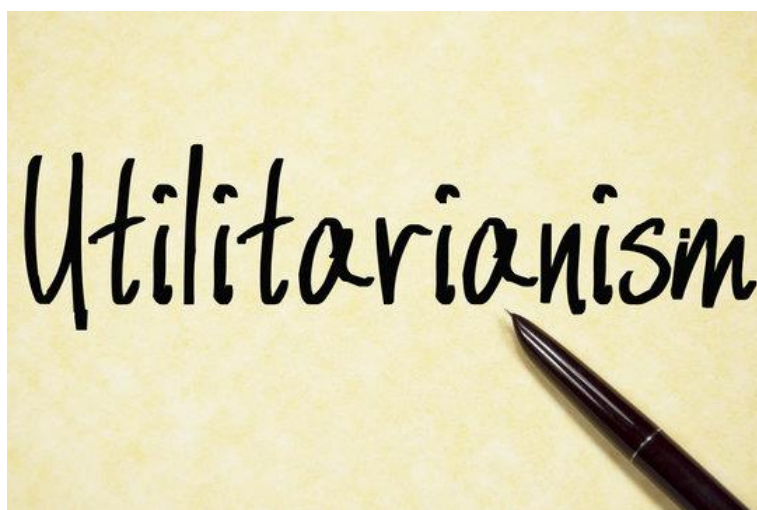
Hedonism: Hedonism is the belief that pleasure or happiness is the ultimate good. Utilitarians believe that pleasure and happiness are valuable in themselves and should be pursued for their own sake.

Utility: Utility refers to the usefulness of an action in promoting happiness. Utilitarians evaluate actions based on their utility or usefulness in maximizing overall happiness.

Consequentialism: Utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory, which means that it evaluates the morality of an action based on its consequences. Actions that result in the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people are considered morally right.

Impartiality: Utilitarianism requires impartiality, which means that everyone's happiness counts equally. Utilitarians do not prioritize their own happiness or the happiness of their friends and family over the happiness of others.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Utilitarians use cost-benefit analysis to evaluate the morality of an action. This involves weighing the costs and benefits of an action to determine whether it will result in the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.



Examples of Utilitarianism:

A doctor who has limited resources must decide which patients to treat first. The doctor should prioritize patients who will benefit the most from treatment and who will experience the greatest amount of happiness as a result.

A government must decide whether to invest in renewable energy or continue using fossil fuels. The government should invest in renewable energy because it will benefit the greatest number of people in the long run.

A company must decide whether to lay off workers to cut costs. The company should consider the impact on the workers and their families, as well as the impact on the company's overall profitability. If laying off workers will result in more suffering than it will alleviate, the company should find another solution.

Conclusion:

Utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory that emphasizes the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It evaluates the morality of an action based on its consequences, and seeks to maximize overall happiness and minimize overall suffering. Utilitarians use cost-benefit analysis to determine whether an action will result in the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

Case Studies:



Allocation of School Resources: The school has a limited budget and must decide how to allocate resources. The school could use the funds to provide more extracurricular activities, upgrade technology, or hire more teachers. Utilitarianism would require the school to prioritize the option that benefits the greatest number of students and maximizes overall happiness.

Cheating on Exams: A student is struggling to keep up with their classmates and decides to cheat on an exam. Utilitarianism would require the student to consider the consequences of their actions on the wider community, such as the impact on other students who have studied hard and the integrity of the education system.

Bullying: A group of students are bullying another student, causing them to feel isolated and unhappy. Utilitarianism would require the school to take action to stop the bullying and promote a positive learning environment that maximizes overall happiness for all students.

Dress Code Policies: The school has a strict dress code policy that requires students to wear uniforms or adhere to a certain dress code. Utilitarianism would require the school to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of the policy and consider whether it maximizes overall happiness for the greatest number of students.

Zero-Tolerance Policies: The school has a zero-tolerance policy for certain behaviors, such as drug use or violence. Utilitarianism would require the school to consider whether the policy promotes overall happiness for the greatest number of students and whether it is effective in achieving its goals.