

First Paper Topics

Write a paper answering one of the sets of questions below. Your paper should be no longer than 1800 words which is about five or six pages. Please turn it in to my box in 208 Pearsons by 10 am on Thursday, September 30. Good luck!

1. Describe Peter Singer's argument about famine relief. That is, tell the reader what conclusion Singer seeks to establish and how he argues for it. Then, describe what strikes you as the best reason for doubting that Singer's argument succeeds. How might Singer respond to this objection? Finally, offer your resolution of the problem: explain why you think that Singer's response either succeeds or fails.
2. Cohen agrees with Singer that we are required to give aid to relieve famine but he disagrees with Singer about the extent of our responsibility for famine victims. Explain what Cohen believes about our responsibility to provide famine aid. Give what you regard as his best argument for his position. What do you consider the best argument that Singer could make in reply? Give your assessment: how are we required to respond when famines or similar calamities strike others?
3. Thomson's violinist example is supposed to refute an argument against abortion. What is that argument and how does Thomson use the violinist example to reply to it? What, in your opinion, is the best reply that an opponent of abortion might make? How might Thomson respond? Explain what you think: does the reply undermine Thomson's argument or not?

