



Structure

The three-step technique – Omissions question

Activity	Objective
Step 1: Examples	
The non-voter, the non-contributor, and the non-petitioner	To get material that will illustrate similarities and differences
Step 2: Analyse	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No direct causal connection 2. No effective opportunity to influence events 3. No intention 	To form the hypothesis: the prototype concept
Step 3: Testing	
1. Borderline cases	
In the case of the girl who drowned in the lake as others looked on from the shore without helping, omissions did seem to count.	The opportunity to influence events effectively is not absent in all omissions at the responsible end of the spectrum.
2. Contrasting cases	
If I decide to check the oil in my car once a year, it's my intention to accept the consequence that my car will seize up and I have caused this to happen.	Intentions include foreseen consequences and causes represent deviations from normal expectations.
3. Doubtful cases	
In all cases there is a clear difference between deliberately killing someone, say a terminally ill patient in great pain, and merely allowing them to die by omitting to treat them.	Yet this may be a psychological rather than a moral problem: that we feel guilty may not be evidence that we are in fact guilty. Feelings are not always a reliable indicator.