

EthosForge – Joke Book

A Spark & Anvil joke book. Groan-worthy puns, tricky riddles, silly nonsense, and real fun facts from the world of EthosForge – read them out loud and make someone laugh.

Why did the golden rule go to school?

To learn how to treat others the way it wants to be treated!

How to use this book

Read a joke, pause at the question, and try to guess the answer before you read on. Best of all: read them out loud to a friend, a grown-up, or your class. A good laugh makes the tricky stuff easier – that's real science.

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[How to use this book](#)

[Puns](#)

[Riddles](#)

[Silly Stuff](#)

[Fun Facts](#)

[Keep laughing](#)

Keep exploring online

Puns

Why did the golden rule go to school?

💡 To learn how to treat others the way it wants to be treated!

What did fairness say when it got picked last?

💡 "That's not very fair – and I should know!"

Why was the ethical dilemma so hard to solve?

💡 Because both answers had good points!

What do you call someone who always does the right thing?

💡 A person of good character – and they never take short-cuts!

Why did the promise feel so important?

💡 Because breaking it would crack trust!

What did empathy say to sympathy?

💡 "I don't just feel FOR you – I feel WITH you!"

Why was the utilitarian always counting?

💡 They wanted the greatest good for the greatest number!

What did justice say to mercy?

💡 "We don't always agree, but the world needs both of us!"

Why was the bystander effect so frustrating?

💡 Everyone assumed someone ELSE would help!

What did one perspective say to another?

💡 "I see your point – but have you seen mine?"

Why did Kant's categorical imperative go to the gym?

💡 To work on its universal maxims!

What did the consequentialist say to the deontologist?

💡 "It's not about the rules – it's about the results!"

Why was the social contract so popular?

💡 Everyone agreed to it – that was the whole point!

What did integrity say when nobody was watching?

💡 "I'm still here – that's kind of my whole thing!"

Why did the moral compass need batteries?

💡 It kept losing its direction in tough situations!

What did Aristotle say about being a good person?

💡 "It's not one good deed – it's a HABIT of good deeds. Get practicing!"

Why was the trolley problem the most famous ethical dilemma?

💡 Because no matter which track you choose, someone's unhappy!

What did the rights-based ethicist say during the debate?

💡 "Some things are non-negotiable – they're called RIGHTS!"

Why was the veil of ignorance such a good thought experiment?

💡 Because you'd design a fair society if you didn't know where you'd end up in it!

What did the moral philosopher say at the restaurant?

💡 "I'll have the ethical option – whatever causes the least harm to the most beings!"

Riddles

I'm a rule that says "treat others the way you want to be treated." Almost every culture has a version of me. What am I?

 The Golden Rule!

I'm the feeling you get when you can understand how someone else feels. What am I?

 Empathy!

I'm what you use to tell the difference between right and wrong. What am I?

 Your moral compass (conscience)!

I'm a situation where you have to choose between two options, and both have good and bad consequences. What am I?

 An ethical dilemma!

I'm doing the right thing even when nobody is watching. What am I?

 Integrity!

I'm the principle that says everyone deserves to be treated equally. What am I?

💡 Fairness (equity)!

I'm the ability to see a situation from someone else's point of view. What am I?

💡 Perspective-taking!

I'm what happens when everyone in a group thinks someone else will take action, so nobody does. What am I?

💡 The bystander effect!

I mean keeping your word, even when it's hard. What am I?

💡 Honoring a promise (keeping commitments)!

I'm an agreement – spoken or unspoken – where people give up some freedom in exchange for a functioning society. What am I?

💡 The social contract!

I judge whether an action is right or wrong based on its OUTCOMES. What am I?

💡 Consequentialism (utilitarianism)!

I judge whether an action is right or wrong based on the RULES it follows, regardless of outcomes. What am I?

💡 Deontology (duty-based ethics)!

I'm the idea that being ethical means developing good CHARACTER traits like courage, honesty, and kindness. What am I?

💡 Virtue ethics!

I'm a famous thought experiment involving a runaway trolley and a difficult choice. What am I?

💡 The trolley problem!

I'm the philosopher who said you should only act according to rules you'd want EVERYONE to follow. What am I?

💡 Immanuel Kant (and his categorical imperative)!

I'm a thought experiment where you design a society without knowing what role you'd play in it. What am I?

💡 Rawls' veil of ignorance!

I'm the idea that some moral truths are universal – not just a matter of culture or opinion. What am I?

💡 Moral universalism!

I'm the opposite – I say that right and wrong depend on the culture or individual. What am I?

💡 Moral relativism!

I'm the branch of ethics that deals with real-world issues like the environment, technology, and medicine. What am I?

 Applied ethics!

I'm the ability to make moral decisions at increasingly complex levels as you grow up. What am I?

 Moral development (Kohlberg's stages)!

Silly Stuff

A kid uses the Golden Rule to justify giving everyone broccoli for their birthday. – "I LOVE broccoli, so I'm treating others the way I want to be treated!" Mom: "That's... technically correct, but maybe ask what THEY want."

A school installs a "Fairness Machine" that divides everything equally. – Day 1: Equal snacks. Day 2: Equal homework. Day 3: Equal blame for things only ONE kid did. "This machine has no nuance!"

A conscience becomes visible as a tiny floating advisor above everyone's head. – The honest kid's advisor is quiet. The class troublemaker's advisor is SCREAMING. "MAYBE DON'T PUT GLUE ON THE TEACHER'S CHAIR!"

A class debates whether it's okay to eat the last cookie if nobody's looking. – The utilitarian: "Does eating it maximize happiness?" The deontologist: "Is there a rule about cookies?" The virtue ethicist: "What would a good person do?" Everyone: "JUST EAT THE COOKIE."

A school holds an "Empathy Day" where everyone has to walk in someone else's shoes. – Literally. Chaos ensues. The basketball player is in size 4 shoes: "I can't feel my toes!" Teacher: "THAT'S empathy!"

The bystander effect takes over a classroom fire drill. – Everyone assumes someone else pulled the alarm. The alarm: "SOMEBODY has to pull me!" Students: "After you." "No, after YOU."

A kid creates an AI that always makes the most ethical choice. – It can't decide what to order for lunch because every option has an ethical trade-off. "The salad has less environmental impact, but the sandwich supports local farmers, but—" *crashes*

A philosophy class puts the trolley problem to a vote. – 30% say pull the lever, 30% say don't, and 40% say "Can we just stop the trolley?" The teacher: "That wasn't one of the options." Students: "MAKE it one!"

Kant visits a modern school and insists every rule must be universal. – "If you chew gum, EVERYONE must chew gum. If you're late, EVERYONE must be late." Principal: "That's not how school works." Kant: "Then FIX your maxims!"

A "Moral Compass" GPS is invented that gives ethical directions. – "Turn left for honesty. Turn right for convenience. Recalculating... you've chosen the grey area again." User: "Is there a 'it's complicated' route?"

A society designs itself behind the veil of ignorance, but someone peeks. – "I peeked and I'm going to be rich! So let's make taxes optional." Everyone else: "That defeats the ENTIRE PURPOSE." Rawls rolls in his philosophical grave.

A utilitarian and a deontologist are trapped on a desert island with one coconut. – The utilitarian: "Whoever is hungriest should eat it – maximum happiness." The deontologist: "We must establish fair coconut distribution RULES first." They argue until a bird eats the coconut.

A moral relativist visits a planet where lying is considered good. – "When in Rome..." they start lying. Earth friends: "But you KNOW lying is wrong!" Relativist: "Wrong according to WHOM?" Everyone has an existential crisis.

A virtue ethicist tries to be courageous, generous, and honest ALL at the same time. – They courageously and honestly tell their friend the truth about their cooking... then generously offer to order pizza. "I call that balanced virtue!"

Every philosophical thought experiment becomes a reality TV show. – "Welcome to TROLLEY ISLAND, where contestants face moral dilemmas for cash prizes!" Ethicists everywhere: "This is literally the opposite of what we intended."

Fun Facts

Almost every culture in history has some version of the Golden Rule! – Confucius said it 2,500 years ago. So did ancient Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, and Greek thinkers – independently! It's one of the most universal ethical ideas.

The word "ethics" comes from the Greek word "ethos," meaning... – Character! And "morals" comes from the Latin "mores," meaning customs. So ethics is literally the study of good character and good customs.

Studies show that children as young as 15 months old have a sense of fairness! – Toddlers get upset when they see resources divided unequally – the drive toward fairness seems to be built into our brains.

The "bystander effect" was discovered after a real event in New York City in 1964. – After the murder of Kitty Genovese (though the original story was partly inaccurate), psychologists found that the more people who witness an emergency, the less likely any individual is to help.

Dogs, elephants, and chimpanzees all show behaviors that look like empathy and fairness! – Dogs comfort distressed humans, elephants mourn their dead, and chimps share food and punish unfair behavior – morality may not be uniquely human.

Philosopher Peter Singer's work on animal ethics helped launch the modern animal rights movement. – His 1975 book argued that the ability to suffer, not intelligence, should determine moral consideration – changing how millions of people think about animals.

Lawrence Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development that humans progress through. – From "I'll be good to avoid punishment" (stage 1) to "I follow universal ethical principles even when they conflict with laws" (stage 6) – most adults only reach stages 3-4!

The "trolley problem" was invented by philosopher Philippa Foot in 1967. – What started as an abstract thought experiment is now used to program self-driving cars – real engineers use trolley-problem logic to decide how autonomous vehicles should handle unavoidable accidents!

Aristotle believed that virtues are developed through PRACTICE, like skills. – He said you become brave by doing brave things, honest by being honest, and generous by giving – virtue isn't something you're born with, it's a habit you build!

John Rawls' "veil of ignorance" is one of the most influential ethical thought experiments of the 20th century. – He asked: "What kind of society would you design if you didn't know whether you'd be rich or poor, healthy or sick, majority or minority?" It's a powerful tool for thinking about fairness.

The field of "AI ethics" is one of the fastest-growing areas of applied ethics today. – Questions like "Should an AI be allowed to make life-or-death decisions?" and "Who's responsible when an AI makes a mistake?" are being debated by ethicists, engineers, and lawmakers worldwide.

Immanuel Kant believed there are some things that are ALWAYS wrong, no matter what. – His "categorical imperative" says: if you wouldn't want EVERYONE to do something (like lying), then you shouldn't do it either – no exceptions, ever.

"Moral courage" – doing the right thing when it's difficult – activates different brain regions than physical courage. – Brain scans show that standing up for someone being bullied uses the prefrontal cortex (rational thinking) more than the amygdala (fear response), unlike physical danger situations.

The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 with input from every major world culture. – Its 30 articles represent an attempt to define universal ethical principles that apply to ALL humans – it's been translated into over 500 languages, more than any other document in history!

Research shows that people who regularly practice perspective-taking make better ethical decisions AND are more successful leaders. – The ability to imagine yourself in someone else's situation strengthens both your moral reasoning and your ability to work effectively with diverse groups of people.

Keep laughing

That's **70 jokes** from EthosForge. Made someone laugh? Try making up your own – the best jokes are the ones you tell.

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