

# EUTHANASIA

## Learning outcomes:

To **describe** euthanasia  
To **explain** religious views on  
euthanasia  
To **evaluate** if euthanasia  
should be legal in the UK

## Starter:

Have you ever had a  
pet?  
What happens to pets  
when they are  
terminally ill? Explain.



# Key Terms

- **Euthanasia:** the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma.

## Challenge!

Is euthanasia morally right? Why?



1. Watch the clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo8Hn0DEcpw>

2. Take notes on  
Euthanasia.

Challenge!

How does this make you  
feel after watching the  
clip? Why?



# **What are the different types of Euthanasia?**



# What are the different types of Euthanasia?

## Voluntary Euthanasia

This is when a person asks a doctor to end their life as they do not wish to live anymore. This is their own choice.

## Non-voluntary Euthanasia

This is when the person is too ill to request to die, for example because they are in a coma, but a doctor will end their life for them because it is thought to do so would be in the best interests of the person.

## Involuntary Euthanasia

This is when the person is able to provide consent but does not, either because they do not want to or because they are not asked, but their life is ended anyway.

## Challenge!

Which type of euthanasia is ethically right? Why?



# **How is Euthanasia Performed?**



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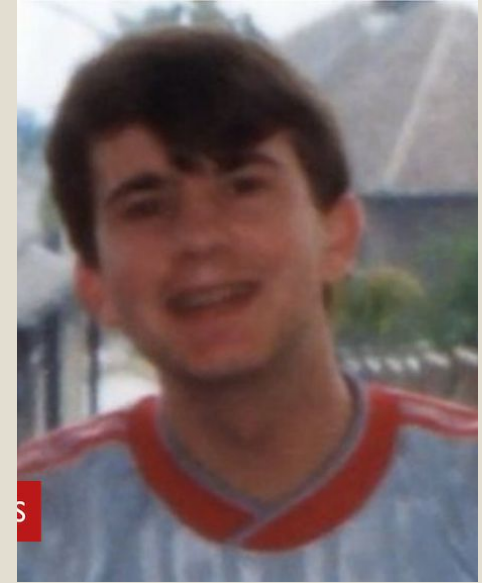
- **Active euthanasia** is when active steps are taken to end someone's life, for example by giving them a lethal injection.
- **Passive euthanasia** is when doctors stop providing treatment or do something that is intended to quicken the natural process of dying. For example, when a person is not resuscitated after a heart attack.
- All forms of euthanasia are currently illegal in the UK and treated as manslaughter or murder. However a medical decision may be made to withhold treatment if it is considered to be in a patient's best interests. In Britain such action would not be considered euthanasia.

1. What are the two forms of euthanasia?
2. Is euthanasia illegal in the UK? Why do you think that is the case?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the two forms of euthanasia? Why?



# Tony Bland

- At 18 years old Tony Bland went to see his favourite football team, Liverpool FC, play at Sheffield's Hillsborough football stadium in 1989. Overcrowding and a rush of fans into the stadium led to a crush that resulted in 94 deaths. Tony's ribs were crushed and his lungs were punctured. This interrupted the supply of oxygen to his brain and resulted in irreversible damage, which left him in persistent vegetative state. Although there was no hope of recovery he was kept alive with food and fluids that were fed through tubes. The hospital, with his parents support, petitioned the court for permission to allow him to die. In 1993 the consent was obtained and doctors withdrew the food and fluids that were keeping him alive. This was the first time in the UK that this action was legally permitted. The law did not recognise the removal of Tony Bland's feeding tubes as passive euthanasia. Some critics believe that this was in fact 'euthanasia through the back door'.



1. Do you think this was morally right? Why?
2. What would you have done if you were working at the hospital and he was your patient? Why would you do that?



# Christians Views on Euthanasia

“All people deserve compassion and care in their suffering and dying. Euthanasia and assisted suicide should not, however, be considered acceptable responses. They undermine human dignity and are morally wrong.”  
The Salvation Army

“Blessed are the merciful.”  
Matthew 5:7

“You shall not murder.”  
Exodus 20:13

“...all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”  
Psalm 139:16



# What do these quotes tell us about Christian Views on Euthanasia?

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Exodus 20:13

## **Challenge!**

Which one do you agree the most with? Why?  
Which one do you disagree the most with? Why?



# Christian Views on Euthanasia

- Many Christians believe that taking a life is interfering with God's plan. They think it is comparable to murder and open to abuse. For example, if euthanasia was legalised, it could potentially lead to those who are very old feeling pressure to ask for euthanasia in order not to burden their families. Most Christians believe that euthanasia is against the sanctity of life, and only God has the right to take life away at a chosen time.
- Modern drugs and hospice care provide the dying with a chance to end their lives with dignity and without pain. Where suffering is unavoidable, some Christians say that this can bring people nearer to God and can help them to understand the suffering of Jesus.

1. Explain two Christians views on Euthanasia.
2. Reread the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, why may some Christians agree with this?
3. Watch the clip on St Peters Hospice:  
<https://youtu.be/aGTios6laOg>
4. How does the clip support a Christians view on hospices?



# Christians Views on Euthanasia

- Some Christians do support euthanasia and believe that the drugs that are used to end a suffering person's life are God-given, and should be used if it is the most loving thing to do. They believe that God has given people free will so they should be able to choose when to end their lives.



# **What Would A Buddhist View On Euthanasia be?**



# What Would A Buddhist View On Euthanasia be?

- Many Buddhists are against euthanasia, however, views towards euthanasia vary between Buddhists and may depend on the circumstances in which euthanasia is carried out. Below are some of the key points on euthanasia in Buddhism.
- The First Moral Precept – which is to not kill or harm any living being.
- Personal Choice - Buddhism emphasises personal choice and responsibility. Some Buddhists argue that if a person has a clear mind and is not affected by any outside pressure, they should be allowed to choose what to do with their own life, including whether to end it or not.
- Karma, Rebirth And Suffering – when a person dies, their consciousness is passed into a new life. According to the teaching of karma, in this new life a person will experience the consequences of the skilful or unskilful actions in their previous lives. This could mean that the person being reborn would suffer as a consequence of the forced ending of their previous life.
- Compassion – it can be seen as compassionate to help someone die, however, it can be argued that it may relieve that person's suffering in the short term, but will lead to more suffering in the future.
- State of Mind of the person at death is important, it influences their rebirth. If a person is helped to die quickly and peacefully, this could benefit their future consciousness.

The Dalai Lama (1993) commented that euthanasia should be avoided except in exceptional circumstances (such as when a person is in a coma with no hope of recovery).

**Why do you think that might be the case?**



# Can you correct the mistakes in the passage?

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‘Euthanasia should be allowed in the UK.’ Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should: Give detailed arguments in support of this statement

- Give detailed arguments in support of a different point of view
- Refer to religious scripture or teachings
  - Reach a justified conclusion

**(12 marks)**

**F**or – Some \_\_\_\_\_ agree with this statement because...Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore this is a strong/weak argument because...

**A**gainst – Other \_\_\_\_\_ disagree with this statement because...Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore this is a strong/weak argument because...

**R**eligious – Some **Protestants/Catholics/Mahayana/Theravada** .... Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore this is a strong/weak argument because...

**M**y opinion – Overall, I think the strongest argument is...because...Therefore...



# Did you include these points?

## Arguments in support

1. If someone is suffering unbearably and going to die anyway, it may be kinder to help them to die than to help them alive to suffer more.
2. It is a person's choice and right to decide what to do with their life.
3. Dignity in death.
4. Buddhism suggests it may be the most compassionate thing to do in some situations.

## Arguments against

1. It is murder – 'thou shall not kill.' Also goes against the Buddhist First Moral Precept 'Do not harm or kill any living being.'
2. Interferes with Gods plan.
3. Disrespects the sanctity of life.
4. Only God has the right to give and take away life.



# Peer Marking

## Question 5 (12 marks):

**Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence.**

Levels	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.	10-12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant information.	7-9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence	4-6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1-3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0



# **Do We All Have The Right To Decide** **When We Die? Why?**