

Candidate 3 evidence

Philosophy National 5 Resource Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
Relevant to society, philosophical responses	

Utilitarianism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best action is generating most happiness - Teleological 	
Kantianism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Deontological Actions are innately good/bad [Intentions Right thing, right intentions 	

Utilitarianism	
Intensity, duration, certainty, fecundity, propinquity, purity, extent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing suffering - Self-determination - Money, resources 	
Mill's	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greatest Happiness Principle - Higher, lower 	
How utilitarianism doesn't support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abuse power 	
Criticisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human life to numbers - Unpredictability consequences 	

Kantianism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Killing vs preserving life - First formulation Categorical Imperative - "Act only on maxims which you can at the same time will to be universal laws" - Second formulation - "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, ever merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end." - Maxim, duty, someone avoids being burden vs relieve suffering 	
Criticisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Too absolute for euthanasia - Refuse them right to control life death - Importance of consequences as humans - Act from duty not emotion, apathetic 	

Conclusion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intertwined - Situational dependency vs black/white - Can/cannot justify? 	

To what extent do philosophical responses make euthanasia morally justifiable?

Euthanasia has been a relatively new topic of discussion as a way to allow terminally ill patients to pass away peacefully. It is becoming increasingly relevant in society, especially as circumstances for the modern patient continue to change. So we, as a society, must decide whether or not we should allow it, and whether or not it is morally justifiable in the first place. For this, we can turn to some philosophical responses - or namely, the conflicting philosophies of Utilitarianism and Kantianism.

Utilitarianism argues that the most moral action to take in any situation is the one that generates the most utility (promotes the greatest happiness and prevents the greatest pain). It is a teleological philosophy, which means that the outcomes of an action decide whether or not it is morally acceptable. In short, the means justifies the ends.

Kantianism, on the other hand, is based on a deontological approach, which simply means it claims that actions are innately good or bad, and that is what decides its morality instead of the outcome. Kantianism also differs from Utilitarianism on the basis that it also considers the motives or intentions behind the action. To do good is to follow one's duty, and can only be achieved by doing the right *thing* with the right *intentions*, regardless of the consequences.

Utilitarianism can be applied to the topic of euthanasia on a number of points. If we consider Jeremy Bentham's Hedonic Calculus, we can see that the consequences of euthanasia almost always fall into at least one of the seven key categories that allow us to measure the overall level of pleasure or happiness. These are the intensity of pleasure, duration of pleasure, certainty of pleasure, fecundity of pleasure, propinquity of pleasure, purity of pleasure, and the extent of pleasure. Firstly and likely most obviously, the purpose of euthanasia is to reduce needless suffering by allowing individuals to pass peacefully. This increases the overall level of happiness because of the prevention of suffering. Secondly, euthanasia returns to patients the right to free will and freedom of determination. This increases the overall level of happiness because individuals are given that value of self-determination. Thirdly, terminally ill patients are often using expensive machinery or supplies. Through euthanasia, valuable money and resources can be freed up and funnelled back to other patients who need help. Because of this, pleasure can be extended to a larger group of people by improving their quality and duration of life. This can also be confounded by the possibility that the individual would not have experienced an increased quality of life in the time that they might save otherwise, further increasing the overall level of happiness.

The other side of Utilitarianism, developed by John Stuart Mill, is also relevant in this analysis. Mill developed what is known as the Greatest Happiness Principle, which argues that euthanasia can be morally justified on the basis that the level of happiness would be greatly increased by way of preventing great pain. Mill also founded the idea

of higher and lower pleasures, saying that intellectual 'higher' pleasures are more valuable than sensational or physical 'lower' pleasures. In the context of euthanasia, this means that although physical pains can be alleviated using painkillers and medication, the mental and emotional pains that come with being a terminally ill patient can only be alleviated by euthanasia, and therefore should be prioritised.

Although Utilitarianism generally supports euthanasia, there are some points that seem to oppose it. Mainly, it is possible that with the power euthanasia brings, it is easy to exploit it or potentially fall down an ethical slippery slope. This would cause euthanasia to become morally unacceptable, because in this case the level of happiness would decrease dramatically.

There are some criticisms of the Utilitarian application to euthanasia, however, that reveal some holes in the case. It is argued that utilitarianism and Hedonic Calculus reduce lives to numbers and calculations, ignoring the complexity and dignity of a human life. It is also argued that as the morality of an action is only judged by its outcome, there is no way of telling whether or not allowing euthanasia is a good decision or not until after the consequences are in effect. This unpredictability of consequences means that Utilitarianism would be ill-fit to be applied to situations such as euthanasia, where the consequences could be devastating.

As the famous counterpart of Utilitarianism, Kantianism can also be applied to the topic of euthanasia on a number of points. Firstly, Kant explains that actions are innately good or bad, regardless of outcomes. Because euthanasia is seen as killing, it would be considered a bad and therefore immoral action. Similarly, disallowing euthanasia would be the preservation of life, which is a good and therefore moral action to do. Secondly, under the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, Kant explains that principles or *maxims* that can be applied to one person should be applied to all people in the same situation. In Kant's words, "Act only on maxims which you can at the same time will to be universal laws." This means that if euthanasia can be morally justified being applied to one person, it should be morally justifiable being applied to anyone else under similar circumstances. Thirdly, under the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, it explains how we should never treat someone as the means to the end, but rather the end itself. ("Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, ever merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.") For euthanasia, this means that we should not be treating people's lives as a means to relieve human suffering, but rather as an end in its own right, and should be treasured and preserved. Fourthly, Kantianism also claims that the maxim behind an action also influences its morality. This means that an action done with bad intentions could make the action immoral, compared to if the same action was done out of a sense of duty and with a good intention. For euthanasia, this means that if euthanasia is carried out with ill intent, it would make it immoral. But if it were to be carried out with good intentions, it could be considered moral.

Just as with Utilitarianism, there are also criticisms on the case of Kantianism. Firstly, it is said that the black and white rules of Kantianism are too absolute to be sensibly applied to something as complex as euthanasia, which often occurs on a case-by-case situation. Secondly, Kantianism refuses the individual control over their own life and death, which is of course negative as the individual has a right to self-determination where Kantianist philosophy would be robbing them of this value. Thirdly, part of what makes us human is the ability to consider consequences and weigh outcomes. By outright ignoring the consequences of an action, Kantianism is ignoring the importance of consequences as humans. Fourthly, Kant's claims that we should always be acting out of a sense of duty and never emotion can cause apathy and a lack of compassion. This is important because emotion is not something that can be ignored, and to try would be an ignorance of what makes us human.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that Utilitarianism and Kantianism are intertwined in the morality of euthanasia. But the two philosophies generally differ mainly where Utilitarianism allows for situational dependency, while Kantianism draws a black and white moral line on the situation. This is seen in Utilitarianism when it claims that the morality of an action is based on the outcomes of the action, and also seen in Kantianism when it explains how actions are innately right or wrong, regardless of consequence. Overall, according to Utilitarianism, euthanasia would be morally justifiable to the extremes as long as the outcomes are positive, while according to Kantianism, euthanasia would not be justifiable because even if it were to be done with good intentions, the base act of killing would still make the action immoral.