1. Both Plato and Aristotle think that *akrasia* (weakness of will, lack of self-control) is a phenomenon with deep significance in moral psychology and the theory of virtue. With respect to either Plato or Aristotle, discuss: (a) Whether the phenomenon of *akrasia* is possible and how it is possible in their moral psychological theories; (b) Their analysis of the phenomenon (What happens, precisely, when an agent acts akratically, and why does this happen?); and (c) The significance of this phenomenon for thinking about the nature of virtue.

2. One of the formulations of Kant’s categorical imperative is that we must act in such a way that we always treat people as ends in themselves, and never merely as means. What does this mean? Present and evaluate Kant’s argument for the requirement, and try to identify a significant weakness.

3. Kant claims that a beneficent action performed out of sympathy has no moral worth. Why does he think this? Could we have good reasons for actions that have no moral worth? Discuss the views of at least one critic of Kant.

4. Rawls believes that the “burdens of judgment” under conditions of freedom make pluralism a fundamental fact of political life. Is it possible to resolve matters of justice on the basis of “public reason” despite this pluralism?

5. Explain the distinction between agent-relative and agent-neutral reasons. Should agent-relative reasons play any role in moral reasoning? Discuss with respect to at least two philosophers.

6. Explain the central idea of Scanlon’s contractualist account of morality. How does Scanlon argue against Utilitarianism? Does Scanlon’s account provide a plausible standard of right and wrong?

7. Explain Aristotle’s so-called “Unity of the Virtues” thesis and his argument for it. Explain the view of one contemporary theorist who denies this strong version of the Unity of the Virtues in favour of a weaker version. What are their reasons for rejecting the strong version of the thesis, and for adopting a weaker version? Which version of the thesis do you find most plausible and why?

8. Explain Mill’s distinction between higher and lower pleasures. What is the basis of this distinction? What is Mill’s point in drawing it? Does introducing a distinction such as this make utilitarianism more plausible by accounting for the role of reflection in moral thinking?

9. What kind of moral obligations might we have to people we do not know or specially care about? Evaluate Hume’s “narrow circle” argument and compare or contrast it with the views of at least one contemporary philosopher.
10. Some modern moral theories take action or the maxim of an action as the basic unit of moral assessment. Some neo-Aristotelians would argue that the basic unit of assessment is, or ought to be, an agent’s character, and that the assessment of action is, or ought to be, grounded in the assessment of character. What speaks for or against either position on the basic unit of moral assessment? Discuss with reference to at least two philosophers.

11. Peter Singer has argued on utilitarian grounds that most of us are doing far less than we are morally required to do. Susan Wolf argues that the same conclusion may be reached on Kantian grounds. Is this true? Do Kant’s and Mill’s theories entail that most of us are doing far less than we are morally required to do? If these theories do entail that, what is the significance of this? If not, why not, where do Singer and Wolf go wrong in interpreting the theories?

12. What does blame add to the judgment that a person has acted wrongly? Is blame central to the moral life? Discuss with reference to at least two philosophers.