

Name _____

Date _____

Norms, Morals, and Ethics 101

Norms, morals and ethics are all related to each other but have distinct definitions and meanings. This exercise will help make sense of these terms.

NORMS: Standards of proper or acceptable behavior. (Merriman Webster Definition)

List key words in the definition: _____

Example of norms: It is a norm in the classroom to listen while others are speaking during class discussions.

Example of norms in global affairs: It is a norm to not invade another country without just cause.

Your example of norms:

MORALS: Principles of right and wrong in behavior. (Based on Merriman Webster Definition)

List key words in the definition: _____

Example of morals: It is moral to help someone in need.

Example of morals in global affairs: Humanitarian aid is a moral cause.

Your example:

ETHICS: Rules of behavior based on ideas about what is morally good and bad. (Merriman Webster Definition)

List key words in the definition: _____

Example of ethics: Stealing is not ethical

Example of ethics in global affairs: Based upon international humanitarian law, it is ethical to not harm civilians during times of war.

Your example:

Look back at the definitions of norms, morals, and ethics. How are the definitions the same? How are they different? Do they build off one another?

Norms, Morals, and Ethics: Teacher's Guide

This worksheet activity is meant to help students better understand the similarities and differences between the definitions of norms, morals, and ethics.

As a teacher's guide to the terms, their distinct identities are as follows:

1. Norms deal with standards of appropriate behavior. There is no value judgment by the individual as there is with morals. Instead society dictates what is acceptable.
2. Morals involve value judgments and principles about right and wrong in behavior. They can be decided by individuals or society.
3. Ethics are based upon rules of what is morally good or bad behavior. Since ethics are rules, they are generally determined by society.

The terms are all similar in that they deal with right and wrong in behavior. They are different in that norms deal with societal standards, morals involve value judgments by individuals or society, and ethics are based upon rules (usually dictated by society).

Morals are the basis for the definitions of ethics (rules based upon morally good or bad behavior) and norms (appropriate behavior is arguably, generally moral).