

Rights-Centered Reasoning

Talking about ‘rights’ gives us a way to talk about how we should treat each other.

⊕ Positive Rights



Guarantee certain **goods** to individuals



Require the community **to provide** these goods



Natural positive rights include **food, shelter, and clothing**



Legal positive rights include **due process or minimum wage**

⊖ Negative Rights



Guarantee certain **freedoms** to individuals



Require the community **not to interfere** with these freedoms



Natural negative rights include **life, liberty, and property**



Legal negative rights include **freedom of speech or religion**

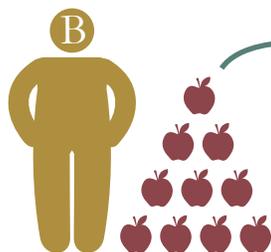
Conflict and Resolution

Positive and negative rights sometimes conflict. Communities resolve rights conflicts through dialogue, debate, and eventually agreements codified as law. An essential task of this process is determining **which right is more fundamental and therefore takes precedence**.

Example: A and B have the positive right to food and the negative right to property.



A is starving and can't get food, not even from programs or charities.



B has a surplus of food but won't give any away.



So, A steals food from B.

Question:
How should the community judge A's stealing from B?