

# Ethics

## Applied Ethics

### Environmental Ethics

### Work Booklet





## Preface

This work booklet is all about environmental ethics. It covers the important elements of this novel branch of applied ethics, including significant concepts and issues (like sustainability, waste management, and climate change), the ideas of well-known thinkers (like James Lovelock and Arne Næss), and debates in environmental ethics. Additionally, it covers the legal, social, and religious perspectives on the various issues arising from them. It is a comprehensive resource, and provides clearly arranged spaces for organised note-taking.

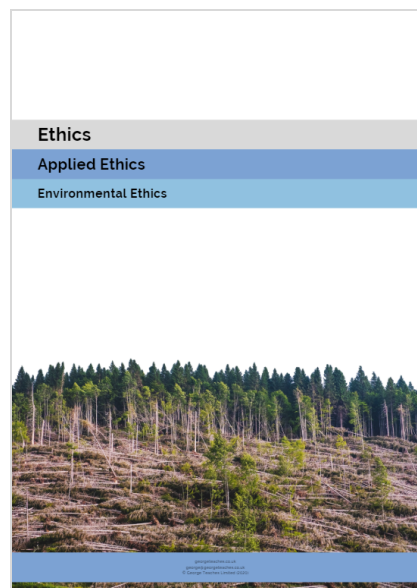
This work booklet follows the video lessons available at George Teaches, and is designed for use in conjunction with them. It is accompanied by information sheets, which are also available in a single information booklet. Additional materials on James Lovelock and Arne Næss can be accessed online, which comprehensively summarise their famous works on environmental ethics. Throughout this work booklet, key questions are used as subtitles, key terms and key thinkers are highlighted in separate boxes, and areas for the consolidation of notes are provided (most notably at the beginning).

I am deeply indebted to my colleagues and students for the production of this publication, which has been inspired by their desire for more extensive and holistic resources for teaching and learning about ethics. At all times, I have attempted to provide resources that meaningfully support teachers and students; with this particular work booklet, I have aimed to create a framework for organised note-taking that will support both deep learning and future revision. Consequently, it provides structured spaces to record and consolidate ideas about A Level environmental ethics content and much more. My earnest hope is that it is capable of supporting students of all abilities, and helping the most able organise their thoughts. Above all, it is my sincerest wish that it proves beneficial to both your teaching and your learning of environmental ethics, be you teacher or student (or, as I am, be you both).



George

London, UK  
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Key Terms and Key Thinkers in Environmental Ethics

Antropocentrism	Applied Ethics
Biocentrism	Conservation
Dominion	Environmental Ethics
Ecosophy	Ideology
Intrinsic Value	Instrumental Value
Stewardship	Theocentrism



**James Lovelock (b. 1919)**

**Arne Næss (1912–2009)**



## Key Concepts in Environmental Ethics

**Religious  
Perspectives in  
Environmental  
Ethics**

**Legal and Social  
Perspectives in  
Environmental  
Ethics**

**Environmental  
Ethics**

**Debates in  
Environmental  
Ethics**



**Introduction to  
Environmental  
Ethics**

**Issues in  
Environmental  
Ethics**

**James  
Lovelock on  
Environmental  
Ethics**

**Arne Næss on  
Environmental  
Ethics**



# Introduction to Environmental Ethics

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

1. **What** is environmental 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 environmental ethics, it is necessary to understand where it is located in the field of ethics. Write definitions for "applied ethics" and "environmental ethics".

Applied Ethics	Environmental Ethics

There are two significant approaches to environmental ethics, and those concerned with environmental issues usually subscribe to one of them. Although both approaches promote care for the environment, there are some important differences between them. Make a note about the two approaches (i.e. conservation and stewardship).

Approaches to Environmental Ethics	
Conservation	Stewardship

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

The approaches to environmental ethics (i.e. conservation and stewardship) are usually motivated by underlying beliefs. Conservation is usually motivated by one of two different underlying beliefs, and stewardship is motivated by a third underlying belief. Make a note about the underlying beliefs that can motivate conservation.

Anthropocentrism	Biocentrism



Stewardship is motivated by a different underlying belief to those associated with conservation. Importantly, the underlying belief that motivates stewardship is religious, whilst the underlying beliefs that motivate conservation are not. Make a note about the underlying belief that motivates stewardship.

Theocentrism

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

Although the approaches to environmental ethics are similar, because they both promote care for the environment, their differences have a profound impact on how people treat the environment. Conservationists inspired by anthropocentrism (also known as shallow ecologists) do not seek to preserve the environment beyond the level required to safeguard human survival; this means they only protect those parts of the environment that are useful to people. On the other hand, conservationists inspired by biocentrism (also known as deep ecologists) seek to preserve the environment to the greatest extent possible; they believe damage and destruction of the environment is only justified if it is done to fulfil basic human needs. Stewards sit somewhere between the two types of conservationist; they believe that God wants them to care for living things, and treat the environment responsibly. Consider the differences between conservationists and stewards, and make a note about why they are important.

Why the Approaches to Environmental Ethics Are Important		
Approach	How	Why
<b>Stewardship</b> Theocentrism	Consider all living things in ethical decision-making but prioritise human beings.	
<b>Conservation</b> Anthropocentrism Shallow Ecology	Consider human beings in ethical decision-making.	
<b>Conservation</b> Biocentrism Deep Ecology	Consider all living things in ethical decision-making.	

# Issues in Environmental Ethics

- 1. **What** are the key issues in environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** are the key issues in environmental ethics approached?
- 3. **Why** are the approaches to the key issues in environmental ethics important?

1. **What** are the key issues in environmental ethics?

Human beings have an unquestionably harmful effect on the environment; however, some human activities are more damaging and destructive than others. The most harmful activities are all key issues in environmental ethics, because they stimulate significant debate about the extent to which human beings should be allowed to damage or destroy the environment. Make a note about three key issues in environmental ethics (i.e. sustainability, waste management, and climate change).

Key Issues in Environmental Ethics		
Sustainability	Waste Management	Climate Change

2. **How** are the key issues in environmental ethics approached?

The two significant approaches to environmental ethics are conservation and stewardship. Sustainability, waste management, and climate change are addressed differently depending on which approach is adopted. Make a note about how the most important issues in environmental ethics are addressed.

How Stewards Approach Key Issues in Environmental Ethics	
Approach	How
Stewardship Theocentrism	



How Conservationists Approach Key Issues in Environmental Ethics	
Approach	How
<b>Conservation</b> Anthropocentrism Shallow Ecology	
<b>Conservation</b> Biocentrism Deep Ecology	

3. **Why** are the approaches to the key issues in environmental ethics important?

The approaches to sustainability, waste management, and climate change dictate what life looks like for human beings and the environment. Make a note of how stewards and conservationists suggest living to address the problems created by natural resource consumption and pollution.

How Stewards and Conservationists Suggest Living		
<b>Stewardship</b> Theocentrism	<b>Conservation</b> Anthropocentrism Shallow Ecology	<b>Conservation</b> Biocentrism Deep Ecology

Beyond what life looks like for human beings and the environment, how environmental issues are addressed is important for other reasons. Make a note of three additional reasons why the approaches to the key issues in environmental ethics are important.

Why the Approaches to the Key Issues in Environmental Ethics are Important	
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# James Lovelock on Environmental Ethics

- 1. **Who** is James Lovelock and what are his key ideas on environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** do James Lovelock's key ideas on environmental ethics work?
- 3. **Why** are James Lovelock's key ideas on environmental ethics important?

1. **Who** is James Lovelock and what are his key ideas on environmental ethics?

James Lovelock (b. 1919) is a British scientist and member of the environmental movement. He is most famous for developing the Gaia hypothesis, which he introduced and explained in his book of the same name, Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth (published in 1979). Although it was ridiculed by some scientists at the time, it has since become a fundamental assumption of ecology science. Make a note about who he is and what he has done.

## James Lovelock (b. 1919)

James Lovelock introduced three key ideas about environmental ethics in his book, Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth. Make a note about three of his key ideas.

## Key Ideas of James Lovelock on Environmental Ethics

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James Lovelock is most famous for developing the Gaia hypothesis. Make a note about the Gaia hypothesis and its supporting evidence.

## The Gaia Hypothesis





# Arne Næss on Environmental Ethics

- 1. **Who** was Arne Næss and what are his key ideas on environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** do Arne Næss's key ideas on environmental issues work?
- 3. **Why** are Arne Næss's key ideas on environmental issues important?

1. **Who** was Arne Næss and what are his key ideas on environmental ethics?

Arne Næss (1912-2009) was a Norwegian philosopher and environmentalist. He received his PhD from the University of Oslo, and was appointed as its youngest ever professor in 1939. In 1970, he resigned his academic chair and retired to his mountain hut (Tvergastein), where he spent the rest of the decade developing deep ecology and writing Ecology, Community and Lifestyle (published in 1989). Make a note about who he was and what he did.

Arne Næss (1912-2009)

To understand Arne Næss's key ideas on environmental ethics, it is necessary to understand his definitions of "ideology" and "ecosophy". Write definitions for "ideology" and "ecosophy".

Ideology	Ecosophy

Arne Næss introduced three key ideas about environmental ethics in his book, Ecology, Community and Lifestyle. Make a note about three of his key ideas.

Key Ideas of Arne Næss on Environmental Ethics	
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2. **How** do Arne Næss's key ideas on environmental issues work?

Arne Næss's key ideas support his view that human beings should radically change their ways of life to benefit both themselves and Earth. Taken together, they form an ethical argument that concludes all living things have equal intrinsic value and human beings should behave accordingly. Explain how each key idea supports his view.

How the Key Ideas of Arne Næss on Environmental Ethics Work		
The root cause of environmental issues is capitalist ideology.	Promoting ecosophy can solve environmental issues.	Deep ecology recognises the intrinsic value of all living things.

3. **Why** are Arne Næss's key ideas on environmental issues important?

The key ideas of Arne Næss are important for three reasons in particular. Make a note about why his key ideas are important.

Why the Key Ideas of Arne Næss on Environmental Ethics Are Important	
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# Debates in Environmental Ethics

- 1. **What** are the debates in environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** do the debates in environmental ethics work?
- 3. **Why** are the debates in environmental ethics important?

1. **What** are the debates in environmental ethics?

The most important debates in environmental ethics go beyond those involved in environmental issues, like sustainability, waste management, and climate change. The debates discussed here take place at a deeper level, and their answers influence the ways that different people approach environmental issues (e.g. conservation and stewardship). Make a note about three of the most important debates in environmental ethics (i.e. value, interests, and attitude).

Debates in Environmental Ethics		
Value	Interests	Attitude

The very important debate about value is over whether the environment and other living things have intrinsic value or instrumental value. This debate is of central importance because it affects how human beings evaluate the worth of the environment, either as something that is valuable in itself or as something that is valuable only as a tool for something else. Consequently, it is important to know what these types of value are in order to understand this debate. Write definitions for "intrinsic value" and "instrumental value".

Intrinsic Value	Instrumental Value



2. **How** do the debates in environmental ethics work?

The debates in environmental ethics are about more than environmental issues. In fact, debates about value, interests and attitude affect other areas of applied ethics as well (e.g. animal ethics, and medical ethics). Make a note about how the debates in environmental ethics work.

How the Debates in Environmental Ethics Work		
Value	Interests	Attitude

3. **Why** are the debates in environmental ethics important?

The debates in environmental ethics are important for several reasons. Arguably the most important is the effect they have on human lifestyles. Make a note about how the debates in environmental ethics affect the lifestyles of human beings.

How the Debates in Environmental Ethics Affect Lifestyles	

Beyond the effect they have on people's lifestyles, the debates in environmental ethics are important for other reasons related to the threat posed by environmental issues. Make a note of three additional reasons why the debates in environmental ethics are important.

Why the Debates in Environmental Ethics are Important	
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# Legal and Social Perspectives in Environmental Ethics

- 1. **What** are the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** do the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics work?
- 3. **Why** are the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics important?

1. **What** are the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics?

Perspectives are viewpoints, and both the international legal system and its representatives, and the people of the world in their various societies, have different perspectives on environmental ethics. Make a note about the legal perspective and the social perspective in environmental ethics.

Legal Perspective

Social Perspective

2. **How** do the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics work?

The legal perspective in environmental ethics is varied; however, there is some consensus at the international level among most members of the United Nations. Generally, obviously serious and urgent environmental issues are vigorously addressed, but others are not. Make a note about three legally binding treaties in environmental ethics.

How the Legal Perspective in Environmental Ethics Works	
Montreal Protocol	
Kyoto Protocol	
Paris Agreement	

Just like the legal perspective, the social perspective in environmental ethics is varied. Nevertheless, it is generally more biocentric, which means it is supported by the belief that life is the most important thing in the universe, and its anthropocentric wing is weak (i.e. it is concerned for future generations of human beings, not just those alive today). Generally, it is ideological and prioritises environmental issues over all others. Make a note about three social protests in environmental ethics.

How the Social Perspective in Environmental Ethics Works	
People's Climate March	
Extinction Rebellion	
Earth Strike	

3. **Why** are the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics important?

The legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics govern how seriously environmental issues are taken; consequently, they are capable of effecting significant change. Even though United Nations treaties are frequently criticised, because environmentalists argue they do not go far enough, they can lead to large-scale change. Make a note about how the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics can effect large-scale change in how environmental issues are addressed.

How the Legal and Social Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Effect Change	

Beyond the effect they have on change, the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics are important for other reasons related to the scale of the threat posed by environmental issues. Make a note of three additional reasons why the legal and social perspectives in environmental ethics are important.

Why the Legal and Social Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Are Important	
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# Religious Perspectives in Environmental Ethics

- 1. **What** are the religious perspectives in environmental ethics?
- 2. **How** do the religious perspectives in environmental ethics work?
- 3. **Why** are the religious perspectives in environmental ethics important?

1. **What** are the religious perspectives in environmental ethics?

There are numerous religious perspectives in environmental ethics. Christianity and Judaism share some common scriptures, most notably what Jews call "the Hebrew Bible" or "Tanakh" and Christians call "the Old Testament". These scriptures are open to different interpretations about how human beings should treat the environment; some of these interpretations are grouped together under the title of stewardship, whilst others are grouped together under the title of dominion. Make a note about the stewardship and dominion approaches to environmental ethics.

Stewardship

Dominion

2. **How** do the religious perspectives in environmental ethics work?

The religious perspectives in environmental ethics are many and varied. Even among Christians, it is possible to adopt two distinct approaches: stewardship or dominion. Make a note about the perspectives of the Anglican Communion, the Catholic Church, and the Cornwall Alliance.

How the Religious Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Works	
Perspective	How
The Anglican Communion	

### How the Religious Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Works

Perspective	How
The Catholic Church	
The Cornwall Alliance	

3. **Why** are the religious perspectives in environmental ethics important?

One significant reason why the religious perspectives in environmental ethics are important is because there are so many religious people on Earth. The numbers involved mean religious leaders are incredibly powerful. Make a note about how the religious perspectives in environmental ethics can effect change.

### How the Religious Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Effect Change

Beyond the effect they have on change, the religious perspectives in environmental ethics are important for other reasons related to the scale of the threat posed by environmental issues. Make a note of three additional reasons why the religious perspectives in environmental ethics are important.

### Why the Religious Perspectives in Environmental Ethics Are Important

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**Acknowledgements:** George Teaches Limited would like to thank the following for permission to use their photographs: **front cover:** Massimo Rivenci/Unsplash; **p. 2:** Riccardo Chiarini/Unsplash; **p. 3:** Riccardo Chiarini/Unsplash; and **back cover:** Massimo Rivenci/Unsplash.

