

What Makes Something Moral?

Read each of the following scenarios, which involve people making moral choices. Identify the object, intention, and circumstances surrounding the act and then indicate whether the choice is morally good or morally bad based on the information provided. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Scenario 1

A young man named Jonathan is struggling to feed his family. He and his wife are both out of work, and they do not have enough money to pay for rent and food. Jonathan knows he is responsible for the care of his family, and his two small children are beginning to show signs of malnutrition. Jonathan passes a grocery store and notices it has outdoor displays of vegetables that no one is watching. He doesn't want to steal, but he feels as if he doesn't have a choice. He decides to hide some vegetables under his jacket and takes them home to feed his family.

Object: _____

Intention: _____

Circumstances: _____

This choice is morally good / bad (circle one). Reason:

Do any of the circumstances mitigate Jonathan's guilt? Explain.



Scenario 2

A young woman named Theresa is a first-semester senior in high school. She is beginning to apply for colleges, and knows she has a good chance of receiving a full scholarship to an Ivy League university. Her grade point average is very high, but she is currently struggling with AP calculus. Knowing that a low math grade could hurt her chances of getting a scholarship, she decides to enlist the help of a classmate who is good at math. It is well known that the math teacher trusts his students' integrity to grade one another's tests. The teacher is unlikely to notice cheating, and Theresa knows that other students regularly cheat and get away with it. Nonetheless, she studies diligently for her math exam. Just before the class begins, Theresa decides she will not cheat, and she quietly informs the student from whom she was planning to get help.

Object: _____

Intention: _____

Circumstances: _____

This choice is morally good / bad (circle one). Reason:

Would any of the circumstances mitigate Theresa's guilt if she had chosen to cheat? Explain.

