

# KS3 Spine: Morality

## 1. Morality:

*noun* The distinction between **right and wrong** or **good and bad**.

Very similar to ethics but **morality** is normally concerned with the individual's own determination of what is correct behaviour.

## 2. Where does morality come from?

A difficult question but usually broken down into three areas:

1. the individual and their internal responses
2. social interactions amongst groups of people, including the family
3. religion.

These individual or combined factors usually determine an individual's perception of what is **acceptable** and what is **unacceptable**.

## 3. Etymology (where the word comes from)

The word morality comes from the French word *moral*. Moral refers to a standard of behaviour or a principle of right and wrong. The word *moral* originates from the Latin *moralis*, originally from *mor/mos*, meaning custom.



## 4. Philosophical approaches

Philosophy (from the Greek *philosophia*, meaning love of wisdom) deals with the fundamental questions of human existence. What **morality** is and where it comes from is one of these important questions.

**Aristotle's Moral Theory:** The ancient Greek philosopher believed in balance between extreme behaviours (too much or not enough), both of which were considered vices or sins.

Adjective to describe his works/ideas: **Aristotelian**

**Hobbes' Social Contract:** Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher whose life overlapped with Shakespeare's, suggested that without the **moral** rule of law, life would descend into a chaotic and evil mess.

Adjective to describe his works/ideas: **Hobbesian**

**Immanuel Kant:** A German enlightenment philosopher who tried to establish how one can be **moral** based on individual and internal motivations. Kant proposed that all your behaviour should be good, or **moral**, enough to be made into a universal law.

Adjective to describe his works/ideas: **Kantian**

## 5. A psychological approach



Psychology, the study of the human mind and human behaviour, also seeks to determine the origins of **morality**.

One key name in psychology, an Austrian psychologist named Sigmund Freud, proposed a theory that metaphorically separated the human mind into three component parts. This Structural Model suggested that each of our minds, or psyches, was composed of:

**The id:** A Latin word meaning *it*. This is the part of the mind which runs only on impulses, desires and needs. It is the dark and unconscious part of our mind which has no sense of **right and wrong**.

**The ego:** A Latin word meaning *I/self*. This is the rational and realistic part of our mind which deals with control and restraint in terms of **correct behaviour**. The ego's role is to mediate between the primal id and the last part of the model.

**The super-ego:** A Latin term meaning *above I/self*. This part of the mind is concerned with perfection and making you the best, or most **moral**, person you can be. The *super-ego* tells you something is **right or wrong** via your conscience and feelings of guilt. The rules governing the super-ego's correct behaviour come from parents, society or religion (think of God as the ultimate parental figure).

A common visual metaphor for The Structural Model is that of an angel (super-ego) and a devil (id) sitting on either shoulder with the person (ego) being conflicted in the middle.





## 6. Morality Tale:

A type of text that has a hidden message, or **moral**, on how to be **good** and avoid the corrupting power of **evil/sin**. Within morality tales, characters would often personify the correct, **moral virtues** and incorrect, or **immoral**, sins and it was up to the protagonist, and by extension the audience, to follow the correct path.



## 7. The Seven Deadly Sins

Often fundamental to morality tales, these were a group of **vices** within Christian teachings and showed people how not to live. Committing one of these deadly or capital sins could lead to hell. Linked quite closely to the more well known Ten Commandments.

**Lust** (*noun*)/**Lustful** (*adj.*):  
Uncontrolled desire and passion

**Gluttony/Gluttonous:**  
Eating/consuming too much

**Sloth/Slothful:**  
Laziness but also wastefulness

**Greed/Greedy:**  
The overt love of money

**Wrath/Wrathful:**  
Anger, rage, violence

**Envy/Envious:**  
Resentment and jealousy of others

**Pride/Prideful:**  
Abundant self-love, hubris and arrogance

## 8. The Seven Contrary Virtues

To give people something to strive towards and show them how to live a **moral** life, seven virtues were also given so that sin and eternal punishment could be avoided. All of the virtues share a theme of self-control.

**Chastity** (*noun*)/**Chaste** (*adj.*):  
Controlled sexual behaviour

**Temperance/Temperate:**  
Self-restraint and control

**Diligence/Diligent:**  
Hardworking

**Charity/Charitable:**  
Generosity and benevolence

**Patience/Patient:**  
Tolerance and forgiveness

**Kindness/Kind:**  
Compassion and satisfaction

**Humility/Humble:**  
Modesty and a sense of being unworthy in comparison to God.

## Activities

### Recap Quiz

1. Where does someone's morality come from?
2. What did Hobbes believe would occur if we lived without moral rule?
3. Freud's Structural Model suggested our minds are separated into three parts. Identify the names of these three parts and write a sentence explaining each one. Create an image to represent each one.
4. What is the difference between the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Contrary Virtues?

### Vocabulary of Analysis Builder

Pick a series of words that relate to morality. Don't just use ones from this sheet but use any that relate to the difference between good and bad. Then, for each, come up with three grammatical forms for each word. The three best for analysis are *noun*, *adjective*, *adverb*. Three have been done for you.

Noun	adjective	adverb
morality	moral	morally
righteousness	righteous	righteously
immorality	immoral	immorally

### Self Quiz Construction

Develop a short quiz (10 questions) for yourself. The answers must be knowledge-based so one-word answers are ideal. Once you have constructed the quiz, put this sheet away and test yourself. Repeat until you get 100%. Once achieved, repeat the whole process with new questions.

### Advanced Philosophical Question

Subjective (personal) response with no real wrong answer. Using the information in this sheet, *where do you think morality comes from? Does it even exist?* Provide evidence, ideally personal to you, to support your response.