

Introduction to Animal Ethics

- 1. **What** is animal ethics and how is it approached?
- 2. **How** do the approaches to animal ethics work?
- 3. **Why** are animal ethics and its approaches important?

1. **What** is animal ethics and how is it approached?

Ethics is a large field that can be divided into three branches: applied ethics, meta-ethics, and normative ethics. To understand animal ethics, it is necessary to understand where it is located in the field of ethics. Write definitions for "applied ethics" and "animal ethics".

Applied Ethics	Animal Ethics

There are two significant approaches to animal ethics, and every human being on Earth explicitly or implicitly adopts one of them. There are important differences between the two approaches, because they take opposing views about the value of animal life. Make a note about the two approaches (i.e. human supremacy and animal liberation).

Approaches to Animal Ethics	
Human Supremacy	Animal Liberation

2. **How** do the approaches to animal ethics work?

The approaches to animal ethics (i.e. human supremacy and animal liberation) are usually motivated by underlying beliefs. Human supremacy is usually motivated by anthropocentrism, and animal liberation is usually motivated by biocentrism. Make a note about these two beliefs (i.e. anthropocentrism and biocentrism).

Anthropocentrism	Biocentrism

Human supremacy and animal liberation are justified in different ways. Human supremacy is sometimes justified with an argument based on human species membership (i.e. speciesism), or an argument based on personhood. Animal liberation is usually justified with an argument based on sentience. Make a note about these three key terms.

Speciesism	Personhood

Sentience

3. **Why** are animal ethics and its approaches important?

In brief, animal ethics and their approaches are very important, because they affect how much pain and suffering animals experience. Consider the differences between human supremacy and animal liberation approaches, and make a note about why they are important.

Why the Approaches to Animal Ethics Are Important		
Approach	How	Why
Human Supremacy Antropocentrism	Consider human beings in ethical decision-making.	
Animal Liberation Biocentrism	Consider sentient animals and human beings equally in ethical decision-making.	
Animal Liberation Biocentrism	Consider animals and human beings equally in ethical decision-making.	