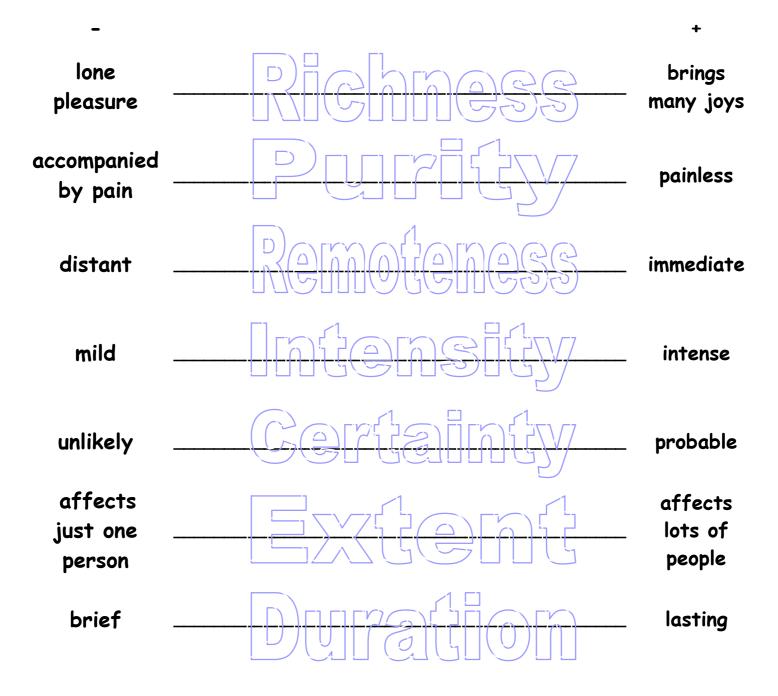
## **Bentham's Hedonic Calculus**



Bentham's Hedonic Calculus is used to choose between two courses of action. For each possibility, you add up all of the pleasure/pain, and then you do whichever action leads to the most pleasure/least pain. It's not an exact science, but if you try using numbers (say 1-50) you get an idea how it works. You may want to go down to -50 to indicate pain - whatever works!

It's worth noting that Bentham felt it was important to reduce pain first and then look at pleasure. However, if one course of action involves a small amount of pain but a huge amount of pleasure, it will be better than an action that leads to no pain but only little pleasure. Remember, once you've done this a few times, you can make similar decisions on a 'rule of thumb'.

The calculus gets a lot of stick for being 'unworkable' - pain/pleasure is immeasurable, unpredictable and incalculable (3 separate points - try explaining why!), but this is basically the system used when deciding how to spend lottery money or choosing who to operate on in hospitals.