Knowledge Organizer: Ethics and Morality

1. Ethics:

- **Definition:**

  - Ethics refers to the study of what is morally right and wrong, guiding human behavior and decision-making.

2. Understanding Ethical Theories and Dilemmas:

- **Ethical Theories:**

  - Utilitarianism, Deontology, Virtue Ethics, and Relativism are key ethical frameworks.

  - These theories provide different approaches to determining moral actions.

- **Ethical Dilemmas:**

  - Situations where moral principles conflict, making decisions challenging.

  - Balancing competing values and making ethically sound choices.

3. The Impossibility of Some Decisions:

- **Complexity:**

  - Certain situations present dilemmas with no clear morally superior option.

  - Ethical decision-making acknowledges the difficulty of some choices.

4. Right and Wrong:

- **Morality's Origin:**

  - Exploration of where moral values come from—religion, societal norms, reason, or a combination.

  - Discussion on the foundation of moral principles.

5. Absolute and Relative Morality:

- **Absolute Morality:**

  - Belief in universal, unchanging moral principles.

  - Often associated with deontological ethics.

- **Relative Morality:**

  - Morality shaped by cultural, situational, or personal factors.

  - Often associated with consequentialist and relativistic ethical views.

6. Intention vs Outcome:

- **Moral Decision Making:**

  - Examination of whether the morality of an action depends on intent, consequences, or both.

- Different ethical theories may prioritize either the intention or the outcome.

7. Conscience:

- **Role in Morality:**

    - The conscience as an internal moral guide, influencing decision-making.

    - Its connection to moral development and personal responsibility.

- **Implications for the Existence of God:**

    - Exploration of whether the conscience points to a higher moral authority.

    - Consideration of religious perspectives on the conscience.

Key Themes:

- **Moral Complexity:** Acknowledgment that some ethical decisions are intricate and challenging.

- **Diversity of Views:** Recognition that ethical theories provide different lenses for approaching moral questions.

- **Personal and Cultural Influence:** Understanding how individual beliefs and cultural contexts shape moral perspectives.

- **Critical Thinking:** Encouraging students to critically analyze and evaluate ethical theories and dilemmas.