

**Goals:**

- Introduce students to the debate between free will and determinism.
- Have students consider how a deterministic world view would impact personal responsibility.

**Plan:**

- Explain the difference between free will and determinism.
- Do activity.
- Ask discussion questions.
- Conclude.

**Definitions:**

- Free will - the capacity for agents to autonomously choose between different possible courses of action.
- Determinism - the belief that all events are determined completely by causes external to one's will; the view that all events in the universe, including human decisions and actions, are causally inevitable.
  - "It is never possible for us to do anything different from what we actually do... in each case, the circumstances that exist before we act determine our actions and make them inevitable" (Nagel 53).

**Activity:**

Present students with a variety of situations and have them vote whether they are instances of free will or determinism. Students will justify their answers.

Situations:

- Man committing murder during a robbery.
- Ordering food at a restaurant from a menu.
- Infant celebrating doljanchi (explain).
- Stray cat approaching a human for food.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What "evidence" do we or could we have for free will? What intuitions do we have concerning the sensation or appearance of free will?
- What are the implications of a deterministic world? Does it absolve people of responsibility for their actions? Does it belittle one's own role in personal success?
- In what ways would a deterministic view differ from religious conceptions of fate?

- Does resolving the debate between free will and determinism matter? In what ways, if any, would possessing knowledge of which world is “correct” change the way one lives now?
- Research has found that promoting the idea that someone lacks free will makes people more dishonest, behave aggressively, and even conform to others’ thoughts and opinions. If philosophers were to “prove” that determinism is correct and people lack free will, ought they be held responsible for such consequences?
- Are free will and determinism truly incompatible? In what ways might these theories be compatible?
- How would time travel impact the plausibility of determinism? Would traveling to the future “prove” determinism?
- If determinists are correct, then is it justifiable to arrest people before they commit crimes?
- What are the consequences of there being no free will? Can we hold people accountable for their actions? Can we enact punishment? Can we alter people’s behavior? Can we change people’s minds? Can we overcome our circumstances?