**Moral Conviction Essays Draft**

1. Moral Responsibilities Framing (Increase Moral Conviction)
2. Moral Piggybacking Framing (Increase Moral Conviction)
3. Pragmatic/Practical Framing (Decrease Moral Conviction)
4. Personal/Hedonic Benefit Framing (Decrease Moral Conviction)

Moral Responsibility Framing – Universal Health Care

* Word count: **154**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **52.34 (HS Level)**

Some countries guarantee healthcare to all citizens for free through Universal Health Care (UHC). Just guaranteeing UHC through the law isn’t enough though. The big question is, who will pay for UHC?

The answer is the U.S. government. The U.S. government has an obligation to fulfill its promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These guaranteed rights are a moral issue, and require good health.

Individual health is the responsibility of every citizen. However, most normal Americans will experience an injury or illness that cannot be self-solved. Good health has no equivalent. You can choose not to replace a broken phone. However, skipping chemotherapy for cancer has a real ethical cost.

Healthcare is expensive. Even hard-working Americans can struggle to get healthcare. Large healthcare costs could happen to anyone. American citizens ought to demand UHC from their government. This is a moral responsibility, helping all Americans pursue life, liberty, and happiness.

Moral Responsibility Framing – Capital Punishment

* Word count: **179**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.76 (HS Level)**

In many countries, killing is used as punishment for a crime. This is known as capital punishment (or the death penalty). Should capital punishment be used in America?

Many believe that because capital punishment is an ethical wrong, we should not use it.

There is strong evidence that capital punishment in America is unfair and a moral issue. Juries can sometimes make mistakes. These mistakes lead to innocents dying. To many people, killing the innocent is an ethical problem. Executing the guilty is not worth the ethical mistake of executing the innocent.

There is also a huge risk of racial bias in capital punishment. 42% of death row prisoners are African American. However, only 12.5% of our population is black. Also, killers of White Americans are sentenced to death at higher rates than killers of Black Americans. This racial bias is unjust.

Capital punishment is wrong. Society pays large moral costs by killing innocent people. The clear racial bias in execution is ethically unacceptable. We cannot allow this to go on. America has to stop using capital punishment.

Moral Responsibility Framing – Exercise

* Word count: **119**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.34 (HS Level)**

Activities for physical fitness are known as exercise. One problem is that over 45% of American adults do not get enough exercise. Should Americans exercise more?

One argument for exercise is that exercising grows moral character. Being healthy helps make connections with people. Exercise is a moral issue.

America is a diverse country, and we don’t always agree. Taking care of your body is something that we can all agree on. When you exercise, you are getting healthy and living a more ethical life. Ignoring your own health and wellbeing has large moral costs.

Wellness is a virtue. Exercise is good for you and moral. Americans should increase their exercise. Exercising is important for a morally correct society.

Moral Responsibility Framing – Climate Change

* Word count: **145**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **51.74 (HS Level)**

Climate change is the process of our planet heating up. Some of this is due to normal processes like summertime, or volcanos. Most climate change is due to burning oil, gas, or coal. Should Americans reduce their climate impact?

One position is that climate change is a moral issue. Climate change affects basic human rights. Americans in dry places are hurt when they don’t have enough water. Americans in wet places are hurt by natural disasters like hurricanes and typhoons. Americans in hot place are hurt by things like heatstroke. Americans everywhere are hurt when they can’t travel due to extreme weather. There is a real moral cost to all this hurt.

Reducing climate change is easy. Recycling, carpooling, public transportation, and buying used items all help. It is a moral responsibility to do what you can. Helping your fellow Americans is ethically correct.

Moral Piggybacking Framing – Universal Health Care

* Word count: **160**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **58.07 (HS Level)**

Some countries guarantee healthcare to all citizens for free through Universal Health Care (UHC). Just guaranteeing UHC through the law isn’t enough though. The big question is, who will pay for UHC?

The answer is the U.S. government. UHC is important because it protects the value of human life. Healthcare is fundamental for protecting human life, and all citizens can agree that human life really matters.

Most normal Americans will experience an injury or illness that cannot be self-solved. With UHC, we can protect these lives. Abandoning this ethical principle is dangerous. Other values are at risk if this happens. How can you have freedom of speech if you are badly sick?

Good health has no equivalent. You can choose not to replace a broken phone. However, skipping chemotherapy for cancer is unacceptable if we value lives.

Healthcare is expensive. Even hard-working Americans can struggle to get healthcare. Lives have real value. To protect American lives, we need UHC.

Moral Piggybacking Framing – Capital Punishment

* Word count: **163**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.13 (HS Level)**

In many countries, killing is used as punishment for a crime. This is known as capital punishment (or the death penalty). Should capital punishment be used in America?

Many believe that because capital punishment reduces the value of life, we should not use it.

Most people agree that lives have value. Human life is precious and worth protecting. Capital punishment runs counter to this moral principle. Killing should be avoided because it is morally wrong to end life. Executing the guilty is not worth decreasing the value of human life. Harming others is not the goal of 'justice'. Abandoning the principles of sanctity of life is a slippery slope. Easily leading to sacrificing human lives and safety for profit.

If protecting life is ethically important, then we cannot support the death penalty. Society bears large moral costs in doing so. The state-sanctioned ending of lives, regardless of the life, is ethically unacceptable. America needs to move past the usage of capital punishment.

Moral Piggybacking Framing – Exercise

* Word count: **148**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.88 (HS Level)**

Activities for physical fitness are known as exercise. One problem is that over 45% of American adults do not get enough exercise. Should Americans exercise more?

We can first think about what is important to us. If exercise helps our important values, then we should do it. For example, discipline and responsibility matter. Exercise is useful for getting more of both! These values improve your health. Not exercising can lead to some negative values as well. Nobody wants to be lazy and unproductive! Exercise helps fight both of these. Keeping this all in mind, exercise leads to a better and more moral life.

America is a diverse country, and we don’t always agree. Everyone likes responsible people. Discipline is also useful. These values are virtues. We agree that exercise helps achieve them. We also agree these values matter in our society. Thus, Americans ought to exercise more.

Moral Piggybacking Framing – Climate Change

* Word count: **137**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **52.40 (HS Level)**

Climate change is the process of our planet heating up. Some of this is due to normal processes like summertime, or volcanos. Most climate change is due to burning oil, gas, or coal. Should Americans reduce their climate impact?

One position is the importance of fairness. Most people agree that fairness really matters. The effects of climate change are hugely unfair. Americans in dry places are unfairly hurt when they don’t have enough water. Americans in wet places are unfairly hurt by hurricanes and typhoons. It is unfair to Americans everywhere when extreme weather makes it hard to travel.

Reducing climate change is easy. Recycling, carpooling, public transportation, and buying used items all help. It is unfair to expect anyone to solve it alone. Helping out your fellow Americans proves how important fairness is to you.

Pragmatic/Practical Framing – Universal Health Care

* Word count: **199**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **52.44 (HS Level)**

Some countries guarantee healthcare to all citizens for free through Universal Health Care (UHC). Just guaranteeing UHC through the law isn’t enough though. The big question is, who will pay for UHC?

The answer is the U.S. government. The U.S. government already spends a significant amount of its gross domestic product on healthcare, totaling over 18.3% in 2022. In comparison, some of our peer countries with UHC like Canada (12.2%) and Japan (11%) spend a lot less. Surprisingly, our estimated lifespans are noticeably shorter (78.5 years, vs 82.6 and 84.45, for Canada and Japan).

More healthcare coverage helps American citizens directly. UHC leads to lower healthcare costs, lower infant and maternal mortality, and better average health everywhere. The effects of an increase in healthcare access through statewide Medicaid expansion have already been seen. Compared to states that did not expand access, they eliminated catastrophic medical costs, lowered medical debt, lowered depression, and increased perception of health.

Health care today costs too much, and America has been spending more money to get worse outcomes. This is unacceptable. American citizens should demand UHC from their government. That way, everyone can benefit from an increased life-span and a greater quality of life.

Pragmatic/Practical Framing – Capital Punishment

* Word count: **203**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **51.35 (HS Level)**

In many countries, killing is used as punishment for a crime. This is known as capital punishment (or the death penalty). Should capital punishment be used in America?

Many believe that because capital punishment doesn’t make economic sense, we should not use it.

Capital punishment in America is expensive. Capital punishment cases need over twice as many hearings and court filings (20 and 65, as opposed to 10 and 29). Sentencing also takes a lot longer. Capital punishment cases need about 200 days more than other, similar cases. Our justice system cannot handle this inflated burden.

This also leads to greater direct costs to taxpayers, at an estimated $800,000 – $1,000,000 more per offender, compared to the costs of life imprisonment. Capital punishment only gets more expensive every year, from approximately $1,100,000 in the 90’s, to over $1,700,000 today. This price rises much faster than the cost of life imprisonment. Going forward, this means even more monetary waste.

If our economy is important, we cannot support the death penalty. Society bears large economic costs in doing so. The large increase in burden on both the courts and American taxpayers is economically unacceptable. America needs to move past the usage of capital punishment.

Pragmatic/Practical Framing – Exercise

* Word count: **162**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.17 (HS Level)**

Activities for physical fitness are known as exercise. One problem is that over 45% of American adults do not get enough exercise. Should Americans exercise more?

Exercise has real practical benefits. Not exercising leads to a 30% higher rate of diabetes, and a 50% higher rate of hypertension. These serious illnesses are awful. Avoiding them is a smart choice. Having a higher quality of life is really worth it. Exercise can also be really cheap. Anyone can choose to walk more. Sit-ups and push-ups are free. Youtube has easy tutorials. Even using the stairs can help a little bit. Exercise is very practical.

America is a diverse country, and we don’t agree on everything. Living longer is one thing we can all appreciate. You can live longer by exercising! Exercise reduces risk of death per year about 20-35%.

Exercise is very practical and has obvious benefits. Exercise is for everyone, not just athletes or the rich. Thus, Americans should exercise more.

Pragmatic/Practical Framing – Climate Change

* Word count: **169**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.47 (HS Level)**

Climate change is the process of our planet heating up. Some of this is due to normal processes like summertime, or volcanos. Most climate change is due to burning oil, gas, or coal. Should Americans reduce their climate impact?

One perspective is the economic impact. Excess carbon costs about $51 per ton, in the form of reduced air and water quality, and extreme weather events. Carbon taxes in America set at $25 per ton leads to an estimated reduction of 10.5 gigatons of carbon per year. This $26 per ton net savings would result in $273 billion extra per year in the US economy. Reducing climate impact leads to a stronger economy.

While each individual American citizen has their own obligations and responsibilities, a stronger economy benefits all Americans. Many climate change actions exist that can even save you money, such as carpooling or using public transportation when possible, and buying used items instead of new. Taking steps to reduce your climate change impact just makes economic sense.

Personal/Hedonic Benefit Framing – Universal Health Care

* Word count: **201**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **54.68 (HS Level)**

Some countries guarantee healthcare to all citizens for free through Universal Health Care (UHC). Just guaranteeing UHC through the law isn’t enough though. The big question is, who will pay for UHC?

The answer is the U.S. government. UHC is a clear winner and benefits ordinary Americans. Monthly average health insurance premiums already cost roughly $438 a month. If the U.S. government covered basic healthcare needs, you could be saving over $400 a month instead! Plus, it’s fun to not have to worry about healthcare expenses. Traveling to go on a ski-trip, or hiking in a national park is much more relaxing, and your costs are covered if you hurt yourself.

The effects of an increase in healthcare access through statewide Medicaid expansion have already been seen. Compared to states that did not expand access, they eliminated catastrophic medical costs, lowered medical debt, lowered depression, and increased perception of health. It is obvious that you benefit directly from all of these things.

Directly helping ordinary Americans is a significant part of why UHC matters. American citizens should demand UHC from their government. That way, you can benefit from more money in your own pocket, and an increased quality of life.

Personal/Hedonic Benefit Framing – Capital Punishment

* Word count: **174**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **52.04 (HS Level)**

In many countries, killing is used as punishment for a crime. This is known as capital punishment (or the death penalty). Should capital punishment be used in America?

Many believe because capital punishment doesn’t benefit themselves, we should not use it.

Capital punishment in America affects taxes. The average cost of one execution is almost $2 million dollars. This means $150 dollars per year in extra taxes to fund these executions. For many people, $150 is a significant amount. Imagine if the government asked to raise your taxes $150 dollars per year, to pay for the execution of human life! Also, anyone could be accused of a serious crime. This includes you or your friends. You would also feel guilty if innocent people were killed. This guilt is easy to avoid by stopping the death penalty.

The average American does not benefit from execution compared to life imprisonment. Execution leads to higher taxes . Overall, capital punishment doesn’t help anybody -- including you. America needs to move past the usage of capital punishment.

Personal/Hedonic Benefit Framing – Exercise

* Word count: **203**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.13 (HS Level)**

Activities for physical fitness are known as exercise. One problem is that over 45% of American adults do not get enough exercise. Should Americans exercise more?

One simple argument in favor of exercise is that exercise is a great way to save money and feel good. Lack of exercise costs people $27 billion dollars annually. People who don’t exercise are also 64% more likely to be diagnosed with depression. Not exercising shrinks both your wallet and your happiness.

America is a diverse country, and we don’t agree on everything. Lower medical costs and a more positive mood is something that we can all appreciate. Regular exercise can save you about $2,500 a year on medical costs! Exercise can also be really cheap. Anyone can choose to walk more. Sit-ups and push-ups are free. There aren’t a lot of ways to save money that have low or no upfront costs. Exercising is also really good for mental health. This is because exercise releases natural 'feel good' chemicals. These chemicals directly lead to mood and happiness improvements.

Exercise can really improve your own quality of life. Americans should indeed take steps to increase their exercise, as this leads to better financial and mental health.

Personal/Hedonic Benefit Framing – Climate Change

* Word count: **190**
* Flesh-Kincaid Readability Score: **50.13 (HS Level)**

Climate change is the process of our planet heating up. Some of this is due to normal processes like summertime, or volcanos. Most climate change is due to burning oil, gas, or coal. Should Americans reduce their climate impact?

One perspective is how climate change affects you directly. Millions of premature deaths occur every year due to air pollution. Nobody wants to live in a place where the air smells awful and is hard to breathe. Americans can also enjoy majestic natural parks (Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, etc.). Climate change and pollution could lead to these parks being closed to the public in the future. Iconic getaways such as Hawaii’s beaches, the Florida coast, and even the Rocky Mountains are also at risk.

While each individual American citizen has their own obligations and responsibilities, you directly and personally benefit in many ways by addressing climate change! Many climate change actions exist that are fun and easy; Instead of going to a retail store, try thrift shopping with your friends and buying used! When you take steps to reduce your climate impact, your own life can be improved in many ways.

**Outcome Measures:**

Support for Issue

* Our government needs to implement Universal Health Care because basic population needs are not being met.
* Capital Punishment (the Death Penalty) is necessary in America.
* Regular exercise is necessary for Americans.
* Greenhouse gas emissions generated by human activity has and will continue to change Earth’s climate.

Moral Conviction for Issue

1. “There are very important ethical aspects to this situation.”
2. “This matter clearly does not involve ethics or moral issues.”
3. “This situation could be described as a moral issue”
4. A reflection of my core moral beliefs and convictions.
5. Connected to fundamental beliefs about right and wrong.
6. A moral stance.
7. Based on moral principles.

Openness to Belief Change on Issue

* How open are you to changing your mind on \_\_\_\_?

Persuasiveness of Argument on Issue

* How persuasive was the above essay on \_\_\_\_?

Individual Differences – Political Orientation

* In politics people sometimes talk of ‘left’ and ‘right’. Where would you place **yourself** on a scale from 1 to 11 where 1 means extreme left and 11 means extreme right?

Individual Differences – Deontological Orientation

* Solutions to ethical problems are usually black and white
* A person's actions should be described in terms of being right or wrong
* A nation should pay the most attention to it's heritage, it's roots
* Societies should follow stable traditions and maintain a distinctive identity
* Uttering a falsehood is wrong because it wouldn't be right for anyone to lie
* Unethical behavior is best described as a violation of some principle of the law

Individual Differences – Utilitarian Orientation

* When people disagree over ethical matters, I strive for workable compromises
* When thinking of ethical problems, I try to develop practical, workable alternatives
* It is of value to societies to be responsive and adapt to new conditions as the world changes
* Solutions to ethical problems usually are seen as some shade of grey
* When making an ethical decision, one should pay attention to others' needs, wants, and desires
* The purpose of the government should be to promote the best possible life for it's citizens

Individual Differences – Dogmatism

* Anyone who is honestly and truly seeking the truth will end up believing what I believe.
* There are so many things we have not discovered yet, nobody should be absolutely certain his beliefs are right.
* The things I believe in are so completely true, I could never doubt them.
* I have never discovered a system of beliefs that explains everything to my satisfaction.
* It is best to be open to all possibilities and ready to reevaluate all your beliefs.
* My opinions are right and will stand the test of time.
* Flexibility is a real virtue in thinking, since you may well be wrong.
* My opinions and beliefs fit together perfectly to make a crystal-clear “picture” of things.
* There are no discoveries or facts that could possibly make me change my mind about the things that matter most in life.
* I am a long way from reaching final conclusions about the central issues in life.
* The person who is absolutely certain she has the truth will probably never find it.
* I am absolutely certain that my ideas about the fundamental issues in life are correct.
* The people who disagree with me may well turn out to be right
* I am so sure I am right about the important things in life, there is no evidence that could convince me otherwise.
* If you are “open-minded” about the most important things in life, you will probably reach the wrong conclusions.
* Twenty years from now, some of my opinions about the important things in life will probably have changed.
* “Flexibility in thinking” is another name for being “wishy-washy”.
* No one knows all the essential truths about the central issues in life.
* Someday I will probably realize my present ideas about the BIG issues are wrong.
* People who disagree with me are just plain wrong and often evil as well.