

Formulations of the Moral Law

First formula:

FUL *Formula of Universal Law: “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you at the same time can will that it become a universal law” (Groundwork 4:421; cf. 4:402);*

with its variant,

FLN *Formula of the Law of Nature: “So act, as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a **universal law of nature**” (Groundwork 4:421; cf. 4:436).*

Second formula:

FH *Formula of Humanity as End in Itself: “So act that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means” (Groundwork 4:429; cf. 4:436).*

Third formula:

FA *Formula of Autonomy: “... the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law” (Groundwork 4:431; cf. 4:432), or
“Not to choose otherwise than so that the maxims of one’s choice are at the same time comprehended with it in the same volition as universal law” (Groundwork 4:440; cf. 4:432, 434, 438),*

with its variant,

FRE *Formula of the Realm of Ends: “Act in accordance with maxims of a universally legislative member for a merely possible realm of ends” (Groundwork 4:439; cf. 4:433, 437, 438).*

The “Universal Formula”:

FU *Act in accordance with that maxim which can at the same time make itself into a universal law (Groundwork 4:436-437).*

Compare:

FK *“So act that the maxim of your action could always at the same time hold as a principle of universal legislation” (Critique of Practical Reason 5: 30)*

FM *“Act upon a maxim that can also hold as a universal law” (Metaphysics of Morals 6:225).*

A. “Now if we attend to ourselves in every transgression of a duty, then we find that we do not actually will that our maxim should become a universal law, for that is impossible for us, but rather will that its opposite should remain a law generally; yet we take the liberty of making an exception for ourselves, or (even only for this once) for the advantage of our inclination” (*Groundwork* 4:424).

B. “The ground of all practical legislation, namely, lies *objectively in the rule* and the form of universality, which makes it capable of being a law (at least a law of nature) (in accordance with the first principle), but *subjectively* it lies in the *end*; but the subject of all ends is every rational being as an end in itself (in accordance with the second principle): from this now follows the third practical principle of the will, as the supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, the idea of the *will of every rational being as a will giving universal law*” (*Groundwork* 4:431).

C. “The three ways mentioned of representing the principle of morality are, however, fundamentally only so many formulas of precisely the same law, one of which from itself unites the other two in itself [*deren die eine die anderen zwei von selbst in sich vereinigt*]. Nonetheless, there is a variety among them, which is to be sure more subjectively than objectively practical, namely, that of bringing an idea of reason nearer to intuition (in accordance with a certain analogy) and, through this, nearer to feeling” (*Groundwork* 4:436).

D. “All maxims have, namely, (1) a *form*, which consists in universality, and then the formula of the moral imperative is expressed thus: ‘That the maxims must be chosen as if they are supposed to be valid as universal laws of nature’; (2) a *matter*, namely, an end, and then the formula says: ‘that the rational being, as an end in accordance with its nature, hence as an end in itself, must serve for every maxim as a limiting condition of all merely relative and arbitrary ends’; (3) a *complete determination* of all maxims through that formula, namely: ‘that all maxims ought to harmonize from one’s own legislation into a possible realm of ends as a realm of nature’” (*Groundwork* 4:436).

E. “A progression happens here, as through the categories of the unity of the form of the will (its universality), the *plurality* of the matter (the objects, i.e. the ends), and the *allness* or totality of the system of them” (*Groundwork* 4:436).

F. “But one does better in moral judging always to proceed in accordance with the strict method and take as a ground the universal formula of the categorical imperative: “*Act in accordance with that maxim which can at the same time make itself into universal law*” (*Groundwork* 4:436-437).

<u>Formula:</u>	<u>FUL (FLN)</u>	<u>FH</u>	<u>FA (FRE)</u>	<u>Text</u>
<i>Concept</i>	Form	Matter	Thorough determination	4:437
<i>Quantity</i>	Unity	Plurality	Totality	4:437
<i>Judgment form</i>	Universal	Particular	Singular	A70, 79/B95,106
<i>Transcendental</i>	One	True	Good (Perfect)	B113-115
<i>Faculty</i>	Understanding	Judgment	Reason	R5734, 18:339-40
<i>Principle</i>	Contradiction	Sufficient Reason	Thorough determination	R5562, 18:234
<i>Modality</i>	Possibility	Actuality	Necessity	R5739-42, 18:341
<i>One-All</i>	All derived from the one	All connected in one	The one derived from all	R5734, 18:340