

Chapter 1: revision and extension (with detailed answer key): **from analysis to interpretation and understanding**

Read the two texts below, each of which expresses a view on the topic "Is abortion murder?"¹, then do the tasks.

<p>TEXT 1</p> <p>Abortion is basically killing a innocent babe that is alive in it's mothers womb. People try to say that the baby isn't alive and it's totally unaware. But in reality its heart and brain are the first things to develop. Not only does the baby die but the mother feels the loss. This should automatically tell you there is something wrong with abortion.</p> <p>What if God decided that he didn't want you to be born and killed you? Would that be right? No of course not! So why would it make sense to justify a mother killing her baby? What if a mother had a baby prematurely and decided she didn't want it? Would that be right? I mean, some people get their babies killed at that time. For these reasons I consider abortion wrong and it is murder.</p>	<p>TEXT 2</p> <p>A fetus is not a human being, so we can say that abortion is not murder. First we need to understand: what is murder? Murder, as defined by the dictionary, is the unlawful premeditated killing of one human being by another, whereas abortion can be defined as the deliberate termination of a pregnancy by the removal of an embryo or fetus from the uterus.</p> <p>Notice how the definition of murder mentions the words 'unlawful' and 'human being' and think: do these words apply to the definition of abortion too? For example, can we really say that a fetus or embryo is a human being or that abortion is against the law? The answer varies depending on your religion, country, culture and beliefs.</p>
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1. List all the words you find which belong to the following domains: **human, death, religion, law, and medicine**.
n.b. Repeated words are important! So if you see the same word more than once, note how many times you find it.

	HUMAN	DEATH	RELIGION	LAW	MEDICINE
text 1					
text 2					

2. Now arrange the words in the **human** list into typologies and /or partonomies.

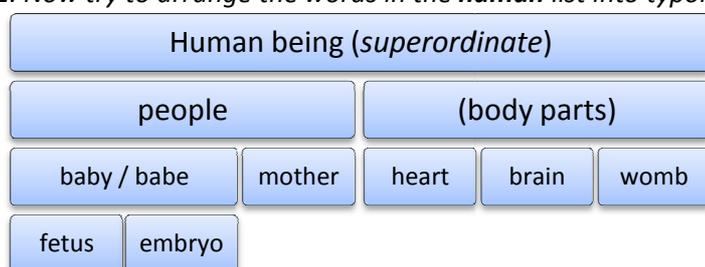
3. Having identified the words in these **domains**, can you now describe how each author has **framed** his/her argument. Why it is unlikely that they will be able to agree with one another?

¹ SOURCE: <http://www.debate.org/opinions/is-abortion-murder> Downloaded: 2/11/2015 (edited)

Chapter 1 – ANSWER KEY

	HUMAN	DEATH	RELIGION	LAW	MEDICINE
text 1	innocent babe baby (4) babies mother (3) she people <i>womb</i> (also med.) <i>heart</i> (also med.) <i>brain</i> (also med.)	abortion (3) killing (2) killed (2) die murder	God right (2) wrong (2)	--	prematurely womb heart brain
text 2	human being (4) <i>fetus</i> (3) (also med.) <i>embryo</i> (2) (also med.)	abortion (4) murder (4) killing	religion beliefs	premeditated unlawful (2) against the law	termination pregnancy uterus <i>fetus</i> (3) <i>embryo</i> (2)

2. Now try to arrange the words in the **human** list into typologies and /or partonomies.



n.b. **age** and **body parts** are *partonomies* with the superordinate **human being**. Inserting these categories makes it possible to group the two sets of words we find in the text: **people** and **organs** are basic terms starting *typologies* for **human** (a **heart** is a type of **organ** is a type of **body part**)

In the context of the texts, we could do something more useful, i.e. create the hierarchies from *only* the words that each author uses. Look what happens:



3. Describe how each author has **framed** his/her argument – and why they have to disagree.

The author of text 1 has framed the foetus as a person; notice how many times the word **baby** is used, when strictly speaking 'baby' is a newborn child which breathes air and is nourished via the mouth. This *personifies* the foetus, with the result that words normally reserved for people, e.g. **murder**, **kill**, can be used in the context of termination of a dependent, parasitic existence. The author of text 1 also uses religion and morality (**right/wrong**) as the basis of his/her argument. As for technical language, there isn't really any: the medical terms are simply body parts, and could be grouped with the **human** domain instead.

The author of text 2, on the other hand, views the foetus as a life-form but does *not* frame it as a type of person. The language used here is technical – legal and medical terminology is present – so this author is answering the question *dispassionately* (= unemotionally, objectively). The words **abortion** and **killing** are repeated many times, which is something we can expect since the words are present in the debate question ("is abortion murder?"). The author is *not* stating if abortion is right or wrong – which is a different debate entirely – but is focusing on the (legal) definition of *murder* and if/how it can be applied to a (medical) definition of 'unborn child'.

The authors are therefore "talking at cross-purposes", i.e. they think that they are talking about the same thing, when in actual fact they are talking about quite different things. Their different conceptualizations of "unborn child" mean that they view the termination of a pregnancy either as death (text 1) or interruption of a process (text 2).

Killing is an emotional and moral issue; but **interruption** of a process is a technical, objective matter.