

Study Outline for Mill's *On Liberty*

The test will consist of 15 fill-in-the-blank questions. There will not be an essay on this test since you will be submitting a written response to one of the Mill questions, (due on Tuesday, 12/10, at midnight).

Questions from Chapter 1

1. Mill begins by stating that the subject of his essay is "Civil, or Social Liberty," which he defines as __ (insert answer here) _____.
2. What was the "aim of patriots"? __ (insert answer here) _____.
3. As opposed to the history of early European republics, where the interests of the rulers "was habitually opposed to the people", Mill states that what the people now want is that __ (insert answer here) _____.
4. Which sector of the population does Mill say imposes its own desires and fears on the majority in the creation and maintenance of social morals? __ (insert answer here) _____.
5. Mill states that the individual is sovereign over his own body and mind. He reserves only one area in which "power can be rightfully exercised" over an individual. When is it possible to intervene in the affairs of others? __ (insert answer here) _____.
6. According to Mill's theory, the state will continue to grow more and more formidable as an evil which does not disappear spontaneously. The only way to prevent the state's encroachment on the individual is to possess a _____.

Chapter 2

7. What is the harm of silencing opinions? _____

8. Mill states, "To discover to the world something previously ignorant, to prove to it that it had been mistaken on some vital point of temporal or spiritual interest is as important a service as a human being can render to his fellow-creatures . . .". Mill stresses the need for intellectual freedom because the truth rarely comes to light. What does he call a "pleasant falsehood"? _____
9. Mill states that the individual who insists that his opinion is correct, and does not allow himself to enter into discussions which may either strengthen or weaken his argument, is at risk for his opinion becoming _____.
10. Mill ends Chapter 2 with a description of the behavior that constitutes the "real morality of public discussion." What are the two personality traits of an individual who participates in a "real public discussion"? __ (insert answer here) _____.

Chapter 3

11. Mill refers to the state of nature as a time when man's desires were excessive and "law and discipline" suppressed man's desires so that now, society controls man by asserting its power over him. Mill warns that the danger that threatens human nature is not an excess **but a deficiency** of what? _____.

12. Mill calls the ascendant class or power in England, "chiefly the middle class", and in America, "they are the whole white population." Mill has a name for the majority who restrict opinion and prevent individuals from reaching their potential. He calls this group the _____.

13. Mill addresses the title of his essay, *On Liberty*, when he discusses the opposition between custom and liberty. He goes on to say that "a people" (a nation) declines when it ceases to possess individuality. Mill argues that Europe achieved success through a diversity of peoples. And yet Mill believed that Europe was moving towards making people more alike through assimilation. According to Mill, custom, assimilation, and religion combined to thwart what?

Chapter 4

14. Mill refutes the idea that non-interference in other's lives is equivalent to indifference. Instead, he assures the reader, there is "*need of a great increase of disinterested exertion to promote the good of others.*" Mill states that education is responsible for inculcating the virtues of self-awareness and social awareness. After a student has completed their education, according to Mill, they should be equipped with the "self-regarding virtues." Beyond this, Mill states that human beings owe one another something. What is it? _____

15. Mill's philosophy privileges the right of the individual to determine his or her course of action. Mill believes this is paramount, even when the individual appears to be pursuing a course of action that is self-destructive. He writes, "All errors which he is likely to commit against advice and warning, are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem is good." Mill accuses religious leaders and others who dictate moral opinion of attempting to "not only prohibit by law everything which it thinks wrong, but in order to get at what it thinks wrong, to prohibit any number of things which it admits to be innocent." Mill offers the example of the temperance movement which succeeded in barring the sale of liquor in the U.S. for a period during the twentieth century. These interventions in private life constitute a violation of Mill's principle of individual freedom. According to Mill, how should an individual decide what is good or bad for himself or herself? _____.