

Just a Typical Date

1. Verb - Base Form
2. Verb - Base Form
3. Adjective

Just a Typical Date

PART ONE: MIND YOUR MOTIVE

Professor Sandel introduces Immanuel Kant, a challenging but influential philosopher. Kant rejects utilitarianism . He argues that each of us has certain fundamental duties and rights that take precedence over maximizing utility. Kant rejects the notion that morality is about calculating Verb - Base Form. When we act out of duty--doing something simply because it is right--only then do our actions have moral worth. Kant gives the example of a shopkeeper who passes up the chance to shortchange a customer only because his Verb - Base Form might suffer if other customers found out. According to Kant, the shopkeepers action has no moral worth, because he did the Adjective thing for the wrong reason.

PART TWO: THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

Immanuel Kant says that insofar as our actions have moral worth, what confers moral worth is our capacity to rise above self-interest and inclination and to act out of duty. Sandel tells the true story of a thirteen-year old boy who won a spelling bee contest, but then admitted to the judges that he had, in fact, misspelled the final word. Using this story and others, Sandel explains Kants test for determining whether an action is morally right: to identify the principle expressed in our action and then ask whether that principle could ever become a universal law that every other human being could act on.

