

# Example of critical thinking on platos protagoras and aristotles ethics

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



## Question 1

According to Aristotle, virtue is simply a state of character. Every person has a character that results from the repetition of certain kinds of habits or activities. Aristotle defines ethical virtue (or excellence) as a positive character trait. It is the excellence in fulfilling a particular function. Virtues are not inborn, but rather, developed by means of habits. However, the capacity to develop virtues is inborn. Aristotle notes that, not every habit imparts virtues; some habits work against virtues.

Aristotle concludes that ethical virtue or excellence is a characteristic that involves choice. The choice result from observing the mean, which is determined by reason, as would be determined by a person of practical wisdom. According to Aristotle, practical wisdom is acting rationally. It includes an understanding and an action. Ethical virtue entails choosing and acting appropriately no matter the situation.

A complete ethical virtue requires intellectual virtue; both practical virtue and theoretical wisdom. The result is a pleasant and happy life. The full functioning of human must include reasoning and being good. It is an activity of the soul in accordance with the reason. The soul can engage either through reasoning or following reasoning (both theoretical and practical). Anyone who does this fulfills his/her purpose or nature as established in the rational soul. Such a person is the happiest.

## Question 2

Protagoras tried to devise a reasoned understanding of a wide range of phenomena, on general level, including education and language. His

discourse begins with a statement that virtue can be taught. According to him, a good Sophist can definitely transform his student into a good citizen. Socrates, on the other hand, believes that virtue cannot be taught. According to Socrates, teachers can only impart technical thinking to students, but not wisdom. Socrates example is that, if virtue can be taught, then, why don't the sons of all virtuous men have virtue? Protagoras gives two pieces of evidence to support his assertion that virtue can be taught. He says that in situations where people cannot help, they pity. One doesn't rebuke the weak, dwarfish, and ugly, but pity them. People will always instruct the irreligious and unjust individuals with the hope of imparting goodness in them.

Protagoras believes that the education system is based on the view that virtue can be taught. This is the reason why parents teach their children good values at the very beginning. Teachers then carry on the teaching task, which shapes the children into virtuous adults. In response to Socrates's question why some sons of virtuous men lack virtue, Protagoras explains that not every can be successful in teaching virtue. There are various factors that determine the success of the teaching process. These include natural inclination of the child, human circumstances, difference in human reacting to advice, type of the authority, the domain of virtue, and the errors, among others. However, every child who is taught, including the bad ones, would be better than those that have never been taught. This is the same basis that Greeks use to educate their children, teaching them to become good citizens. It is therefore important that everyone be taught to a certain degree to impart the virtues.

### Question 3

The dialogue is interrupted as Socrates wants to end it before they agree, claiming that he had some business. He gets up to leave, complaining about their discussion styles (companionable talk and public speaking). However, several listeners intervene and the two men agree to compromise their styles and the discussion continues. Just before the interruption, Socrates complains about Protagoras discussion style. He claims that Protagoras is similar to a gong that would continue booming when struck and won't stop until a hand is laid on it. Socrates doesn't like the long-winded speeches of Protagoras.

### Works Cited

Anderson, M., & Osborn, G. *Approaching Plato: A Guide to the Early and Middle Dialogues*, 2009. Online. September 27, 2012. <http://campus.belmont.edu/philosophy/Book.pdf>

Taylor, C. C. W. *Plato Protagoras*, Revised Edition. Oxford University Press, 1990.