

PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

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|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 12 | 13 - 25 | 26 - 42 | 43 - 54 | 55 - 66 | 67 - 79 | 80 - 100 |

Standard level

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|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 11 | 12 - 24 | 25 - 41 | 42 - 54 | 55 - 65 | 66 - 78 | 79 - 100 |

Higher and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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|--------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 3 | 4 - 7 | 8 - 13 | 14 - 17 | 18 - 20 | 21 - 24 | 25 - 30 |

Standard level

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|--------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
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General

This is the first session the new single work requirement, the critical analysis, is required for Philosophy Internal Assessment and there was one centre – in English, that still submitted a dialogue piece with the critical analysis. The dialogues were not assessed, but the critical analyses were assessed with the new criteria. Some candidates used the form of a dialogue as their critical analysis. This is perfectly acceptable, and should be encouraged for candidates who prefer to write using this narrative technique.

It still appears that formatting of IA material is the main problem encountered by moderators. Several moderators noted irregularities with format and administration, i.e. bibliographies absent, no word count, nor connection to the syllabus.

The absence of either a word-count or connection to syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the candidate from receiving a high mark in Criterion A, but the absence of references is

another matter. It does compromise the integrity of the work, and in any feedback comments to centres, this omission should be noted. There were some reported problems with the 3IA and 3CS forms, namely their absence, though there were no reported errors in addition and rounding.

Candidates, generally, are producing very suitable and assessable pieces of work. The vast majority of teachers are supervising and assessing candidates' IA work correctly. There is still a tendency to be liberal with interpreting the criteria applying to good pieces, and to sometimes be overly severe on weaker samples, but the reduction in the number of problem scripts with regard to content and suitability indicates that the transition to the new IA requirements has been largely understood.

The increased word limit has made the assessment by teachers, and the moderation of these marks, clearer and with fewer inconsistencies. Candidates' work has also improved in its philosophical merit as there is more room for the development of an argument, particularly in the selection of examples for and against an argument, and the evaluation of arguments. Overall, the feedback from moderators has been positive in regards to the new single, longer IA requirement, and the criteria used for moderation.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Many candidates were able to incorporate imaginative and compelling arguments into their analyses, and there were some novel and interesting topics (see below). The range of stimulus materials included photos, works of art, cartoon strips, advertisements, film scenes, poetry (entire works as well as selections), song lyrics, prose (selections from a variety of literary works), drama (selected scenes or characters from films), newspaper and magazine articles (selections). One moderator noted that candidates did not always include a copy of the stimulus material with their sample work, and in some other cases, the referencing of the material was not included.

Candidates generally maintained a clear focus on the selected non-philosophical item. As always, the top samples imaginatively incorporated the stimulus material into the analysis.

Examples of topics and issues:

- Obi-Wan Kanobi's Choice - an ethical dilemma
- What is Inspiration?
- Free Will and Determinism in Kung Fu Panda
- Absurdism in the Book of Ecclesiastes
- Aristotle and Bentham on Charity
- Selfish or reasoned response: a Critique of Suicide
- Horace: should humans strive for pleasure?
- The Oversimplification of Democracy

Some outstanding pieces of work were:

- A piece examining the Aesthetics of Plato and Walter Benjamin. It compared the visual and aural qualities of the CD and vinyl recording of *Born To Run*. This piece was skilfully written. The understanding of the aesthetic views of each philosopher and the analysis of these views were very high.
- A piece on ethics: doing the right thing and doing the good thing. It used the character Dirty Harry as the paradigm. Rather than giving a comprehensive overview of a variety of ethical arguments in this area, it focussed on one central aspect of the question. Depth is again preferable to breadth.
- A piece using a conversation between Tweedledum and Tweedledee in *Alice In Wonderland* to discuss language, meaning and solipsism. Detailed and subtle understanding was evident, and the development of the discussion was excellent; a clear and coherent sequence of thoughts.

What these samples had in common, apart from a high level of philosophical understanding, was that the stimulus material lent itself to a *focussed* discussion and analysis, usually of one idea, and not a general overview of a whole area of debate. Even if the topic is a traditional one on abortion or capital punishment, it will still score highly if it has *depth*. At all times the focus and emphasis was on philosophical analysis and evaluation. Reference to the stimulus material was to highlight or clarify a philosophical concept. The extra word limit meant the good samples developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly state the tenets of a position and then conclude. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples always had a degree of a personal reflection; that the problem had been given time to develop intellectually.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of organization; they could assemble an argument with clarity of expression and use appropriate philosophical language. Very few of the samples exceeded the 2000 word limit. A number of samples had word counts of under or near 1000 words. Though it contravenes the 1600 word minimum, the penalty is best implemented in criteria B, C, and D. These criteria are the ones primarily affected by a low word count. As mentioned above, the main problem in this criterion was in candidates not meeting the full set of formal requirements.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

A large majority of the candidates comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues. They were able to construct arguments to support the positions they were presenting, though they were not always convincing or coherent. The majority of teachers assessed this criterion accurately, though there is still a tendency to be liberal.

Some teachers still reward candidates for mentioning or listing philosophical ideas and arguments without demonstrating knowledge or understanding of them. Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase (poorly and often in a cursory and perfunctory manner) philosophical ideas without demonstrating that they actually understood what they were writing about.

Criterion C: Identification and Analysis of Relevant Material

In general, the material used was highly relevant and the examples were appropriate. The increase in the word limit allowed candidates to develop and refine their arguments by the use of more detailed– and qualified– examples. Those teachers who were liberal with this criterion need to distinguish between a listing of philosophical perspectives and the critical application and analysis of that material. Some counter positions *must* be discussed, not just mentioned or stated in order to warrant a mark above 6 in this criterion.

Criterion D: Development and Evaluation

The problem here still seems to be not in holding an opinion, but in stating a philosophical evaluation of that opinion *with* an adequate justification. Candidates who performed poorly in this criterion needed to explore the implications of their judgements and observations in a more critical/analytical fashion, and not just state a position and give details. This was the area of performance in which most candidates still experienced difficulty.

The lack of a convincing personal perspective on the relevant issues accounts for most of the problem. Many candidates were unable to appreciate, in a comprehensive fashion, the overall context of the arguments they were developing, and so could not temper their arguments to fit the context. *This is where wider reading is of benefit.* It was of little surprise that candidates who listed no reading material in their samples were outperformed by those that did.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Read *carefully* and *attentively* the instructions in the current Subject Guide for the Internal Assessment exercise. A particular focus on the formatting is needed: title, new limit of *strictly* 2000 words, connection to syllabus, bibliography, and so on. Also, specific reference to the sourcing and inclusion of stimulus material, should continue to be emphasised.
- Incorporate the IA requirement *into* the curriculum at an early opportunity, and revisit this task over the 18 months prior to final submission. This will greatly help in the understanding and development of ideas.
- Candidates should also have a copy of the requirements and marking criteria to aid their understanding of the nature and assessment of the task.
- Encourage wider reading on the part of the candidates. This greatly helps to put the topic into a larger philosophical perspective and allows candidates to display a more detailed knowledge of the topic.
- Encourage candidates to display a personal as well as an intellectual engagement with the topics and issues discussed

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 10 | 11 - 20 | 21 - 35 | 36 - 47 | 48 - 59 | 60 - 72 | 73 - 90 |

Standard level

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
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| Mark range: | 0 - 7 | 8 - 15 | 16 - 24 | 25 - 32 | 33 - 39 | 40 - 47 | 48 - 60 |

General comments

75 percent of the teachers of the centres involved in this examination session who answered the consultation (G2) form stated that, compared with last year's paper, this exam at HL was of a similar standard, 18 percent found it a little more difficult, and 7 percent found it much more difficult. At SL: 25 percent a little easier, 38 percent of a similar standard, 25 a little more difficult, and 7 percent much more difficult. At both levels the vast majority found the level of difficulty appropriate. At both levels more than 60 percent found syllabus coverage, clarity of wording and presentation of the paper to be good; the rest of answers evaluated them as satisfactory.

Teachers are encouraged to send their commentaries by means of the G2 form. This feedback is very useful and it is taken into account during the grade award meeting, and also for the preparation of future examinations.

There was no significant evidence regarding time mismanagement problems in HL or SL.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Similarly to previous years, there was no area of the program that stood out as unusually difficult. The main difficulties raised by examiners were in terms of skills or approach. The main difficulties, pointed out by examiners, which were similar to previous examination sessions, can be synthesized following the rubric of the paper:

- a) Present an argument in an organized way.

Different issues were found in the construction of a logical argument. In a relevant number of cases, what is placed after an original premise does not follow logically. There were answers that did not present a well-organized argument. Some of the candidates seemed to be unclear as to how to organize and develop an argument; others seemed to be unclear on structure and purpose. Only some candidates had a clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and knew exactly where they were going and how each point contributed to the answer.

- b) Use clear, precise and appropriate language.

There were answers that did not employ clear, precise or appropriate language to philosophy. A weakness of a group of exams was the inability to write a text that was straightforward, economical in expression, and to the point. There were exams where candidates did not know how to write essays: series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection.

- c) Identify any assumptions in the question.

This seems to be a difficult or unusual task for candidates. The rubric of the exam explicitly asks for the identification of assumptions. In turn, some answers mistakenly confused this assignment with simply denying the question, but - on a positive note - this was less frequent than in past exam sessions.

- d) Develop a clear and focused argument.

There is still a problem with candidates being overly descriptive and not philosophical enough. Examiners indicated that a significant number of answers lacked a clear argument. Some responses did not address the very specific and particular terms of the question, answering in a very general manner. In the weakest cases there was evidence that only general knowledge had been shared and candidates did not really appreciate how to attempt a philosophy essay.

- e) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response.

This is a quite difficult task for candidates as far as it refers to awareness of one's own argument. A clear identification of possible strengths and weaknesses was present only in the good responses.

- f) Identify counter-arguments to their response, and address them if possible.

Candidates are slowly but steadily making progress in this respect. A significant group of answers were convincingly concerned with the presentation and examination of counterarguments; some other answers appeared only to pretend to do this. The weaker responses did not show any concern with it at all.

- g) Provide relevant supporting material illustrations and/or examples where appropriate.

In general, relevant material i.e. concepts, theories or philosophical discussion, were adequately introduced. The use of examples presented basic difficulties. The role of examples is crucial in an essay. Where specific examples are called for, many candidates seemed unable to connect particular examples to general ideas. Examples are also all too often left unexplained or not analyzed. Some answers did confuse argument and example, using examples as arguments rather than as supporting illustration. In other cases the use of examples was anecdotal.

- h) Conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.

This was clearly achieved only in the very good answers that showed awareness and control of their own argument. Many candidates do not have a firm grasp of the nature and function of logical argument as support for theoretical conclusion.

One main issue raised by examiners was the reliance of some candidates on material that was obviously the result of memorization. Candidates from a number of centres had clearly been taught, and taught well, basic positions of a number of philosophers. These positions were then repeated on the papers as if they were central to the question, and a conclusion tacked onto the end, as if it had arisen from the discussions, most of which was simply a textbook recitation of Descartes, Hume, Plato or someone else. Where this material is used properly, it can enrich the discussion; otherwise, it tends to make the candidate sound knowledgeable but at the expense of him/her actually doing any real philosophy of his/her own.

Related to this, a problem, which is reflected at different levels of achievement, lies in a misunderstanding of the kind of answer that should be presented. In the philosophy exams in general, but specifically in Paper 1, *answers are expected to develop an argument*. To show knowledge of specific philosophical theories, names, or positions is not an end in itself, but a means to develop the answer as a specific argument regarding the issue addressed by the question. A clear example of this misunderstanding is the following kind of answer. It starts with “x has long been debated by many philosophers”, where x stands for the general topic of the theme, and it is usually followed by a list of positions, theories without concern either for the specific issue or for developing an argument. Moreover, our philosophy questions have to be read as opportunities to examine and explore the possibilities opened by the question.

Examiners have also identified a tendency to make statements without analysis, argument, exploration of the issue at hand, or attempt at justification. The mere assertion of opinions cannot count as evaluation or relevant philosophical answers. Some groups of candidates seemed to be prepared too thinly, i.e. candidates answer from too many different optional themes and did not achieve depth of knowledge or understanding in any one of them. In a significant number of occasions, a great breadth of answers were attempted from the same centre, suggesting perhaps too many themes being dealt with during the course or candidates attempting questions that have in fact not been treated.

In a similar line of thought examiners pointed out that as can be seen from the total number of marks available in the assessment criteria for knowledge and understanding (5), as opposed to those available for identification and analysis (10) and evaluation (10), it is vital that candidates should realize that the IB Philosophy course is not primarily a test of knowledge (e.g. of past philosophical positions, arguments and writers). In this course it is critical that candidates should be given the chance to develop their own skills of philosophical analysis and evaluation, which can be deployed in the Papers of the examination and the Internal Assessment. Developing these skills forms the basis of the intent of the course. In our experience there is a strong correlation between those candidates who best demonstrate the skills of philosophy with those who have been given good exposure in their classes to reading (and thinking) about past philosophical positions. In the best answers, awareness of past contributions offers a platform from which the candidate can express his or her own position. However, there is still a tendency in some answers simply to rely on learnt material and this restricts the candidate’s ability to pick up assessment marks – especially in criteria C and D, thus restricting the candidate’s ability to fulfill the intent of the course. We advise that exposure to past contributions to philosophical problems, issues and themes should be seen as offering a chance for a candidate to develop his or her own method of addressing problems, issues and themes philosophically. Finally, examiners claimed that handwriting was in some cases barely legible.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

In correspondence with the approach to the previous section, a good preparation mainly refers not to specific areas but to skills and approach. All the questions tested general skills in writing clearly, advancing a substantive philosophical position in an orderly way and offering justifying reasons for a conclusion, while different questions also tested certain more specialized skills and understanding of philosophical ideas. Most of the candidates prepared within the context of the current programme and its objectives, not only for other ways of teaching and learning philosophy, did in general perform reasonably well. In this case, candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a philosophically appropriate response to a challenging question and to develop a well-balanced and focused personal response. They showed a satisfactory grasp of the conventions of the language employed. The language register was usually at the appropriate level of academic formality. Some candidates had a good understanding of the function of the introductory paragraph as a way of introducing the reader to the topic. A significant number of candidates displayed good knowledge or arguments relevant to the question. For this group of candidates, abilities, levels and depth of understanding ranged from the very good to the outstanding. The pertinent features of these essays were their fluency with, and knowledge of, philosophical terms and conventions. They were also characterized by a subtle and considered tone, and strong evidence of personal thought and involvement with the problem.

Some main positive characteristics were: a) many candidates demonstrated a very good grasp of language. Those papers which were written well were often excellent in terms of both style and content; b) in general, a significant number of candidates seem to have the basic idea of how a philosophical essay must be presented and structured; c) most candidates defined the terms used in the problem, and many used their definitions as a device for attacking the question appropriately; d) some candidates seem to have an excellent grasp of the ideas of a large number of philosophers, and applied those ideas to the discussion of diverse questions; e) many candidates also demonstrated a fairly sophisticated understanding of some difficult and abstract ideas; f) a significant number of candidates had a good grasp of various approaches to philosophical problems and were able to develop personal illustrations and examples in response to them.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

Since a new format for the answers is required, it is worth mentioning that there was a significant agreement between examiners and teachers who commented on this: Core Theme is much better in this format. They pointed out that it is better that the question has been transformed into an essay question, and that its structure, guided by the three prompts of identifying philosophical issue, exploring two different approaches and explaining and evaluating, should make for better and more coherent analysis and narrative, while maintaining the benefits and guidance of the separated prompts.

Core Theme: What is a human being?**Question 1 Stimulus material**

Passage: Jared Diamond, *Collapse*, Penguin Books London, 2005

This question seemed to be more difficult on average for candidates than question 2. Many candidates had obviously prepared something about identity and various concepts about the self (often contrasting Descartes and Hume), but only the good answers which were quite numerous seemed comfortable discussing the social nature of the individual, or its relationship to the social structures that surround and influence us all. Some answers draw a comparison between (1) the relation of a society in peak condition to one in decline, and (2) the relation of a youth to old age. A group of weak answers failed to understand the specific demands of the question. Some did not even mention Diamond's passage in their essay. Others mentioned it and then went on to talk about something else that had no relevance to the passage.

Question 2 Stimulus material

Picture of a Toyota Robot

Approximately three out of four candidates chose this question. Answers presented many different approaches and were of diverse quality too, ranging from excellent to very poor. Candidates who did well on this question compared behaviourism and functionalism and discussed John Searle's 'Chinese Room' argument, Thomas Nagel's 'What is it like to be a bat' argument and Alan Turing's 'Turing test'. Candidates who approached it through the debate between freewill and determinism, or that between dualism and the identity theory, did at least well, or in any case better than candidates who approached it through the notion of the emotions or creativity. These two notions gave rise to common sense approaches in many cases. Very good answers reaching even to excellent identified issues related to free will and personhood. It was also common to find arguments reduced to a series of assertions about the obvious difference between robots and humans. A significant number of answers took the question as if it simply were the core theme itself: what is a human being?

Section B**Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology****Question 3**

Some very good answers, few though. They were able to develop different kind of arguments analyzing classical epistemological approaches to truth e.g. Plato, Descartes, Hume or discussing forms of relativism, including the idea of democratic relativism which assumes that principles should be debated and decided upon by all citizens. Other answers seemed to find the question tough. In this case many became opinionated rather than analytical, taking as the same the notions of knowledge and truth.

Question 4

There were few answers to this question with very diverse results. The very weak answers attempted to say something about knowledge in general or empiricism in relation to experience. The better answers at least identified standard presentations in the knowledge process: rationalism underlines the role of conceptual schemes, whereas empiricism underlines the role of facts. They also were able to discuss issues related to different views such as realism and perspectivism.

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics**Question 5**

A great majority covered this question and proceeded to describe utilitarianism and contrast it with Kant - as if they were always going to have a question requiring such a contrast. Many took 'taste of the majority' to mean Greatest Happiness Principle, which did not always result in an effective answer, since it brought descriptive answers or the view that utilitarianism is about taste. Furthermore, its connection to the sentence in the question is much more nuanced. The statement was also interpreted as an expression of cultural relativism in many answers. In some cases, Kantian universalibility was mistakenly taken as catering to the majority.

Question 6

Many candidates mainly considered this question as an opportunity to make declarations about environmental issues or repeat claims about the damage humans are causing. It is important to recall that in this context philosophy questions expect arguments as answers. Being legitimate to sustain positions, they should be backed up by arguments. This was not the case for a significant group of answers which sustain that we should protect the environment without exploring reasons why. Why there may be a moral obligation towards environment was only analyzed by the very good answers, which were the exception. Only a few dealt with specific issues such as intrinsic and instrumental value, or attempted to apply traditional theories like utilitarianism to the environment.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion**Question 7**

This question was generally well covered, even if a group of answers simply presented a mere list of all the different arguments for God's existence. Many concentrated simply on miracles as evidence of religious experience but others used the classical work of William James well. Good answers explored possible specific characteristics of religious experience without falling onto psychological description.

Question 8

The idea that God is omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent was a quite widely employed characterization, which was employed differently. In weak answers it mainly contributed only to list God's alleged attributes, whereas in the good answers it was a starting point to explore the possibility of knowing them.

These good answers were able to discuss the nature of God and how humans can understand how God claimed to be unequalled or unable to be equated with anything in human experience. Candidates often went into detail with the problem of evil, which was made specifically relevant to this question only in some cases.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

Question 9

A group of answers were an example of misreading the question or directly not wanting to pay attention to the specific terms of the question, where analysis is explicitly required by the command 'to what extent.' Emphatically stating that the involvement of the audience does define works of art and saying it in different ways does not develop an effective response. Only a few very good answers with specific knowledge and by means of historical examples were able to evaluate the issue, and to broaden the discussion reflecting on what a work of art is.

Question 10

A reasonably satisfactory job was done by many of the answers. In general, candidates seemed to feel confident with the question. Some answers identified the aesthetic experience of works of art as non-utilitarian, where "utilitarian" would mean making and using something for some non-aesthetic reason. In general, answers discussed the nature, functions and purpose of art. Many referred very appropriately to examples of works of art, using them effectively.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

Question 11

Protect us from 'ourselves' was interpreted in two ways: As the individual requiring protection from him/herself - e.g. the use of drugs, and also as the individual requiring protection from other humans. Although most chose the latter interpretation, the most interesting discussions were ones that were based on the former interpretation. They tended to evaluate Mill's distinction between other and self regarding actions in a sophisticated manner. Many mentioned Hobbes, though without making his view specifically relevant to the question.

The weaker answer only attempted some very general reasons or common sense views of why law should exist.

Question 12

There were varying performances with regards to this question: very good answers, satisfactory and even less. The better ones did discuss the concept of justice and its functions within the state. Some of them also explored the more general issue of the ethical responsibilities of the state. According to the perspective followed they made good use of the views of Rawls and Nozick. In other cases, they developed arguments based on a Marxist approach.

Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives**Question 13**

This question was not popular. It invited an exploration of what constitutes the individual in the non-Western tradition studied, and what part the individual plays in that tradition. It also invited an exploration of the part the individual might play in the order of the world and life.

Question 14

This question was not popular. It invited an exploration of the interaction in the world of the tradition studied. It allowed for a theoretical and/or practical approach.

Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues**Question 15**

This question was poorly answered by many. A quite significant group of candidates seemed to select the topics with no prior knowledge base to build upon, and no clear idea of how to begin a thoughtful discussion of the topic. Many candidates who chose this question simply expressed their personal opinion. No philosophy was discussed. On the other hand, there were some who explored the question using effective approaches based on Marx, Arendt and Taylor.

Question 16

Answers were qualitatively diverse. Very good answers clearly and creatively related the organisation of society in market economies with social justice, unequal distribution of the wealth and product of labour. They were able to explain and evaluate the possible opposition between individual freedom and social interests. Some of these answers found a good support on Rawl's ideas. Satisfactory and good answers compared, in general terms, socialist with liberal views on social organisation. Taxation was used as an effective example in some answers. Weak answers lacked specific philosophical knowledge and philosophical approach; they only offered some basic attempt based on common sense and general mentions to elementary social, historical or personal examples.

Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures**Question 17**

The issue under discussion was well identified in general; however the answers might be divided into two groups: again, a group of answers without specific previous preparation and a group of very good or excellent answers which developed purposeful and interesting arguments. Some of these underlined the value of diversity to humans, and its implications with regards to experience and creativity. Others referred to arts as a case in which something might be seen as universal and something as particular. Other very good answers investigated consequences, positive and negative, of the merging of cultures and some presented the consequences of being citizens of the world for human experience.

Question 18

Few answers to this question which invited an analysis of the differences, in terms of value, of international and national institutions and their relative contribution to society.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Since the new program continues and deepens the approach of the previous one, and it is strongly orientated towards the development of skills synthesized under the expression 'doing philosophy', the main lines of guidance remain the same. The following comments are the result of examiners' shared experience which might contribute to improve the performance of future candidates.

- Candidates have to pay particular attention to, and carefully follow, the initial bullet points displayed at the beginning of the exam to show them what they are expected to do; they should:
 - present an argument in an organized way
 - use clear, precise and appropriate language
 - identify any assumptions in the question
 - develop a clear and focused argument
 - identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response
 - identify counter-arguments to their response, and address them if possible
 - provide relevant supporting material illustrations and/or examples where appropriate
 - conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.
- During the course these ideas should be understood and exercised by means of producing arguments. As stated above, answers are expected to construct an argument - the more candidates can practice this, the better.
- Learn to be clearly focused on the question. Candidates need to be made aware that the beginning of an essay in philosophy must examine the precise nature of the question being asked, and which terms need careful definition. They must also be aware that a plan or strategy for tackling the problem should also appear near the beginning, so that the reader can follow the argument as it unfolds. Therefore, more work on using the introduction as an outline of the proposed approach to the problem would be very useful.
- Related to this is the structure problem: few candidates have a very clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and know exactly where they are going and how each point contributes to the answer. Perhaps it would be good if teachers trained them in these analytical essay-writing skills and in thinking of the question as they conclude each paragraph/point.

- Candidates should learn to convey a philosophical view clearly and coherently, in a self contained way, without somehow relying on the idea that the reader will know the view and fill in the missing picture by him or herself.
- Candidates must also be aware that the questions posed in philosophy in general, and in Paper 1 in particular, rarely have one simple answer, and that different sides might be taken into account, with counter arguments being presented, as appropriate, to demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives on an issue.
- Candidates need to ensure that their answers pertain to the question being asked, rather than being a recitation of everything that the candidate knows about that topic, relevant or not. Whenever reference is made to philosophers and their ideas, it is needed to show exactly how those ideas are relevant to the question posed. What is required is the ability to show how that information helps answer the questions asked.
- Some examiners suggested exercises in dialectic. These could be in the form of analysing arguments, writing counter-arguments to philosophical positions or practicing controlled debates in class. Constant reflective thinking on this topic ("what kind of argument was this?", "is this a good argument?", "what does the writer assume?", "is the assumption justified?", "why do you think what you said is true?"....) is absolutely necessary.
- The conclusion should reflect a tentative resolution, and indicate areas for further examination.
- Teachers should emphasize the preference for personal engagement and critical discussion of a question over a demonstration of learned material. Philosophy is an intellectual activity, not memorizing information or the simple utterance of opinions.
- References to important philosophic ideas and philosophers should be used to bolster the arguments of the candidates whenever it is relevant, without becoming a substitute for genuine philosophic reasoning on the part of the candidate.
- Teachers should not teach too many optional themes, and candidates should be advised to choose the questions of the themes they have been learning. It is difficult to develop a reasonably good philosophical argument as expected without previous preparation.
- Teachers should insist on better time management during the examination.
- More practice with the compare/contrast format, requiring candidates to show both similarity and differences between two positions should occur.
- Teachers should offer opportunities within the course for critical, and personal, discussion of philosophical issues.
- Focus on one or two themes. Centres that presented a weak cohort seemed to study many themes
- Practice and develop the language required to identify a Stimulus. Essay structuring in an exam context. The appreciation of the need for greater depth in candidates' understanding of a philosophical issue or concept.

- Finally, some examiners pointed out that the most important piece of guidance would be to avoid stipulation and un-argued-for substantive premises. Candidates should write, especially on critically-minded questions, with the aim of convincing and not of showing knowledge. Tell candidates to imagine that a Socrates-like examiner is going to read their papers and think of and try to answer the obvious questions and objections he might raise. The better papers managed to do this with great success. Philosophy is about arguments for positions as much as it is about the positions themselves. The second piece of advice is that if a philosopher is mentioned in an answer, he/she should be represented so that a certain understanding of his/her position emerges, including his/her justifications for holding the position stated. Many candidates referred to philosophers using “one-liners” such as “Descartes was a dualist and thought mind and body are two separate substances” and nothing more.

It is important for teachers to teach their candidates how to plan their essays or answers, bearing in mind that the question at the top of the response which will probably need to be explained in the first or second paragraph, discussed from one or several angles in the main part, and receive a clear reply in the concluding paragraph. Attention should be given to the stem of the question so that the answer is properly focused

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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|--------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 3 | 4 - 7 | 8 - 12 | 13 - 16 | 17 - 19 | 20 - 23 | 24 - 30 |

Standard level

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|--------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 3 | 4 - 7 | 8 - 12 | 13 - 16 | 17 - 19 | 20 - 23 | 24 - 30 |

General comments

First, it is worthwhile noting that the May 2009 examination session marked the first examination session of the new Philosophy programme for which teaching began in September 2007. The May 2009 Paper 2 at **both** HL **and** SL required candidates to answer only one of two questions set for each of the 12 prescribed texts. General comments received on the G2 document which focused on the overall quality of the examination papers indicated clearly that the May 2009 HL and SL examination papers were well-structured, providing ample time for the development of a response, improved range of choice of text questions and a good opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Second it is important to comment on the data collected from the official G2 document received from both HL and SL Philosophy Teachers involved in the May 2009 session. A summary of the comments received follows:

Only 13 centres responded to the G2 document for the HL Paper 2 component while only 10 centres responded with regard to the SL Paper 2 component. This is a very disappointing number of responses as the G2 document constitutes an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the examination paper can be considered critically from the perspective of IB Philosophy teachers. The document also provides an opportunity for general comments about the HL and SL examination papers and for comments about the individual questions set. Lastly and very significantly, the G2 document constitutes a crucial document at the Philosophy Grade Award Meeting, especially in the context of discussions regarding the setting of the final grade boundaries which are now identical for both the HL and SL papers. The IB Co-ordinators of all centres ought to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme. The G2 document is always available online on the Philosophy OCC site. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by a centre's IB co-ordinator.

Of those teachers who responded to the questions asking for a comparison of this year's examination papers to those of May 2008, 11 indicated that, in comparison to last year's paper, the May 2009 HL Paper 2 examination paper was of a similar standard. On the other hand, with regard to a comparison of the May 2009 SL Paper 2 examination paper with that of May 2008, 1 teacher felt that the paper was a little easier, 4 judged it to be of a similar standard, and 3 felt it was a little more difficult. Some teachers did not respond to the questions asking for a comparison with last year's paper.

Of the teachers who responded to the relevant questions, at HL:

- 13 judged the examination paper to be 'appropriate';
- 11 felt the syllabus coverage to be 'good';
- 2 felt the syllabus coverage to be 'satisfactory';
- 9 judged the clarity of wording to be 'good';
- 4 viewed the clarity of wording to be 'satisfactory';
- 11 felt the presentation of the paper to be 'good';
- 2 judged the presentation of the paper to be 'satisfactory'.

Of the teachers who responded to the relevant questions, at SL:

- 9 judged the examination paper to be 'appropriate';
- 7 felt the syllabus coverage to be 'good';
- 3 felt the syllabus coverage to be 'satisfactory';
- 7 judged the clarity of wording to be 'good';
- 1 viewed the clarity of wording to be 'satisfactory';

- 1 judged the clarity of wording to be 'poor';
- 7 felt the presentation of the paper to be 'good';
- 3 judged the presentation of the paper to be 'satisfactory'

All general and specific comments for both HL and SL Paper 2 were carefully noted and taken into account at the May Philosophy Grade Award Meeting. Once again, the significance of the G2 document should not be underestimated.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

There was clear evidence that most teachers (but, unfortunately, not all) followed the unambiguous recommendation of the Subject Guide which encourages teachers to select for formal study *one* prescribed text at both HL and SL.

Adherence to this recommendation facilitates an in-depth, focused and comprehensive appreciation of the prescribed texts required by both the Subject Guide and the examination rubric. Therefore, while acknowledging varying levels of performance vis-à-vis the assessment criteria, and taking into account that candidates were generally able to perform successfully in this component of the programme, the practice of preparing candidates for more than one text persists and, available evidence suggests that this practice is counter-productive.

The most notable difficulties that emerged in this year's examination session were the **failure** to:

- maintain precise focus on the wording and demands of the examination questions
- address precisely all the command terms of the question (e.g. Discuss and critically evaluate, explain and discuss, etc.)
- demonstrate a sound, critical reading and detailed study of the actual text
- make appropriate references to the prescribed text in developing the argument
- engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question and its implications
- engage in a critical evaluation of relevant, textually based information in the development of the overall argument
- offer personal reflections on their arguments
- incorporate relevant supporting examples and illustrations
- identify and briefly explore relevant counter arguments and counter positions.
- distinguish successfully between a simple exposition of an author's arguments from a critical evaluation / examination / discussion of those arguments and of the further implications of an author's arguments.

- do more than offer a simple outline or general resumé of the main points of a particular author's overall philosophical perspective rather than develop an argument incorporating those specific aspects of a particular author's general philosophical perspective relevant to the demands of the question
- develop conclusions that included relevant evaluative and critical comments and observations
- incorporate a textually informed personal, reflective response.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

With regard to the performance of this year's candidates, the majority provided convincing evidence that the selected prescribed text (HL and SL) had been carefully read, studied under the direction of the teacher, and competently analysed in a classroom situation. Hence, the examination answers were situated comfortably within the scope of the official assessment criteria. It is clear that this was a good set of examination papers which provided candidates of differing abilities to demonstrate their philosophical skills in developing cogent arguments on challenging philosophical issues derived from the various prescribed texts.

In general terms, candidates demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of knowledge of the variously chosen prescribed texts. This was true in terms of the knowledge of the text, the use of the language and idiom of the authors of the selected texts, and in terms of knowledge of the arguments developed by the various authors within the texts. Therefore, when judged from the point of view of an understanding of key terms, major textual issues, and an appreciation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the arguments developed by the various authors, candidates generally performed with a satisfactory degree of success. Stronger candidates gave evidence of a certain level of expertise in the areas noted above.

In more specific terms, only the strongest candidates began their responses with useful introductory paragraphs situating the argument in the general context of the prescribed text as a whole. This is an important factor in the development of a coherent, focused and convincing textually based argument. Again, the stronger candidates were able to proceed to an analysis of the portions of the selected text which were, in fact, relevant to the question set, incorporate useful illustrations and examples, acknowledge relevant counter positions and counter arguments, and go on to develop a convincing conclusion – again, relevant to the selected text and the question set. A skill which only better candidates were able to engage was that of delving into the more subtle points of a text's arguments and exploring those points in some detail.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Bhagavad Gita

Question 1

This question was only moderately popular amongst candidates. Most candidates were able to offer a summary of the key points of the text, not all of which were relevant to answering the question. However, few candidates were able to develop a detailed answer to the question nor were they able to develop a critical, evaluative response to the central theme of the question – To what extent does the Bhagavad Gita transmit a message of war or peace.

Question 2

This question was less popular than the other option on this prescribed text. Candidates were able to rely more on a description of God generally portrayed in Hinduism than on the view presented in the text itself. Hence, most answers lacked depth, precision and focus. Additionally, discussion and explanation of the concept of God presented in answers usually lacked effective evaluation and detailed analysis of relevant material.

Confucius: The Analects

Question 3

Few candidates chose to answer this question. Answers tended to offer brief, general descriptive definitions of filial piety but failed to explain and discuss the role this notion plays in the perspective of the arguments of the text. Hence, many answers only developed partial responses to the demands of the question and its implications.

Question 4

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Answers demonstrated a basic, general knowledge of the text without clearly dealing with the relationship between knowledge and learning and the development of humaneness. This approach entailed that the question set was not being answered in a precise and focused manner.

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

Question 5

A moderate number of candidates chose to answer this question. Answers showed that candidates were able to master the fundamental ideas presented in the text which were relevant to answering the question. However, candidates were unable to develop a convincing, critical treatment and evaluative assessment of the information assembled in response to the question.

Question 6

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Answers tended to present broad generalities concerning the philosophical views of Lao Tzu and superficial outlines of some of the more obvious aspects of Taoism without focusing precisely on the demands of the question.

Plato: The Republic, books IV-IX**Question 7**

This question was one of the most popular choices amongst candidates. The question was clear, direct and focused on a central element of both the prescribed text and of Plato's philosophy. It was very encouraging to note that candidates were able to present clearly organised, coherent and complete descriptions of the various distinctions Plato drew between knowledge and opinion. It was also encouraging to note that almost every candidate was able to link their description to the major analogies and similes Plato used to illustrate his perspective (sun, divided line, cave, ship of state, chariot). The major weakness which was evident in several responses was the failure on the part of a number of candidates to enter into a critical analysis of the relevant material nor were they able to develop an evaluation of the distinctions between knowledge and opinion. Several of the answers entered into precise, lengthy and extremely detailed descriptive accounts, for example, of the analogy of the divided line or the analogy of the cave without any mention of the epistemological implications found in these analogies.

Question 8

This question was another of the very popular choices amongst candidates and was another example of a question focused clearly and directly on a central theme of the prescribed text. In all instances candidates were able to offer fairly detailed descriptions of Plato's definitions of justice in the individual and in the state. However, not all candidates were able to discuss the relationship between justice in the individual and the state. Rather, many candidates chose to lose precise focus on the question and invest time in an explanation of the details of, for example, the story of the ship of state or the analogy of the cave. Lastly, only the strongest candidates were able to develop critical, analytical and evaluative treatments of the relevant textually based information.

René Descartes: Meditations**Question 9**

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. Those candidates that focused precisely on the question were able to construct clear albeit somewhat descriptive accounts of the various stages through which Descartes argues for the existence of God and were able to highlight why the idea of God could not proceed from a finite being. The shortcoming of even the good answers was the absence of a critical evaluation of the information gathered. Weaker candidates only outlined the general aspects of the arguments for the existence of God.

Nevertheless, while responses were weak in the critical analysis of relevant material and in the evaluative development of the overall arguments – a situation which impacts directly on

criteria C and D – responses showed that candidates were quite familiar with the relevant portions of the text.

Question 10

While a popular choice amongst candidates, this question proved to be more difficult for candidates to answer in a manner precisely focused on the relevant portions of the text. Responses indicate that because candidates were not clearly aware of how imagination fits into the Cartesian epistemology, there was a tendency to summarise the main steps of Descartes's system of methodological doubt by means of which he arrives at certainty with a few allusions to imagination. The example of the piece of wax was identified by most candidates, but rather than developing its use in drawing distinctions between understanding (intellection) and imagination most candidates simply outlined the details of the example. Hence, not only was the question not addressed directly and precisely by many candidates, but the requirement set out in the question for a critical assessment of the role of imagination in establishing the probable existence of material object was not met. Lastly, not all candidates even discussed the content of Book VI where the existence of material objects is discussed at length.

John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

Question 11

This was a moderately popular choice amongst candidates. Answers tended to be descriptive and talked generally of the individual in the state of nature and the move to civil society through the establishment of the social contract and the selection of the form of government. Most answers demonstrated a satisfactory to good knowledge of the text. However, not all candidates were able to enter into a critical discussion with the relevant content of the text itself. Only a few candidates were able to identify and explore briefly relevant counter positions or counter arguments. These shortcomings impacted on assessment criteria C and D.

Question 12

This was also a moderately popular choice amongst candidates. In this case, almost all candidates were able to engage in a discussion and explanation of Locke's view of private property and the role it played in his overall perspective. Almost all answers were clear and employed relevant and precise philosophical language drawn from the text. Many candidates were able to outline in very precise detail aspects asked for by the question. However, once again, not all candidates were able to critically analyse the relevant material nor were they all able to develop their arguments in an evaluative manner. These shortcomings will always impact on marks awarded in assessment criteria C and D.

John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

Question 13

This was a popular choice amongst candidates and evidence provides clear confirmation that candidates who chose this question were very familiar with the text and the arguments relevant to the question. Answers showed a secure use of appropriate philosophical

language drawn from the text and answers remained generally focused on the demands of the question. The only apparent difficulty was the failure to engage critically and evaluatively with the text and the theme about which the question asked. Nevertheless, performance was quite good with regard to this question.

Question 14

This question was also a popular choice amongst candidates. Answers were uniformly consistent with regard to a secure treatment of Mill's Harm Principle and the notion of the Tyranny of the Majority. However, not all candidates were able to make the important connection between the prevention of harm to others as the only legitimate basis for the restriction of liberty. Hence, many essays tended to be somewhat descriptive and detailed in terms of an exposition of textually based ideas, but rather weak in terms of a full treatment of the demands and implications of the question set. There was room for more critical and evaluative engagement with the text and what the question asked.

Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Question 15

This question was chosen by many candidates. Almost all candidates demonstrated a good to excellent knowledge of the terms 'guilt' and 'bad conscience' and the role these notions played in the development of Nietzsche's arguments. Several candidates were able to make convincing connections across the three essays of the prescribed text with these two central notions. Unfortunately very few candidates were able to engage critically, and evaluative effectively, the material assembled in their arguments. However, it is important to note that the overwhelming majority of candidates who chose this question were able to perform quite satisfactorily.

Question 16

While this question attracted the attention of a large number of candidates, not all of them were able to appreciate fully what the question asked. This was clear in terms of the number of essays that chose to engage in a description -- albeit accurate and detailed -- only of the differences between master and slave morality. Only the strongest candidates showed that they understood Nietzsche's understanding of the 'historical' development of morality from an earlier period to that of his contemporary, Judeo-Christian contemporary situation. Another shortcoming consisted in the failure, at various levels, to develop a critical evaluation of the information assembled in the answer. However, as was the case with regard to the other Nietzsche question, answers were still quite good and securely anchored in the text.

Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

Question 17

While not a very popular choice, candidates who tackled this question were able to construct clear, focused and coherent responses. There was evidence that the text had been read with care and the information understood in a satisfactory manner. A more precise and consistent attention to the requirement of the question for a critical evaluation of the information would have improved performance significantly.

Question 18

This question was far less popular than the other Russell question. The few candidates who chose to answer it were quite at home in their descriptions of 'knowledge by description'. However, rather than addressing the specific demand of the second part of the citation, they tended to simply describe what Russell meant by 'knowledge by acquaintance'. Another weakness of answers was the absence of a convincing critical assessment of the information assembled in the answer, the specific task asked for in the question set.

Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition**Question 19**

This question was chosen by a good number of candidates. Almost every candidate was able to address directly and precisely what Arendt intended by the term 'work' as opposed to 'labour' and 'action'. In the strongest cases, the awareness of the text was quite detailed. Again, many candidates were able to explore, at varying levels of success, the role of work in human activity. It was disappointing that only a few candidates engaged in a critical and evaluative discussion with the material assembled in the answer.

Question 20

This question was moderately popular amongst candidates. All candidates were able to offer evidence that they had achieved a general understanding of the major themes of Arendt's text. However, the responses did not always maintain precise and sustained focus on the demands of the question. In this regard, the tendency was to offer a descriptive account of Arendt's main ideas. Lastly, the absence of the incorporation of a critical assessment and the failure to identify and take into account counter positions and to incorporate supporting illustrations were the most often noted weaknesses of the responses.

Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Ambiguity**Question 21**

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question than the second option on de Beauvoir's text. Most were able to demonstrate a general appreciation of the text, often focusing on themes which were not directly relevant to the demands of the question. Only a few candidates were able to focus precisely and in a sustained manner on this central theme of her argument. Those candidates who were able to do so chose to provide general outlines of her argument without critically engaging with the topic, a factor which impacted directly on criteria C and D.

Question 22

Of the two questions set on the de Beauvoir text, this was the more popular option. Responses focused competently on the relevant arguments of the text and descriptive outlines of de Beauvoir's arguments were assembled. Performance ranged from adequate to very good. Several candidates were able to situate de Beauvoir's arguments into the context of existential philosophy with relevant references to Sartre's influence on her thought. The major weaknesses were the failure to explore counter arguments and the absence of a critical assessment of the material, a task specifically required by the examination question.

Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

Question 23

Of the two questions set for the Taylor text, this was the less popular. It appears that candidates did not fully appreciate that the question dealt with central elements of the text. However, candidates who chose to answer this question were still able to develop arguments which reflected a generally sound knowledge of the relevant textual arguments.

The main weakness of the responses was the tendency to drift off into a description of the three sicknesses Taylor sets out in the first chapter without making clear and precise connections with the demands of the question. As is often the case, very few of the candidates who answered this question offered a critical analysis of the relevant material nor went on to develop an evaluative judgement of the material.

Question 24

Evidence from the G2 documents has indicated that several teachers felt that the citation was too lengthy and convoluted. This observation has been taken into account with regard to future questions that may be based on a text citation. Nevertheless, this question seems to have provided candidates with a stimulating opportunity to explore many of the political aspects of Taylor's arguments. Candidates were generally able to base their responses on relevant textual material and competently addressed the questions of fragmentation, atomism, and effective democratic action. The major weakness of many essays was the absence of critical and evaluative comments. On the other hand, several candidates comfortably incorporated textually inspired personal reflections

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The general trend in the May 2009 session has been for teachers to prepare candidates for the study of ONE prescribed texts at both HL and SL and HL. The requirement of the preparation of a single text at both course levels, along with the introduction of TWO questions for each of the 12 prescribed texts, was hoped to introduce a significant improvement into the structure of the Philosophy programme. The evidence provided by the majority of HL and SL Paper 2 examination scripts shows that candidates were able to construct answers with a reasonable degree of precision, insight into, and critical appreciation of, the prescribed text(s) chosen at each of the subject levels. However, a small number of centres still provide evidence that more than the recommended number of prescribed texts is being tackled in class (some centres appear to be covering as many as 4 to 5 texts).

This report repeats the strong recommendation made in almost every previous report that this practice is counter-productive and recommends that the requirement asking for the study of ONE text be followed more precisely.

- Candidates must learn to read carefully, address clearly, and answer completely the examination question. The omission of parts of the question and/or the failure to perform the required task(s) set out in the question

(e.g. Discuss and critically evaluate, Explain and discuss, To what extent, Evaluate philosophically, etc.) can have serious consequences in the assessment of a candidate's essay.

- Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination questions that ask them to make connections between or amongst ideas, themes, or issues raised in a prescribed text. Candidates must not fail to address all aspects set out in each question.
- While the discussion, analysis and evaluation of a prescribed text in a classroom situation under the guidance of the teacher are absolutely essential elements in the study of a prescribed text, it might be useful to provide candidates with or direct them to at least one dependable 'commentary' on the relevant text. The availability and consultation of such a resource can help in the development of a comprehensive and critical appreciation of both the text and its author. If the purchase of such a text is not possible for budgetary reasons, internet sites can be explored for electronic copies of such texts. Recommendations for websites providing access to electronic versions of philosophical texts can be found on the philosophy OCC site (resources link).
- Candidates might be encouraged to use 'chat lines' and 'discussion forums' provided by some of the reputable and acknowledged philosophy internet sites (e. g. www.radicalacademy.com). In this way, candidates can enter into virtual discussions with other philosophy candidates and philosophy teachers regarding the texts they are examining.
- Teachers ought to help candidates understand the difference between the simple exposition and/or descriptive summary of the arguments found in a text and the critical analysis and evaluation of the elements of those arguments.
- Candidates should be introduced to the technique of identifying and incorporating supporting examples and illustrations into their answers. Similarly, they should be introduced to the technique of incorporating relevant counter positions and counter arguments into their responses. These techniques are absolutely essential with regard to the development of a candidate's answer. Failure to take these techniques into account will have an impact on assessment criterion C in particular.
- It is essential that candidates incorporate a personal, textually based and philosophically informed response into their arguments. This is an important element of a Paper 2 examination answer and failure to include this element into the answer will have an impact on assessment criterion D in particular.
- Teachers should encourage candidates to develop concise introductory and concluding paragraphs that help set the stage for the development of the response and assist in bringing the essay to a successful and convincing conclusion.
- Candidates should try to develop contemporary applications of the arguments of the prescribed texts studied in class. For example, this might be the case with those authors that tend to talk of matters that have political significance (e.g. Plato, Taylor, Locke, etc.)

- Teachers should use more effectively the IB's online resources (OCC) for assistance and the sharing of information regarding the prescribed texts studied in class. Whenever appropriate, this information should be shared with candidates.
- Teachers should provide candidates with past Paper 2 examination questions. In this way, they will become familiarised with the style and format of typical Paper 2 examination questions appropriate to the prescribed text(s) studied in class. In all cases, these practice essays ought to be marked using the official Paper 2 assessment criteria. Moreover, comments made by teachers should be in line with and reflect the requirements of the assessment criteria.
- Teachers ought to read carefully the annual Subject Reports that are published on the OCC philosophy site. The information supplied in these reports offers useful observations and suggestions for the preparation of candidates for the various components of the Philosophy examination.
- Teachers ought to take advantage of completing and submitting the official G2 form at the end of every examination session. The importance of this document has been noted and outlined above.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mark range: | 0 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 14 | 15 - 17 | 18 - 21 | 22 - 24 | 25 - 30 |

General comments

The introduction of Paper 3 gave Higher Level candidates the chance to show both a holistic treatment of their experience of doing philosophy in the IB course as well as to develop skills beyond those used in the other components of the course.

The stated purpose of this examination (using, as it does, an unseen text extract to provide the context of candidate responses) is "to allow candidates to demonstrate an understanding of philosophy as an activity by means of a holistic application of the philosophical skills...they have developed throughout the course."

The introduction of a new component can be expected to be challenging for candidates and for teachers and there was some evidence that candidates found it harder to gain higher marks in this component than in the other components of the Higher Level course.

This Subject Report intends to offer clear guidance to teachers to reflect on the evidence from the May 2009 session and then to offer pointers to enable candidates to make the most of the opportunities afforded by Paper 3.

No G2 response indicated that the paper was too easy or that the syllabus coverage was inappropriate. The clarity of wording and presentation of the paper were also considered 'good' by the majority and 'satisfactory' by the minority of responses. There were contradictory comments on the length of the extract with some considering it too long, some considering it too short. The actual word limit of this extract fell within that mentioned in the Teachers' Support Material document and this first extract can be considered in line with the kind of length expected from the text extract in future.

One comment said that candidates would not have enough time to compose their response of 800 words in the time allowed for the paper – however a great majority of scripts far exceeded the recommended 800 words. The recommendation that candidates should spend at least 20 minutes reading the text carefully still stands.

The Text Extract

Any extract that will appear in Paper 3 examinations will enable candidates to reflect on the experience of doing philosophy, as detailed extensively in the Subject Guide. This particular piece by Roger Scruton enabled a reflection on the nature of philosophical activity as mentioned by Russell and then developed by Scruton himself. Specifically the extract then dealt with a comparison of philosophy and science, a comparison nearly all candidates wrestled with in their responses. Of course there is no right or wrong way to develop a response to a Paper 3 extract, but the best responses will have used the issues arising from the extract and then used this to draw upon their own experience in all aspects of the course they studied at HL. Relevant experiences can include the delivery of philosophy classes (e.g. the experience of debate, group discussion or research for assignments) the specific experience of course components (including the Internal Assessment) and perhaps a comparison between the activity of philosophy and that encountered with other subjects in the IB Diploma.

There is no prescribed expectation as to how candidates should handle the text extract. Some went chronologically through the passage commentating on paragraphs one after the other. Other responses handled the material in topic chunks. So long as the structure and expression was clear there was no specific way in which one handling of the text was considered superior to another.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The most obvious weakness demonstrated by candidates was either in ignoring the text or in not mentioning the personal experience of philosophy encountered in their HL course in their responses. This will be covered in more detail in comments about the assessment criteria B and D.

Occasionally candidates tended to treat the issues arising from the text in a psychological way rather than in a philosophical way. This meant that some responses lacked philosophical relevancy and depth of understanding of philosophy as an activity.

Candidates also were inclined to make assertions about philosophical activity (as prompted by the text) without going on to justify, explain or analyse these assertions. This meant that

some scripts were overly descriptive and could not meet the demands of the higher achievement levels in the assessment criteria.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

There was a good level of clarity of expression and most responses indicated an awareness of the thrust of the text, although the better ones engaged in an analysis rather than a description of what the text was saying. The best responses used the text to enable a discussion of the activity of philosophy and were able to draw personally on experiences of doing the HL course. This remains the central demand of Paper 3 and all candidates should be encouraged to use their analysis of the extract as a basis for discussing their own reflections of what doing philosophy actually involves. By referring directly to the course, candidates could achieve this far more effectively.

Responses can draw on the *content* of the course studied (although mention of philosophers they have encountered often gave a good chance to investigate philosophical activity) but the best also refer to the philosophical methodologies and argumentation encountered and how personal experience was gained in line with such methodologies and argumentation.

It was possible for high achieving responses to disagree with the points being made by Roger Scruton in this extract, while of course it was also possible for other high achieving responses to agree with him.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

It was straightforward to see whether candidates were clear in their expression or not. The organisation of the response could gain credit as could the clarity and precision of the language used by the candidates. This language needed to be appropriate to philosophy and occasionally terminology was deployed rather vaguely or in an over-ambitious way lacking real control in expression. Some of the weaker responses seemed more comfortable with psychological terminology rather than philosophical terminology. It is perfectly acceptable to read mention of 'I' in a candidate's response so long as the point being made adds to the response productively.

Criterion B: Exploration

Criterion B proved problematic for candidates who were not sufficiently prepared (or in some cases not at all prepared) to draw on their experience of the whole course or who were not able to identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity. Candidates failed to get in the top band if they simply analysed the text and failed to draw on examples of philosophical activity that they had encountered. There is no preferential way to draw on the experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole course, but candidates could list thinkers they had encountered in their response to the text extract as well as mentioning actual experiences of their classes and personal work throughout the HL course. Of course Criteria D also enabled candidates to gain credit for responding personally.

Criterion C: Relevance of the response and understanding of philosophical activity

This criterion enables candidates to gain recognition for their response specifically to the text. The best responses demonstrated a detailed, relevant and in-depth understanding of the philosophical activity in response to the text. Thus the best responses did not simply analyse the text in detail, but used references to the text to show an awareness of how philosophical activity is carried out. The best responses gained credit for using the text appropriately, convincingly and compellingly – as opposed to it being a mere start point to a general discussion about philosophical activity, which of course candidates could be tempted to pre-learn and apply to any text. The weakest responses tended to become overly descriptive, really just summarising what was said in the text extract and thus lacked personal understanding and evaluation demanded by this – and the other – criteria.

Criterion D: Evaluation and personal response

Candidates were able to pick up credit in criterion D for evaluating the philosophical activity raised in the text and expressing a personal response. The best responses were not mere statements of opinion, but contained considered and justified comments on how the extract enabled them to reflect on philosophical activity and their experience of the HL course. The best responses were sensitive to the actual text rather than being a broad (perhaps pre-learned) commentary on philosophy generally. Candidates could of course use their own experience in guiding their evaluation of what the text raised in terms of philosophical activity.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- There is no single way that can be recommended to help prepare candidates for the Paper 3 examination. However, teachers should consider offering regular chances for candidates to reflect on what they are doing in each component of the HL course. They can then also perhaps develop some practice examples using text extracts along the lines suggested by the Guide and the TSM. One method that may be considered would be oral sessions in which candidates talk individually with a teacher about philosophical activity perhaps having read an unseen extract beforehand.
- The key skills to encourage are both a clear approach to understanding of analysis of a text, while drawing on the experience of (and material covered in) the HL course. These must be done together in order to gain the best recognition from the assessment criteria.
- Of particular note this year was the amount of candidates who failed to mention any personal experience of philosophical activity in their responses; teachers should encourage ways in which candidates can be comfortable drawing on their HL course while responding to a text.
- The Guide and TSM contain relevant material to support teachers in preparing candidates for Paper 3.