

PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 39	40 - 51	52 - 65	66 - 78	79 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 26	27 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 65	66 - 78	79 - 100

Higher and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

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

General comments

It still appears that general formatting and referencing of IAs are the main problems encountered by moderators. Several moderators noted irregularities with format and administration, i.e. absent bibliographies, no word count or no connection to the syllabus. The absence of, in a single instance, either a word count or connection to syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the student from receiving a high mark in criterion A, but the absence of referencing and bibliography is another matter. Lack of either compromises the integrity of the work and raises suspicions about the authenticity of the work. The ideas used in an IA **must** be sourced, in both a background context and in direct quotations.

Furthermore, the quality of some of the references used is also questionable. The number of IAs using web references exclusively, none of which could be classed as a **primary source** was disappointing. There were some reported problems with the 3IA and 3CS forms, namely their absence, though there were no reported errors in addition and rounding.

Of a more serious concern was the selection and description of stimulus material. Though rare, some of the selection was of material that is **explicitly** philosophical. There can be no excuse for this, as the requirements are clear in the guide; however, there are some recommendations that may alleviate this problem in future (see below). In some cases entire novels were cited as the stimulus material. Again, this contravenes the formal requirements. Examiners came across analysis pieces without any description or inclusion of stimulus material, though it was referred to in the student's work.

Some students used the form of a dialogue as their critical analysis. This is perfectly acceptable, and should be encouraged for students who prefer to write using this narrative technique.

Students, generally, are producing very suitable and assessable pieces of work. The vast majority of teachers are supervising and assessing IA submissions correctly. There is still a tendency to be liberal with interpreting the criteria and applying marks to good pieces, and to sometimes be overly severe on weaker samples; however, there were few instances of altering marks.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Many students 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 specific verses), song lyrics, prose (selections from a variety of literary works), drama (selected scenes or characters from films), newspaper and magazine articles (selections).

Students 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

- *Alice in Wonderland* and the continuity of identity.
- The ethics of cheating in professional sport.
- Faith, belief and evil.
- Authenticity and narcissism.
- Duty to the environment or to ourselves?
- Why should we be nice to people? A defence of bad manners.
- Determinism and true love.
- The necessity of lying for social interaction.
- The moral value of indolence.

Some outstanding pieces of work were

- A piece examining the existentialist hero and the character of the Joker in *The Dark Knight*. It carefully interpreted and analyzed the character as a way of discussing fundamental Sartrean ideas such as radical freedom and inter-subjectivity. It did not just describe these ideas or conclude by making a simple comparison with the character, but developed and discussed them in such a way as to reveal that the concepts were clearly and thoroughly understood. The consequences of being such a hero were examined.
- A piece that used an ultrasound image of a uterus to discuss gender and identity, mainly from the perspective of Irigaray and other feminist thinkers. It had a sophisticated knowledge of these perspectives and arguments and *critically* and judiciously applied them to issues of the body.
- A piece that used the painting of Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People* to discuss western concepts of freedom, and the tension between too much and too little freedom dependent on our natures as private and social beings. It used rule utilitarianism as a perspective, and by a detailed development of the argument, demonstrated a sophisticated understanding and a compelling conclusion.

What these samples had in common, apart from a high level of philosophical understanding, were:

- the stimulus material lent itself to a *focused* 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.
- good samples developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly stating the tenets of a position and then concluding. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples always had a degree of a personal reflection; the problem had been given time to develop intellectually and personally.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

Most students 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. This is under the 1600 word minimum requirement. As mentioned above, the main problem in this criterion was in students meeting the full set of formal requirements, rather than in the clarity of expression.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

A large majority of the students comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues and achieve a 3 in this criterion. 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 students for mentioning or listing philosophical ideas and arguments without demonstrating knowledge or understanding of them. Weaker students 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 problem still remains with the analysis aspect of this criterion. It was often the distinguishing feature between sample scripts. Those teachers who were liberal with this criterion need to distinguish between a listing of philosophical perspectives or ideas, 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. Students 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 students experienced difficulty.

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

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The following comments are the result of shared examiner experience which might contribute to improve the performance of future candidates.

- Teachers must be reminded to carefully and attentively read the instructions in the current guide for the IA task. To this end, a recommendation is to introduce a new cover sheet that has a checklist of all the specific formal requirements of the IA. This could be a direct copy of the section in the guide.
- Included with the checklist could be a rationale for why the formal requirements are important. Firstly, the selection of stimulus material helps to frame and place in context the philosophical issue or argument. It should help the student from veering away from the topic. Secondly, the emphasis in the type of IA, a critical analysis, helps the student to prepare for Paper 1, 2 (and for HL students) Paper 3, where 20 of the 30 marks on offer for each essay is concerned with development, analysis and evaluation. These are the crucial aspects of any philosophical essay.
- 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.
- When connecting the topic to a part of the syllabus, the candidate should have one theme in mind, not two or more. This helps the candidate to focus on the topic from one main perspective.

- 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 students. This greatly helps to put the topic into a larger philosophical perspective and allows students to display a more detailed knowledge of the topic.
- Encourage students 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

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 – 17	18 - 32	33 - 42	43 - 57	58 - 70	71 - 90

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 – 17	18 - 24	25 - 31	32 - 39	40 - 46	47 - 60

General comments

60% of the G2 responses stated that, compared with last year's paper, this exam was of a similar standard, 25% found it more difficult, 15% of the answers do not apply. 93% of answers found the level of difficulty appropriate and 7% too difficult. The answers also indicated; clarity of wording: 10%, poor; 56% satisfactory, 24% good; presentation of the paper: 25% satisfactory, 75% good.

There was a typographical error in HL Paper 1 (Spanish) 'otros/otras', which was highlighted in some of the G2s received. According to teachers and examiners, it did not hinder the understanding of the question.

Some teachers were concerned about the allocated time for the examination. In general there was no significant evidence to support the underestimation of time allocation for the paper. There were a significant number of scripts with very good or excellent answers, all fully developed.

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.

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

As in previous sessions, exams are of a good level in general terms. However, according to some examiners, the more scripts you read, the more you realize that there is a significant gap between examiner/IB expectation and actual work produced. The main goal is the construction of an argument, though we still get descriptive answers. Regarding the approach to the exam and the task, there are many who do not consider the actual requests of the question, some disregard the question and apply what they have learnt, thus remoulding the aims of the question to suit their memorized response. This results in prepared answers being 'shoe-horned' into a question that it does not necessarily fit. They consider the theme (knowledge, truth) and write about that without considering the requests of the question *per se*. They talk about the general themes, which makes it easy to apply a taught answer to. There was evidence of pre-prepared answers being applied to questions regardless of the theme or direction of the question itself.

Similarly to previous years, there was no area of the programme that stood out as unusually difficult. The main difficulties, pointed out by examiners, which were similar to previous examination sessions, are:

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. However, 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.

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 in a straightforward, concise manner which was economical in expression. There were scripts where candidates did not know how to write essays, but rather, they produced a series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection.

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 requirements of the question, answering in a very general manner. In the weakest cases there was evidence that only general knowledge had been shared.

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 regarding the basic positions of a number of philosophers. These positions were then repeated on the papers as if they were central to the question, with 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 another philosopher).

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.

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 or 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. In some cases, candidate preparation seemed to be superficial in a number of themes, i.e. candidates answer from too many different optional themes, but did not achieve depth of knowledge or understanding in any one of them. In a significant number of cases, a great breadth of answers were attempted from the same centre, suggesting perhaps too many themes being dealt with during the teaching of the course, or candidates attempting questions that have in fact not been treated.

Similarly, 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 examination and the IA. 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 memorized material and this restricts the candidate’s ability to gain high assessment marks - especially in criteria C and D, thus restricting the candidate’s ability to fulfill the intent of the course.

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 in a clear manner, advancing a substantive philosophical position in an orderly way and offering justified reasons for the conclusion reached. Some questions also tested more specialized skills and understanding of philosophical ideas. Most of the candidates were prepared within the context of the current programme and its objectives. 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.

Some main positive characteristics were: a) many candidates demonstrated a very good grasp of language (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) a significant number of candidates showed awareness of the need to justify assertions; f) many candidates also demonstrated a fairly sophisticated understanding of some difficult and abstract ideas; g) 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; h) some candidates demonstrated the ability to deal with counter examples.

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

Section A

Core Theme: What is a human being?

A group of answers showed too wide an interpretation of the task proposed. The intention of the question format is to give an opportunity to relate some background philosophical knowledge with an issue arising from the stimulus which presents something relevant for a reflection on the human condition. This has been clearly misinterpreted: this significant group of answers just took the opportunity to present memorized materials without any attempt to apply ideas to a specific issue / situation. The main problem is the tendency to not achieve the specific objectives of the programme, which in this case means using all the 'material' learnt to construct an argument relevant to the stimulus. The present criteria do not penalize this behavior, among other reasons because of the assessment approach which is not focused on penalties. However this clear misuse of an opportunity should be addressed by teachers.

Question 1

In general the answers to this question reflected on the extent to which war and aggression are unavoidable features of human nature and on the very idea of human nature. They presented different approaches to human nature, e.g. approaches that suggest humans are innately aggressive and competitive vs. approaches that stress cooperation and collaboration, or approaches that emphasize the socialization of human beings and the socio-historical character of human "nature" and social experience. Hobbes, Rousseau and Plato were the most frequent approaches discussed here.

Question 2

Many good answers explored the nature of human beings in the context of, among other issues, the incidence of communication, the creation of technology and hence an artificial world, and the relationship with others. Moreover, they discussed aspects related to human action and production, and the questioning of their ends and possible meanings. Transmission of information vs. human emotional exchange and freedom vs. determinism were some of the main issues considered.

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

This question invited an evaluation of knowledge and particularly the idea that knowledge is power. Although this question is focused on a central issue, it appeared to be an area that was found to be difficult. The majority of the most effective answers used the ideas of Plato as a platform to construct their arguments.

Question 4

There were few very good answers to this question, and it was not attempted by many. They were able to evaluate the coherence theory of truth, but also other alternatives such as the correspondence theory and the pragmatic theory. Some other answers which were based on classical epistemological approaches e. g. Plato, Descartes, Hume and Berkeley were able to offer relevant arguments.

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

A relevant number of the G2s expressed that this question was very difficult. It was popular and generally the responses to the question were of a good level with an appropriate amount of analysis. The answers addressed (amongst other issues) moral principles, universalizability, the extent of the responsibility and the responsibility for the predictable consequences of our actions. Many candidates chose to compare Kant and utilitarianism. A group of answers which only discussed freedom and determinism were not able to construct relevant arguments. Some very good answers produced solid evidence of knowledge learnt and developed good comparisons between possible interpretations regarding the question more than between schools or standard positions, analyzing the meta-ethical dimension of the question.

Question 6

Some very good answers analyzed the goals of applied ethics. They took different approaches, e.g. analyzing the very nature or scope of applied ethics, examining cases of applied ethics, or simply arguing that ethics is about the promotion of change in the world. The weak answers mainly saw the question as an opportunity to present what candidates had learnt about ethics in general.

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

Some of the best answers in M11 were in response to this question. It encouraged an evaluation of the philosophical issues that arise when encountering religious language, especially in a modern, and in many places secular, world. Many answers took this challenge in a very successful way. They analyzed religious language as analogy or symbolic, they considered Wittgenstein's language games, criticism of verification approaches to meaning, cognitive vs. non-cognitive approaches to religious language, and the problem of communicating or verifying private, personal religious experience.

Question 8

This question was quite popular. All candidates who were prepared in this theme produced at least satisfactory answers. The better answers made a link between an observable feature of the world and evaluated how such features were harnessed into an argument for God's existence. The cosmological argument, e.g. Aquinas, design or teleological arguments; modern notions like "intelligent design," Design qua Regularity, Design qua Purpose, Paley's watch maker analogy and Hume's discussion of the design argument were among the most discussed issues.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art**Question 9**

Very few attempted this question which invited an evaluation of the various functions of art and whether the humanizing aspect of art is its most important function.

Question 10

Weak answers were only able to present issues or comments on the arts in general. The good answers discussed and evaluated whether artistic pursuits should remain exclusively creative for their own end or be a vehicle and medium to convey or address wider social issues. In some cases this opened up an evaluation of what an aesthetic experience might or should be. Some very good analysis maintained that the relationship between pure beauty and social cause is not always irreconcilable.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy**Question 11**

In the best answers, Rousseau's and Locke's conceptions were appropriately employed to develop the argument of the case. Plato's political philosophy was often discussed with varying levels of success. Answers drew on a wide range of responses to political obligation from anarchic conceptions to democratic approaches.

Question 12

Locke and Plato played an important role in the responses to this question, as well as Hobbes and Rousseau. Many good answers were able to explain and discuss notions of freedom within the state. They also presented and analyzed the nature of the state, pointing out that the state power is based on the need for compliance to bring about basic and complex needs of citizens/subjects of the state. Positive and negative conceptions of freedom were often analyzed. Freedom, justice and equality, e.g. Rawls and Nozick were discussed quite often.

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

Only a small group of answers attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

Question 14

Much like the feedback for the question above, only a small group of answers attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

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

This question was poorly answered by quite a significant number of candidates who seemed to select the topics without a prior knowledge base to build upon. There seemed to be no clear idea of how to begin a thoughtful discussion of the topic. Many candidates who chose this question simply expressed their personal opinion without involving any philosophical discussion. On the other hand, some very good answers clearly and creatively presented a main view of what development and human progress might mean in the context of, e. g. market economies, materialism or consumerism. Here the views of Arendt, Marcuse, Mumford and Taylor were appropriately employed.

Question 16

In both Themes 7 and 8 there is a quite clear tendency to find an answer without any specific preparation, a process which simply does not produce a response with even minimal philosophical relevance. It has to be stressed that answers without specific preparation and study do not succeed in answering questions of Themes 7 and 8, no matter how familiar they might seem to be. On the other hand, a group of good answers tackled this question adequately employing the views of Butler and Foucault as a platform to analyze the relationship between gender and power.

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

There were few candidates who chose to respond to this question. Only some candidates demonstrated being specifically prepared for tackling this kind of issue. The very good and excellent answers developed purposeful and interesting arguments, underlining in some cases that universal principles should override national self-interest. Others discussed the tensions between local culture and internationalism and the question as to whether there are any universal sets of rights or values that all people share, regardless of their cultural context. Some answers underlined the need for a universal morality.

Question 18

The good answers addressed critical areas presented in this question: concepts or definitions of culture and their resilience and the concept of globalization as an opposition to local cultures. Not only did these questions identify key sources of cultural identity (language, ethnicity, geography, shared histories, religion), but they also discussed relevant aspects of the possible impact of globalization on the self-understanding of communities.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Since the new programme continues to add depth to the previous one, and is strongly oriented 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 the shared examiner experience which might contribute to improve the performance of future candidates.

- Make sure students read the questions. Candidates can also use the help published in the question paper to assist in guiding the way responses should be formulated. Teachers should reinforce the idea that the answer needs to be explicitly tied to the demands of the question.
- Candidates have to pay particular attention to, and carefully follow the initial bullet points displayed at the beginning of the exam which clarify 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 opportunities that candidates have to 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 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.
- 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 will probably need to be explained in the first or second paragraph. In addition, it will need to be discussed from one or more perspectives in the body of the essay, and be clear in the concluding paragraph. Attention should be given to the stem of the question so that the answer is properly focused.

- Related to this is the problem of structure: 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 candidates 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 necessary 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 analyzing 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 and is not about the ability to memorize information or the simple utterance of opinions.
- References to important philosophical ideas and philosophers should be used to bolster the arguments of the candidates whenever it is relevant, without becoming a substitute for genuine philosophical 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.
- Teachers should offer opportunities within the course for critical, and personal, discussion of philosophical issues.
- Focus on one or two themes.
- Practice and develop the language required to identify a stimulus. Essay structuring in an exam context.

Some examiners pointed out that the most important piece of guidance would be to avoid stipulation. 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 scripts and think of and try to answer the obvious questions and objections he might raise. The better scripts 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.

Finally, it is worth considering the relation to IA. The approach to the internal assessment as depicted in the guide (pages 26 and 33-35) already makes clear that it is an integral part of the philosophy course. It offers an opportunity to develop the skills required for Paper 1 in the context of the class work. Therefore it opens a strong (perhaps the stronger) link between class activity and exam. Whereas the IA stresses philosophical analysis, Paper 1 underlines the construction of an argument. Both are main activities of what the programme understands as doing philosophy, and, ideally are synthesized in one main way. This common ground and goal is shown by means of sharing the same objectives as the diagram on 'mapping the course' (which can be found on pages 10 and 11 of the guide) depicts, and the same evaluation criteria (Expression, Knowledge and understanding, Identification and analysis of relevant material, Development and evaluation). This relation between Paper 1 and IA might even be further explored to intensify and expand its possible effect on both: the practice in the course and the improvement of the exam results.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

General comments

This year there were 40 responses to the G2 form for HL, and 25 for SL, a marked improvement on the 17 responses received in M10. However, given the number of IB centres offering Philosophy, it remains a low return. IB coordinators should encourage Philosophy teachers to complete a G2 after an examination as the data is important during the Grade Award meeting, and as feedback to the Paper Editing Committee on the accessibility and general quality of the examination set.

For HL, 37 out of the 40 responses thought the paper at an appropriate standard, and 3 thought it too difficult, while in SL, 21 out of 25 thought the examination paper appropriate and 4 thought it too difficult. In HL, 69% of responses thought the paper of a similar standard to last years, while in SL, the figure was 68%. Noting that some schools have more than one Philosophy teacher, other figures were:

- 4 thought the clarity of the paper was poor, while 38 thought the clarity either satisfactory or good, and
- 2 thought the paper was poorly presented, while 40 thought the presentation either as satisfactory or good.

One of the questions on Taylor (Q23) attracted the most criticism, mainly for its length, which may have made a clear interpretation by students problematic. This criticism will be noted and considered in the composition of future questions.

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

It was evident that most teachers followed the recommendation of the Philosophy guide and selected one text for an in-depth study. The selection of one text allows for a focused and comprehensive study and appreciation of the text. Still, it was evident that a number of teachers prepared candidates, who performed successfully in this component, in more than one text.

The most notable difficulties to be identified in this examination session were the failure to:

- read and comprehend the 7 bullet points listed on the top of page 2 of the examination paper
- maintain precise focus on the requirements of the question
- avoid lengthy description of details that bear no relevance to the question
- incorporate relevant examples that are not just a repetition of the ones used by the author of the text, but as an aid for clarification, or in highlighting a criticism
- make appropriate and relevant references to the text in developing an argument
- identify and explore concisely counter-arguments and positions relevant to the question
- develop conclusions that include relevant evaluative comments
- include a textually informed and relevant personal response to the question.

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

For the most part, the selected text had been carefully read, and competently analysed and evaluated by candidates, under the direction of the teacher. Many comments on the G2 stated that the questions allowed for a range of candidate abilities. This aids all candidates in their attempts to engage with the relevant philosophical ideas and to evaluate them. The majority of candidates displayed a sound knowledge of the text, used the author's terminology correctly, identified material relevant to the question, and had an appreciation of the author's argument. Thus, these candidates achieved, at a minimum, a satisfactory level of success.

The stronger candidates directly addressed the question by locating the relevant ideas within an overall understanding of the text; these candidates had a 'framework', a view of the text that informed their understanding and gave a perspective to the particular issue at hand. This perspective allows a description to become an analysis as it gives a focus and emphasis to particular points. It allows candidates to construct an argument, as they have a view and an understanding of the text, not just knowledge of its content. These candidates also incorporated relevant and thoughtful examples to illustrate a point; this also gives evidence of a personal response to the text. The very best candidates offered subtle and well founded interpretations of the text, from the perspective of the concepts raised in the question.

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

Bhagavad Gita

Very few candidates attempted either question on the Bhagavad Gita

Question 1

Candidates who attempted this question often directly quoted from the text, so their essay read as a list of relevant quotes without an overall view of what sacrifice means in the text. The better candidates commented on the general concept and used specific instances to highlight their view and evaluation.

Question 2

Similarly to the question above, the weaker candidates wrote descriptive essays, often without evaluations. They did not connect the images with human nature, or other concepts, so these were partial answers to the question, as the demands were not fully understood. Usually, these candidates did not offer any meaningful or developed set of evaluations.

Confucius

Very few candidates attempted the question on Confucius

Question 3

The weaker students who attempted this question often omitted the part of the question that referred to harmony, or the part that noted its utility. So there were descriptions of the rituals, or of the importance of harmony, but not tied together with its usefulness. This aspect was accomplished by the better candidates.

Question 4

Like the question above, the weaker candidates offered details and examples of *ren* from the text, often direct quotes, but without an application to contemporary life, or with an evaluation of the concept, either in its theoretical or practical guise.

Lao Tzu

The number of candidates that are attempting questions on Lao Tzu's text seem to be increasing from year to year.

Question 5

This was the more popular of the two questions. Many of the weaker candidates described wu-wei as non-action, but did not expand upon this definition, or they gave a detailed description with examples of wu-wei (usually a repeat of those from the text), but failed to show how it led to a better understanding of the Tao. The better candidates gave a lengthy exposition of wu-wei with thoughtful use of examples, with considered and detailed evaluations, showed how a clearer understanding of the Tao can be achieved.

Question 6

As with the question above, weaker candidates completed one aspect of the question; they explained what is meant by the unspoken nature of the Tao, but failed to discuss or evaluate what consequences this may have. A number said that it was impossible to describe the Tao, but did so anyway, usually unsuccessfully due to their knowledge of the basis of this concept being vague. The stronger candidates both analyzed and evaluated what could be understood by the term Tao. Again, the use of examples used to explain or criticize often determined the quality of the response.

Plato

These questions were the most popular amongst candidates, and of the two, the latter question on the ideal ruler was the favoured one.

Question 7

Usually the weaker candidates focused on knowledge at the expense of belief, or gave such generalised and perfunctory answers that there was little material for them to use in evaluation. Many times relevant material such as the Cave, or the Divided Line were described, but they were often done without a purpose or aim; connections to moral action were often not made, nor to a wider understanding of Universals. Weaker evaluations often began with claims that “knowledge is not like this...”, or “Plato is very narrow minded when it comes to knowledge, as it always changes”. Though Plato might be confusing as to what objects Forms could be applied to, a wider appreciation was often lacking.

Question 8

As the most popular question on the paper, this question also showed how weaker students read only what they want to in a question, while ignoring a key instruction. Explanations were forthcoming, though many omitted relevant material such as the details of the education, or the nature of our souls and the importance of harmony. What was frequently absent was an evaluation or discussion of the qualities of an ideal ruler. Many ignored a development of the moral qualities of a leader in favour of the details of their education, or a lengthy exposition on the Ship’s Captain, without exploring consequences with regards to the qualities of a leader. The better responses exhibited an overall understanding of the text and the place of the ideal ruler within their understanding of the text.

Descartes

These two questions again proved very popular with candidates, the numbers evenly split amongst the questions.

Question 9

The main problem that candidates had with this question was to not make it a Paper 1 essay on the self. Several essays made absolutely no mention of any of the key points necessary, such as the Cogito, or mind and body. What was also evident in weaker responses was the lack of interest shown in discussing the body, and the problems associated with Descartes's view. The stronger candidates made full and detailed analyses and evaluations of both mind and body.

Question 10

With this question, most candidates correctly identified relevant material such as Descartes's argument for the existence of God as the basis for his proof of the existence of the external world, but then did nothing much else with this material. The weaker responses did not adequately discuss (and in some cases totally omitted) Descartes's view of clear and distinct ideas, or if they did mention it, it was not developed or criticized.

Locke

Though not as popular as Descartes and Plato, a significant number of candidates attempted the Locke questions, particularly the first one.

Question 11

Again, the weaker candidates neglected one aspect of the question. In this case, it was usually "[...] a duty to govern in the interests of the governed" that was ignored. Most candidates discussed the right to govern, and the source of legitimate political authority in Locke's text, but they could not broaden this understanding, or make subtle evaluations of his views on property, political rights and responsibilities.

Question 12

Very few candidates attempted this question. The main difficulties experienced seem to be in discussing the problems with or benefits of Locke's view of legislative power. Few candidates seemed able to make wider and contemporary connections to this topic, so most of the weaker essays were descriptions of the limits of political power in a Lockean state.

Mill

Compared with last year, quite a number of candidates attempted the Mill questions. Both questions were popular with candidates.

Question 13

The main difficulty with this question was again, the ignoring of one aspect of the question, and in this context, it was usually the term "utility." There were many essays that discussed the positive and negative freedoms mentioned by Mill, and the Harm principle, but often without a clear and direct connection to Mill's notion of utility, and how one enhances the other.

Question 14

The understanding of the individual and its role and limits of liberty were quite well understood by those who tackled this question. The knowledge of what Mill said of the dangers of conformity was evident. What was also evident was the absence of a critical appreciation of the dangers posed by a lack of conformity within a society.

Nietzsche

Nietzsche proved again a popular choice amongst candidates, though his rhetorical style was not always appreciated or understood. This led to a number of errors and vagueness in the interpretation of key ideas.

Question 15

That our morality has a traceable genealogy, for the weaker candidates, must be true because Nietzsche has created one. The lack of a proper evaluation of the claim was the most glaring omission in this question. Often there would be a long description of Nietzsche's genealogy, with omission of key ideas, such as the role of the will to power in developing the ascetic ideal, or even of resentment when discussing master and slave moralities. It is evident with Nietzsche that many of the weaker candidates do not understand his concepts, or the connections between them.

Question 16

In this question, though the will to power was described, it was often done in a one-dimensional manner. Usually it was described as a simple biological urge, which is not wholly accurate. The use that Nietzsche makes of the will to power, i.e. as a way of interpreting human action, was rarely noted. It is in situations such as these, when ideas or arguments are 'slippery', that examples play an important role, and these were usually absent in weaker responses. An understanding of the meaning(s) of the phrase "the essence of life", was also absent in most of the weaker responses.

Russell

Very few candidates attempted either question on Russell.

Question 17

The main issue with this question was that it asked students for a broader perspective on Russell's work. Candidates became bogged down with long, and often irrelevant, descriptions of the nature of knowledge, or some aspect in the history of philosophy that Russell mentions. Some candidates turned the question into a paper 3 essay, pushing back Russell to discuss their own views on the characteristics of Philosophy.

Question 18

This was the more popular of the 2 questions on Russell. The tendency here was for the weaker candidates to devote most, if not all of their response to a description of knowledge by description and by acquaintance, and self-evident truths, with little analysis and a minimum of evaluations of any of these. Some candidates had difficulties distinguishing epistemological and cognitive meanings of intuitive knowledge.

Arendt

Arendt was not a popular choice amongst candidates this year.

Question 19

The weaker candidates usually responded with a lengthy description of work, and the examples used by Arendt, but made few connections with the idea of permanence. The stronger candidates developed a detailed exposition of the notion of work, and the public and private, and this led them to develop conclusions and evaluations about Arendt's view of human nature and civilization.

Question 20

The tendency for weaker candidates was to give long summary of the *vita activa*, without a specific acknowledgement or discussion of the terms of 'speech' and 'power'. There was little understanding of the political and social assumptions that are within Arendt's political philosophy. The stronger candidates often had a great deal to say about the efficacy of Arendt's conception of political power and action, and demarcations between the elements of the *vita activa*.

De Beauvoir

Compared to last year, more candidates attempted questions on De Beauvoir.

Question 21

Most of the responses to this question displayed a good knowledge of De Beauvoir's distinction between adults and children, and the connected concept of responsibility, but then ended the response without attempting an evaluation or discussion of her explanation, or connected concepts of freedom and ambiguity.

Question 22

Candidates who attempted this question generally displayed a satisfactory level of knowledge of De Beauvoir's categories of individuals determined by their response to freedom. The stronger candidates then subjected her view on the individual to a critical evaluation on a number of her concepts, particularly freedom and ambiguity.

Taylor

Taylor again proved a very popular choice, with nearly all candidates selecting the last question on the ideal of authenticity.

Question 23

The comments made by teachers referred to above, probably account for the few responses to this question. A number of weaker candidates reiterated Taylor's argument without focussing on the central concepts of the self, so the essays lacked relevance and focus.

Question 24

A very popular question, many candidates displayed a satisfactory knowledge of Taylor's argument, and the reasons why authenticity is a value worth preserving and striving for, but currently in need of improvement. The main weakness was to not move beyond the description of the argument to an evaluation of it. Many of the stronger candidates dissected and carefully analyzed the three malaises, and evaluated the assumptions implicit in Taylor's political and social views in tempering their conclusions on the value of authenticity as an ideal.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The following comments are the result of the shared experiences of examiners that might assist the performance of future candidates:

- It is still the belief amongst examiner that one text studied in-depth allows time for candidates to develop fluency with the concepts and arguments of the text. Depth of understanding is always preferable to breadth. Though wider reading is important in understanding philosophical ideas, in the context of teaching a text, it should be invested in reading about the text. Many of the better performing candidates had focused only on the text and question, and made no reference to any other text.
- Candidates must learn to read *carefully*, address *clearly*, and answer *completely* the examination question. Omitting one aspect of a question was a common feature of weaker responses. They either ignored one or two concepts/arguments identified in the question, or they ignored one of the command terms, such as "explain and discuss", etc.
- Although classroom discussion and evaluation are essential, it is also valuable for teachers to direct candidates to credible and reliable commentaries or essays on the selected text. Teachers can consult the Philosophy OCC page for guides to web-based resources in Philosophy.
- Teachers need to impress upon candidates the difference between a descriptive summary of arguments and concepts found in the text and relevant to the question, and an attentive and critical analysis and the development of a justified evaluation. Failure to engage in a critical analysis of relevant material, and in the evaluation and development of arguments, has an impact in criterion C and D respectively.
- Candidates should be instructed as to how to identify and incorporate relevant examples to aid their response.
- Teachers ought to read each session's subject report which is posted on the OCC Philosophy page. These reports contain useful suggestions for the preparation of candidates.
- Teachers ought to be encouraged to complete the G2 form as this provides valuable information to senior examiners about the quality and transparency of questions.
- Teachers might approach their IB coordinator to request participation in official IB Workshops. These events provide an excellent opportunity to address issues and voice concerns about the Philosophy programme.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

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

Candidates found it hard to explore possibilities beyond the stated description of philosophical activity in the text. There was a preponderance of 'safe' responses which stayed very close to the text. However, many candidates did not go further in exploring the implications and other possible areas which the content of the text encouraged.

There is a clear difficulty with some candidates in going beyond descriptive assertions which essentially lack any kind of philosophical justification. In this sense some candidates found it hard to gain credit criterion C, which seeks truly relevant responses and (at best) an in-depth understanding of the way the text raises issues about how philosophical activity is carried out.

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

Candidates were able to present their responses in an orderly fashion, most of them using the structure of the text to drive the structure of their responses. The best responses were able to show an assured use of philosophical terminology and were clear throughout about the philosophical content both of the text. The best responses were clear in structure and expression, and were also obviously relating the material to the text in hand - as opposed to feeling like a pre-prepared assertion about philosophical activity.

Candidates were generally more confident than in previous sessions about relating their response to their experience of philosophy, especially as delivered in the HL course, although some references could be rather formulaic and not particularly effective in illustrating the point in hand.

Personal responses were in abundance which is pleasing, allowing credit to be given in assessment criteria D. The most effective examples again showed thought in line with a point being made in the text, rather than a personal response which could have applied to any extract.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The major strengths were in clarity of structure and a willingness to relate philosophical activity as presented in the text to personal experience of the HL course. The largest weakness was the tendency in some scripts to be descriptive, rather than philosophical, in content. Many candidates relied too heavily on making unexplained and unjustified assertions.

There were opportunities to look at methodological issues - especially in the text's raising of differences between philosophy and entertainment and science.

Few responses developed much material about any assumptions that could be detected (not necessarily just evaluative assumptions) in what was being asserted in the extract. Many candidates used counter-examples, which was pleasing, but such counter-examples could be rather blunt or obtuse (particularly when candidates discussed the work of Nietzsche!).

Examples could be more precise in support of the point that is being made. Many candidates took too narrow and pejorative a view of what might have been intended when Magee speaks of an aim of literature always being 'to entertain'.

Few candidates took the chance to explore what a 'critical analysis of our beliefs, and the presuppositions of our beliefs' might entail.

Some candidates used previous Paper 3 text extracts as examples, which gave a rather narrow impression of the experience of the course from which the response was being developed.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be given lots of chances to practice responding to a variety of text extracts which explore philosophical activity. This will enable the candidates not to expect to take a pre-prepared response into the examination, as they are being asked to respond to what is in front of them.
- Candidates should be encouraged to look at the assumptions and presuppositions of the extract so that they look beyond merely describing what is being said in the text about philosophical activity.
- Candidates should be encouraged to explore the method of thinking that they have experienced in the HL course, and to see how this contrasts with other ways of looking at the world in non-philosophical contexts.
- Candidates should be encouraged to use precise examples (personal examples and other examples from the course) in support of the response being developed. Examples should directly illustrate a response to the text extract in hand.

Further comments

- It is not necessarily the case that the longest answers are the best.
- The most effective responses dealt directly with philosophical implications and activity, and engaged with the extract in a philosophical (rather than, for example, a historical, sociological or psychological) manner.
- Candidates should continue to be encouraged to reflect on their personal experience of philosophical activity throughout the HL course.