

# IMMANUEL KANT

One of the foremost thinkers of the Enlightenment. His comprehensive and systematic work in epistemology (the theory of knowledge), ethics, and aesthetics greatly influenced all subsequent philosophy,

He argues that the human understanding is the source of the general laws of nature that structure all our experience; and that human reason gives itself the moral law, which is our basis for belief in God, freedom, and immortality.

A supporter of the American and French Revolutions.





# IMMANUEL KANT

## Biography

Born 1724 Prussia

Kant came from a poor family merchant which was devoutly religious

Parents were evangelical Lutheran

Parents sent him to a parochial school, which began his lifelong antipathy of organized religion.

Entered the university at age 16, and graduated six years later

Spent the next 8 years tutoring; later returned to the university to study more

15 years, was a university lecturer

↳ He was an unpaid lecturer at the university, but students paid his salary (popular classes, so no income concern)

His daily life:

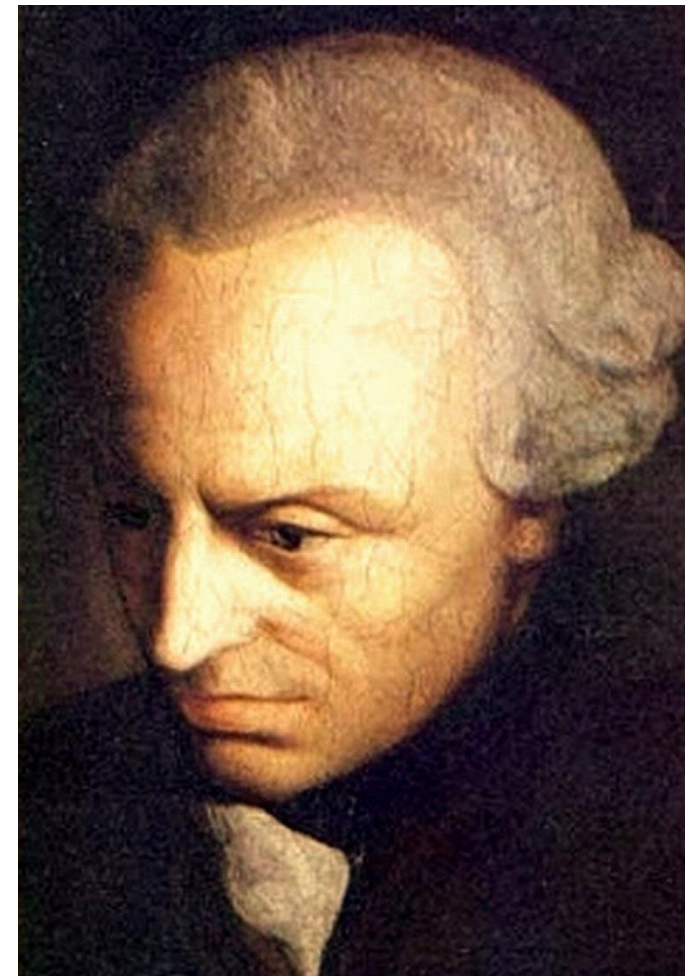
5:00a	wakeup, breakfast and philosophical reflection
6:00a-7:00a	preparing lectures
7:00a-9:00a	classroom
9:00a-noon	writing
Noon-4:00p	lunch and conversation
4:00p	daily walk
	Then reading
10:00p	bedtime

Liberal for his time and place

A supporter of the American Revolution and French Revolution

Mental decline obvious by 1796. Dementia obviously. (Alzheimer's? Lewy's Body disease likely)

Died 1804 Prussia



## Philosophy (major ideas)

Kant argued that the goal of humanity is to achieve perfect happiness and virtue and believed that an afterlife must exist in order for this to be possible, and that God must exist to provide this.

Morality is not defined by the consequences of our actions, our emotions, or an external factor. Morality is defined by duties and one's action is moral if it is an act motivated by duty.

Without human freedom, thought Kant, moral appraisal and moral responsibility would be impossible.

### **Categorical Imperative**

Act according to the maxim that you would wish all other rational people to follow, as if it were a universal law.

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The only thing good without qualification is good will

↳ One ought to treat all rational beings as ends in themselves and never merely as means

Kant believed that the shared ability of humans to reason should be the basis of morality, and that it is the ability to reason that makes humans morally significant. He, therefore, believed that all humans should have the right to common dignity and respect.