Oral Exam Notes: Balancing Free Speech & Toxicity in Gaming

# Thesis

Gaming companies must balance free speech with strong anti-toxicity measures. I'm advocating for:  
- Zero-tolerance harassment policies  
- Public accountability  
- Real-world consequences for toxic behavior

# Why I Chose This Topic

I’m passionate about gaming and have seen how toxic behavior—like sexism or homophobia—pushes people out. Platforms have ethical responsibilities to act.

# Ethical Frameworks

## 1. Utilitarianism (John Stuart Mill)

- Do what benefits the most people  
- Supports moderation to reduce harm & increase well-being  
- Risk: over-moderation may hurt freedom/fun  
- Harm Principle: Speech is okay until it harms others

## 2. Deontology

- Moral duty to protect users  
- Supports strict enforcement of rules, even if unpopular  
- Rules must be applied consistently (e.g., punish all toxic users equally)

## 3. Virtue Ethics

- Foster a respectful community  
- Critique of companies protecting toxic streamers (e.g., Tyler1)  
- Promote positive behavior, not just punish bad behavior

# Reasoning Methods

- Deductive: General rule → specific case  
 E.g., If toxic behavior = punished, Tyler1 should be punished.  
- Inductive: Specific cases → general conclusion  
 E.g., Many toxic streamers avoid bans → companies protect fame over fairness.  
- Abductive: Best guess  
 E.g., Tyler1’s unbans likely tied to his popularity/profit.

# Real-World Examples

- Tyler1: Toxic streamer repeatedly banned/unbanned → shows double standards  
- ADL survey: 74% of gamers face harassment  
- AI Tools: Used by Twitch, Riot, Ubisoft to fight toxicity

# Common Questions & Responses

## Q: Does banning toxic players violate free speech?

No. Free speech does not mean freedom from consequences. When speech harms others, platforms must act.

## Q: Why mention Tyler1?

He’s famous, toxic, and repeatedly forgiven due to his fanbase. His case shows bias and weak accountability from platforms.

## Q: Which ethical theory do you personally support?

Utilitarianism — it focuses on reducing harm for the majority and treats users more equally.

## Q: What was hardest about writing this?

Finding the balance between allowing expression and preventing harm without ruining the fun of gaming.

## Q: What would you add with more space?

Global legal differences and how toxicity impacts younger gamers, who are often the main audience.

# Key Takeaways

- Free speech has limits when it turns into harassment.  
- Companies must act ethically, not just profitably.  
- Enforcing rules equally builds trust and a better culture.  
- Ethical moderation can still preserve the fun of gaming.