OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Utilitarianism

Religion and Ethics

Can utilitarianism protect individuals adequately while making overall welfare its ultimate standard?

1,540 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

Individual-use digital edition | 10 November 2026

Argument plan

Can utilitarianism protect individuals adequately while making overall welfare its ultimate standard?

Thesis: Utilitarianism supplies powerful impartial reasons for protecting individuals, especially through Mill's concern for security and stable rules. However, those protections remain contingent on their contribution to aggregate welfare, so the theory cannot guarantee that an individual's fundamental interests will never be sacrificed for a sufficiently large overall gain.

1. Equal consideration and attention to suffering challenge privilege and protect neglected individuals.

Counter-argument: Counting every person's welfare equally is compatible with sacrificing a minority for aggregate benefit.

Interim judgement: Impartiality is a moral achievement, but it is not identical to inviolable protection.

2. Mill's qualitative happiness and concern for security provide stronger protection than crude pleasure totals.

Counter-argument: Quality and security still derive their authority from happiness rather than independently constraining it.

Interim judgement: Mill improves the practical case for rights without making their utilitarian foundation unconditional.

3. Rules and preference-sensitive reasoning reduce exploitation and respect agency.

Counter-argument: Exceptions, adaptive preferences and demanding aggregation remain possible.

Interim judgement: Utilitarianism is an indispensable test of policy consequences, but inadequate as the sole basis of absolute individual rights.