

HNC @ HOME 2026



A Level Philosophy, Ethics and Religion *Activity 3*

Ethics: Utilitarianism and its application in the real world

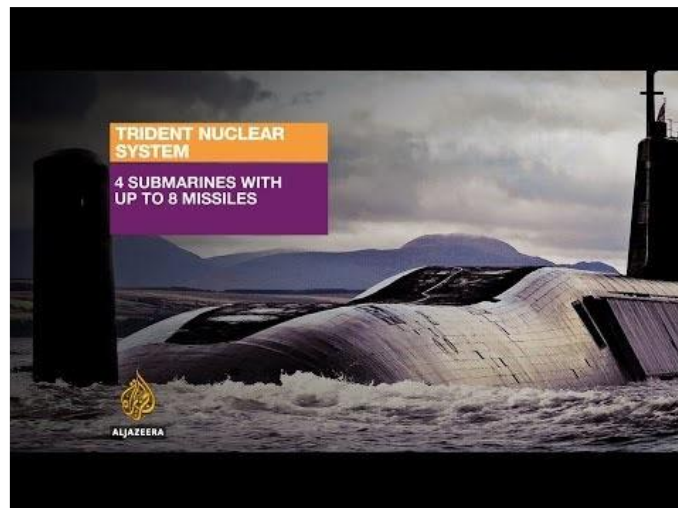
Watch my video explaining the basics of utilitarianism (if you came to an open event, I'm sure you're already familiar!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrSGW2V2p5o&t=10s>



The UK is one of the few countries in the world that has a nuclear deterrent – the Trident missile system – that is there to ward off other nuclear powers from potential attack. However, is this an ethical stance to take for a nation that views itself as a leader of the free world? Watch the documentary to get a sense of what and why we have a nuclear system

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HlimDFs-B0>



After watching the taster session video on Utilitarianism, you should have a basic grasp of what is meant by this ethical framework. However, as we have seen, not every decision can be so easily made, nor is it just limited to trains and running people over! Below are a number of real-world examples of utilitarianism, this is referred to as 'Applied Utilitarianism' as we apply the method to reality and the situations we find ourselves in, either as individuals, communities or societies as a whole.

For each scenario you will need to explore the debate, identify how utilitarianism can be applied and then put forward a conclusion as to whether utilitarianism is a good method of decision making. You will need to do your own research for abortion.

Example 1	Nuclear deterrent: Should we have and use nuclear weapons?
What is the debate?	
How could you apply utilitarianism?	
Is utilitarianism a good method of decision making in this scenario?	
Example 2	Abortion: Pro Life vs Pro Choice – Should abortion be illegal? http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/abortion/mother/for_1.shtml http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/abortion/mother/against_1.shtml
What is the debate?	
How could you Apply utilitarianism?	
Is utilitarianism a good method of decision making in this scenario?	