

# Example of bioethics essay

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



What does it mean to be a " person," and " when" does personhood " begin?  
Herein lies the basis for much of the abortion controversy.

The very essence of being a person belongs to the definition of personhood, which cannot be narrowed down to a single definition. Here the aim is to explore the various definitions of Personhood and on the basis of these justify the often ethically debated concept of Abortion. On the basis of physical traits, as described by the Center for Health Ethics (2011), a physical human body of ' homo sapiens' is considered a Person. Therefore, the mere presence of a human body in its physical form entails the characteristics of being a person. However, a foetus in its initial stages after conception is just a group of cells sharing new physical characteristics with the baby outside the womb. ProLife Across America (2013) debates that Life begins at Conception as a 9 week foetus has individual fingerprints. However, fingerprints are not a physical trait exclusive to humans and it can also be said that the fingerprints do not exist at the time the decision to abort is being made in the initial days of the pregnancy. On the other hand, Center for Health Ethics (2011) states that moral personhood defines individuals as persons when their behaviour can be evaluated as moral or immoral; when they can be blamed or praised for their acts. The foetus again cannot be expected to make rational, moral decisions as its psychological, rational, and social qualities are limited until a very late stage of development (Richards, 1999). Legal personhood in their point of view is simply a concept that entitles any living or non-living element to act as an independent unit as long as it stands as a separate unit in the eyes of the law. Since the foetus has no standing as only persons have a legally

recognised name, a birth certificate, own property, or are a citizen of a country; thus the foetus is not a legal person. Last but not the least, the Metaphysical person stands to be the physical or material existence of an individual who is rational, is a moral agent, can be motivated to act, and uses language to communicate (Warren, 1973). Such a metaphysical person is thus a combination of the physical body, the mind, and the soul. The foetus hardly meets any of the criteria put forward by Mary Anne Warren. Judging on the basis of the above arguments, a foetus does not fit any of the definitions of Personhood, and thus cannot be entitled to any of the legal and moral rights associated with personhood. In this manner, I stand as a proponent of the still fiercely debated, ethical concept of abortion.

## **Works Cited**

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