

Method Sheet

Ethics: Making a Choice

→ What is it that makes an act right or wrong? We have a number of approaches that we can apply in ethics by which an action could be judged good or bad. If we want our choices / acts to be ethically founded we need to look at them from different perspectives (facts, norms, ethical approaches). We ought to try to find "pros" and "cons" and then make up our minds as to what we think is the most decisive argument and/or the most decisive norm / rule. The following is an attempt at setting up a method for ethical decision-making:

a.	Description of problem	first we need to clarify what the problem really is
b.	Facts concerning the problem	we need to know as much as possible about the problem
c.	Alternatives for action	what possible alternatives do we have for action?
d.	Norms	norms/rules /laws that are relevant to the problem. The norms that one may want to apply will depend on one's beliefs / view of life.
e.	Ethical approaches (Discuss the problem on the basis of the various approaches. Try to find pros and cons under each of them).	<p><u>Rule ethics</u>: assesses the act in itself on the basis of rules, laws, commandments given by authorities</p> <p><u>Act ethics</u>: simply deals with the consequences of acts, and accepts no general rules</p> <p><u>Purpose / End / Objective</u>: does not deal with the act in itself but the objective one hopes to achieve</p> <p><u>Intention / (State of Mind)</u>: does not deal with the act in itself, but the intention behind it, the feelings behind the act</p>
f.	Conclusion	Your own choice/solution/opinion drawn on the basis of a thorough discussion of the various «pros» and «cons».