

Personality Test. Assessing Your Score

How we use animals for food

Four different philosophical positions

You may well have noticed how this works. The four kinds of statement (a,b,c & d) represent four different philosophical positions.

Working out your score

Count how many times you chose a), b), c) or d) as your first choice (ie the statement for which you gave the big tick).

The four positions are as follows:

- a) Animal Rights** position. Animals should have a right to life, freedom and happiness. We shouldn't kill them for food or imprison them in cages or pens.
- b) Animal Welfare** position. We shouldn't make animals suffer. If we eat animals, we must give them a good life and as kind a death as is possible.
- c) Environmental (conservationist / sustainable development)** position. We must preserve the earth's resources for future generations and prevent damage to the environment and wildlife.
- d) Anthropocentric ("humans come first")** position. Animals matter and we should avoid cruelty, but humans are more important. We need to look after people first.



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This is about values

The four positions represent four different philosophies which are described in more detail over the page.

There is no right or wrong answer. You will find people from all walks of life who believe in any of these. It is a matter of values.

The one you choose most often is likely to be the closest to your position, but you may agree with more than one of these. Most people care about humans, animals **and** the environment.

The four philosophies in more detail

a) Animal Rights position. Animals have a right to life, freedom and happiness.

This is based on human rights philosophy. All individuals matter equally, irrespective of race, creed or colour. Animal rights thinking extends this principle beyond the species barrier. We are animals ourselves. Therefore, if it is wrong to do something to a human, you shouldn't do it to an animal either.

Animal Rights people are against the exploitation of animals in general. This includes factory farming, long distance transport and inhumane slaughter. They also think it is wrong to kill animals for food and are likely to support vegetarian or vegan diets.

b) Animal Welfare position. Animals should live good lives free from suffering.

This is based on utilitarian philosophy as articulated by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. Animals share with us a capacity to suffer and also for positive feelings or happiness. The priority is to prevent suffering.

Animal welfarists are not necessarily opposed to the killing of animals, provided the animals lead a good life in a higher welfare system such as free-range or organic. Animal welfarists generally oppose factory farming, long distance transport and inhumane slaughter. They are likely to support free-range and organic farming systems which are designed to meet the welfare needs of farm animals.

c) Environmental / conservationist / sustainable development position. We don't inherit the earth, we borrow it from our children.

Conservationists are concerned about protecting the planet and its systems for future generations of people and/or wildlife. Unlike the previous positions, environmentalists may be less concerned about individual animals and more about the survival of species, diverse gene pools and habitats.

They are likely to encourage people to eat less meat so that more land can be left for wildlife. They are likely to support low input and organic farming systems which reduce or avoid the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which can damage biodiversity.

d) Anthropocentric / "humans come first" position. Humans are more important than animals.

Anthropocentrists see humans as the centre of the moral universe. They may oppose cruelty, but believe that where there is a conflict between the needs of humans and animals, humans come first. While there are humans suffering in the world, we should concentrate on them.

They may support intensive farming as a practical way of feeding people. They may also see higher welfare production such as free-range or organic as a good thing where it promotes the rural economy. They might support eating less meat if they see this as a better way of feeding the world.

These positions are not mutually exclusive. Most people care about humans, other animals **and** the environment.

There is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion will depend on your values.

