

What Is Evil?*

Evaluating * Organizing * Prioritizing * Synthesizing * Analyzing

Directions are provided in each step. Some you will do alone, others you will do with your group. Keep and turn in all notes when done. Start this process alone.

1. Define evil (you may use a dictionary to help you, but the bulk of the definition has to be yours); write your definition on a clean sheet of paper. Draw a line to section off this part of your work.
2. Decide which actions you feel are evil and why you feel that way; write a brief list and an explanation for your feelings. Draw a line to section off this part of your work.
3. Share your definition and list of actions with your group. Using your shared notes, create a group definition for evil (it must be different from your individual definitions). Each group member should write this down on their own sheet of paper. Draw a line to section off this part of your work.
4. Go through the following list with your group. Decide which of the items your group feels is evil and why your group feels this way. Your entire group must agree on each one (i.e. your decision must be unanimous). Each group member should record what the group decides on their own sheet paper. When you are done, draw a line to section off this part of your work.
 - A. The pilot dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
 - B. The scientist designed the atomic bomb.
 - C. The president ordered the man to design the bomb and told the pilot to drop it.
 - D. A man kills his friend in a fit of blind rage.
 - E. A soldier being held prisoner kills another captive soldier when he is told by his captors, "Kill him or we will kill you both."
 - F. An oppressed man kills his oppressor to achieve freedom.
 - G. A woman who has been repeatedly abused by her husband kills him while he sleeps.
 - H. A man rapes a child.
 - I. A man walks in on another man; the other man is raping a child; the first man kills the other because he is raping a child.
 - J. A major league pitcher in the World Series game throws a wild pitch at the other team's best hitter, hitting him intentionally in order to take him out of the game.
 - K. A professional boxer in a boxing match hits his opponent, killing him.

- L. A woman uses her computer to access highly confidential personal information that includes both medical and financial information and then publishes it on the internet.
 - M. A person who has AIDS has sex with many different people.
 - N. A man with AIDS rapes a young child because he believes it will cure him.
 - O. One person confides in another who is HIV-positive; the confidante tells another person who tells another; eventually he infected person's boss hears of it and fires the HIV-infected individual because they are HIV-positive.
 - P. A pro-life activist murders a doctor who performs abortions as he is leaving his place of employment.
 - Q. A politician promises he will not cut funding to a certain group of constituents and then, upon entering office, finds he can solve the problem no other way and cuts the funding to these people.
 - R. A poor, single mother steals.
 - S. A rich, married couple donates the bad food from their restaurant to a homeless shelter.
 - T. A mentally ill parent kills their kids.
 - U. A single, teenage mother knocks her daughter out with chloroform each night so that the girl will stay asleep while she is out trying to find a father figure for her daughter.
5. When your group has discussed all of the above actions and come to an agreement on each one, re-evaluate the group definition of evil. If it has changed or been modified, write the new definition on your paper. Each group member should record what the group decides on their own sheet paper. When you are done, draw a line to section off this part of your work.
 6. As a group, create criteria for evaluating evil. Make sure your criteria accords with your decisions about the actions above and can account for any exceptions to the rule.

* Adapted from an exercise by Jim Burke.

What Is VIGILANTISM?¹

Evaluating * Organizing * Prioritizing * Synthesizing * Analyzing

Directions are provided in each step. Some you will do alone, others you will do with your group. Keep and turn in all notes when done. Start this process alone.

1. Define vigilantism (you may use a dictionary to help you, but the bulk of the definition has to be yours); write your definition on a clean sheet of paper. Draw a box around your definition to section off this part of your work.
2. Decide which actions you feel should be labeled “vigilante acts” and why you feel that way; write a brief list and an explanation for your feelings. Draw a box around these acts & your explanation to section off this part of your work.
3. Share your definition and list of actions with your group. Using your shared notes, create a group definition for vigilantism (it must be different from your individual definitions). Each group member should write this down on their own sheet of paper. Draw a box around the group definition to section off this part of your work.
4. Go through the following list with your group. Decide which of the items your group feels should be labeled “vigilante acts” and why your group feels this way. Your entire group must agree on each one (i.e. your decision must be unanimous). Each group member should record what the group decides on their own sheet paper. When you are done, draw a line to section off this part of your work.
 - A. The hijackers who flew planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001
 - B. The Ku Klux Klan
 - C. The members of Perverted Justice who pose as children to help catch pedophiles
 - D. A man that brings a gun to work to negotiate a pay raise
 - E. An oppressed man kills his oppressor to achieve freedom.
 - F. A robber with hostages
 - G. A woman who has been repeatedly abused by her husband kills him while he sleeps.
 - H. A man walks in on another man; the other man is raping a child; the first man kills the other because he is raping a child.
 - I. Citizens who patrol the southern border with guns, believing they are helping the US Border Patrol
 - J. A child tells his teacher about the school bully

¹ Adapted from an exercise by Jim Burke.

- K. A man's family is killed by a man who does not go to prison for his crime. The widower makes plans to kill the murderer and the members of the justice department who let the killer off
- L. A person who has AIDS has sex with many different people
- M. A person who has AIDS has sex with criminals and sex offenders
- N. To prevent a thief from stealing an important artifact, a person steals the artifact to keep the thief from stealing it
- O. A pro-life activist murders a doctor who performs abortions as he is leaving his place of employment.
- P. A rape victim, after discovering she is carrying her rapists baby, has an abortion
- Q. A person distributes literature stating that the government is corrupt and urging others to not pay their taxes
- R. A rich person, in protest of high taxes, sets up a bank account in the Caribbean where the USG will not be able to tax his/her money
- S. A child brings a gun to school to kill the school bully
- T. Private citizens hold a protest on government property
- U. A parent kills his/her child to prevent the other parent from winning sole custody
- V. A private citizen kills a registered sex offender who has served time for his/her crimes

5. When your group has discussed all of the above actions and come to an agreement on each one, re-evaluate the group definition of vigilantism. If it has changed or been modified, write the new definition on your paper. Each group member should record what the group decides on their own sheet paper. When you are done, draw a line to section off this part of your work.
6. As a group, create criteria for evaluating vigilantism. Make sure your criteria accords with your decisions about the actions above and can account for any exceptions to the rule.

Helpful Legal Definitions:

Murder

- 1st degree- to kill someone “either deliberately and intentionally or recklessly with extreme disregard for human life.” 1st degree murder is premeditated, which means that the person doing the killing knew before the murder that he/she was going to kill and had time to think about the act and consequences.
- ...in Self-Defense- a reasonable belief that the only way to stop someone from killing or causing severe physical harm to themselves is by exerting deadly force against their attacker.
- ... and Pleading Insanity- a murder that was committed when the murderer was either unable to understand what he/she was doing or the consequences of his/her actions by reason of mental illness, mental deficiency, or an abnormal mental state (shock, extreme terror and panic, etc.).
- And Depravity of Mind – when the murder has no conscience or moral compass; the murder is usually guilty of a horrendous act, but feels no remorse or gives no sign that he/she is human or cares for human life.

Manslaughter

- Voluntary- Killing without intent; not premeditated; this includes reckless behavior that could lead to the death of another
- Involuntary- killing without intent; not premeditated; this includes reckless behavior that could lead to the death of another

Manslaughter and the degree (difference between voluntary & involuntary) is determined by 5 factors:

1. Provocation- when, in relation to the time of the crime, was the guilty party provoked? If the guilty party was provoked mere moments before the crime, involuntary is most likely unless malice can be proven. If the guilty party was provoked earlier and had a chance to think/calm down before the crime occurred, the charges could be moved up to voluntary manslaughter or murder depending on premeditation and malicious intent
2. Mutual Combat- if only one person in a fight dies, manslaughter is used. If the fight is waged with both or all parties intent on killing (like a duel), murder is used.
3. Murder of a police officer or other law enforcement employee- If you kill a cop who arrested you and is acting within the law, murder is used. If you kill a cop

who is acting outside of the law, the charges can be reduced to manslaughter or homicide.

4. Murder during the prosecution of unlawful/wanton acts- if a person throws rocks at the windows of an abandoned building, and one of those rocks hits a man in the head, killing him, manslaughter is used.
5. Murder during the prosecution of lawful acts, improperly performed, or done without authority- if a cop accidentally kills a man he is trying to arrest (and no premeditation or malicious intent is proven), manslaughter is used. If a Good Samaritan tried to help someone and kills that person while trying to help, manslaughter is used. Doctors who kill patients during surgery are charged with manslaughter

Terrorism

- A violent act or acts against innocent civilians done with the intent to coerce a government or organization to make changes in policy or actions; the acts committed are criminal offenses.

Rhetorical Terrorism

- A violent act against a member of government (or a private organization) done with the intent to scare the other members into making changes and to present a weakened/vulnerable view of the government for civilians (in hopes that they will rebel and join the terrorist or support them)
- Assassinations of presidents are examples of rhetorical terrorism; no civilians are targeted or harmed