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Lesson plan

Hedonism

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The big picture	Hedonism, from the Greek word meaning 'pleasure', is the doctrine or theory of ethics in which pleasure is regarded as the chief good, or the proper end of action.
Learning objectives	<p>What? Learn about the origins and development of hedonism.</p> <p>Why? To assess the value of the teachings of hedonism.</p> <p>How? After studying this topic, students should be able to evaluate and analyse the past and continuing influence of hedonism.</p>
Starter activity	Write down what you understand it means to pursue pleasure.
Lesson activities	<p>Make a detailed timeline on the development of hedonism.</p> <p>Discuss, either in groups or in pairs, the question: 'Is there any place for Hedonism in a modern, ethical society?'</p> <p>Prepare a group response to the following:</p> <p>G. E. Moore (1873–1958) attacked hedonism with the following argument: He starts with a vision of two worlds. One is extremely beautiful while the other is a 'heap of filth'. He then asks which should exist and which should not. The answer is always the beautiful world. From this he infers that the beautiful world is more valuable than the heap of filth and, therefore, that beauty must be valuable. He concluded that all of the potentially viable theories of hedonism (those that value only conscious pleasures) must be false because something, beauty, is valuable even when no conscious pleasure can be derived from it.</p>
Plenary	Explain your opinions to the rest of the class.
Homework task	Make detailed notes on the influence of Hedonism on other ethical theories..
Differentiation	Teachers may wish to make key points on a worksheet for dyslexic or EAL students.

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