

Moral & Ethical Decision Novel Project

Part 1



Student: _____

Book Title: _____

M & E Novel: Describe the various decisions that the main character in your novel made and identify which ethical standard and/or stage of Kohlberg they used to justify their actions.

Situation/Decision	Ethical Standard/ Kohlberg Stage	Support of Standard/Stage Selection



The Utilitarian Approach

Some ethicists emphasize that the ethical action is the one that provides the most good or does the least harm, or, to put it another way, produces the greatest balance of good over harm.

The Rights Approach

Other philosophers and ethicists suggest that the ethical action is the one that best protects and respects the moral rights of those affected.

The Fairness or Justice Approach

Aristotle and other Greek philosophers have contributed the idea that all equals should be treated equally. Today we use this idea to say that ethical actions treat all human beings equally-or if unequally, then fairly based on some standard that is defensible.

The Common Good Approach

The Greek philosophers have also contributed the notion that life in community is a good in itself and our actions should contribute to that life. This approach also calls attention to the common conditions that are important to the welfare of everyone.

The Virtue Approach

A very ancient approach to ethics is that ethical actions ought to be consistent with certain ideal virtues that provide for the full development of our humanity. Virtue ethics asks of any action, "What kind of person will I become if I do this?" or "Is this action consistent with my acting at my best?"

Kohlberg Levels of Moral Development

Stage one (obedience):

Actions taken are to avoid punishment

Stage two (self-interest):

Actions taken are to earn rewards

Stage three (conformity):

Actions taken are to gain a reputation as a good person

Stage four (law-and-order):

Actions taken are to support the value of social order (law)

Stage five (human rights):

Actions taken are based on the greater good for the world – person believes that they have a responsibility to disregard the rule of law for the greater good of society

Stage six (universal human ethics):

Actions taken based upon a universal belief regardless of personal threats or dangers – person believes they are compelled to act