

Discussion Post Prompts: Abortion

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1 A Defense of Abortion

Possible discussion post topics

1. Do you agree with the upshot of Thomson's violinist case? If you found yourself hooked up to the violinist, would it be morally permissible to unhook yourself? Why or why not? And is Thomson's violinist case relevantly similar—for the purposes of deciding whether abortion is morally permissible—to cases involving mothers and their fetuses?
2. For the sake of argument, Thomson grants that fetuses are people. Then she argues that even so, it does not follow that abortion is always immoral. What did you think of that argumentative strategy? Do you agree with Thomson that even if fetuses are people, abortion may sometimes be permissible? Why or why not?

2 On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion

Possible discussion post topics

1. At one point, Warren discusses the following argument: (1) it is wrong to kill innocent human beings; (2) fetuses are innocent human beings; (3) therefore, it is wrong to kill fetuses. How does Warren criticize this argument? What do you think of those criticisms? What do you think of the argument? How would you criticize it, or how would you defend it against Warren's criticisms?
2. How is Warren's approach to the morality of abortion different from Thomson's? What criticisms of Thomson does Warren make? How might Thomson respond to those criticisms? How might you?

3 Why Abortion is Immoral

Possible discussion post topics

1. Why, according to Marquis, is killing wrong? Do you agree? Are there any other reasons for the immorality of killing? How might those other reasons relate to the reason that Marquis proposes?
2. Do you like the discontinuation account of the wrongness of killing? What arguments against it does Marquis give? Do those arguments succeed? Why or why not?