

# Effective Altruism

1. **What** is effective altruism?
2. **How** does effective altruism work?
3. **Why** is effective altruism important?

## 1. **What** is effective altruism?

Effective altruism is a philosophical phenomenon. It promotes the evidence-based charitable giving of disposable income to avoid preventable deaths and alleviate unnecessary suffering. Unlike many other types of charitable giving, effective altruism is characterised by rational decision-making and the repression of emotional responses to misery and pain. Write a definition for "effective altruism".

### Effective Altruism

The term "effective altruism" derives its meaning from the words "effectiveness" and "altruism". Effectiveness is the capacity to successfully produce a desired outcome, and altruism is a system of beliefs and practices that promotes concern for the wellbeing of other people and animals. Effective altruists argue that altruism is most successful when it is concerned with the avoidance of preventable deaths. Make a note about effectiveness and altruism.

### Effectiveness

### Altruism

## 2. **How** does effective altruism work?

Peter Singer is responsible for developing one of the most persuasive arguments for effective altruism, based on the drowning child thought experiment (first framed in 1972, in a paper titled *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*). Peter Singer uses the drowning child thought experiment to argue that proximity is not a morally significant factor in evaluating whether or not human beings are morally obliged to provide life-saving assistance to others. He argues that human beings should give away their disposable income to organisations that stop people from suffering and dying from preventable causes worldwide. Explain how the drowning child thought experiment works.

## Drowning Child Thought Experiment

Effective altruism is an important philosophical movement because it saves lives. Generally, charitable giving is emotional and spontaneous, which means considerable sums are given to charities that do not significantly improve human or animal wellbeing. Make a note of some examples of effective altruism.

## Examples of Effective Altruism

3. **Why** is effective altruism important?

Effective altruism is an important system of beliefs and practices and an important philosophical movement for several reasons. However, there are three reasons of particular significance, including its effect on wellbeing, the environment, and society more generally. Make a note about why effective altruism is important.

## Why Effective Altruism Is Important

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