

PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 65	66 - 78	79 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 41	42 - 54	55 - 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

General formatting and referencing of IAs are the main problems encountered by moderators. The main types of problems encountered are bibliographies which are absent, no word count, nor connection to the syllabus. The absence of, in a single instance, 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 referencing and bibliography is another matter. Lack of either compromises the integrity of the work and raises suspicions about the authenticity of the work. This is a formal requirement and the expectations on this are like any other formal piece: the conventions must be followed. 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. It was disappointing to see many IAs with exclusively web references, none of which could be classed as a primary source. Many had Wikipedia as a 'primary' source, or in some instances, the only source. Some moderators reported incorrect completion of 3CS forms, namely their absence, though there were some addition errors made.

Unlike last year there were no reports of inappropriate selection of stimulus material. In some cases there were reports, again, of entire novels cited as the stimulus material. Again, this contravenes the formal requirements. In one case I came across an analysis piece without any description and inclusion of stimulus material, though it was referred to in the candidate's work.

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.

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; however, there were few instances of altering marks.

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

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

- Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and the continuity of identity
- Taking Moral Egoism seriously
- Intentionality and absolute evil
- Meaning, Language, and Gestures
- Is the Ashley Treatment for the Severely Handicapped moral?
- When I make a moral judgement, what am I doing?
- What does it mean to say that "It takes a whole village to raise a child"?
- Against Equality

- If I know the right thing to do, should I do it?

Some outstanding pieces of work were:

- A piece examining the tensions between free will and determinism through the lyrics of a David Bowie song. It did not introduce any new, radical, or original ideas; it was quite conservative in its approach, but what was there was thoroughly analysed and evaluated from a number of different perspectives. It was eloquently written.
- A piece that used an extract from the Disney movie *Pinocchio* to discuss the development and understanding of a moral conscience. It showed depth in understanding the issue, fluency with ideas, and a highly analytic approach to the topic. Each point was carefully developed and analysed. The candidate was in no hurry to cover all possible arguments; limiting themselves to just a few ideas and delving into them with depth was the main priority.
- A piece that used the mosaic of Norman Rockwell, *The Golden Rule* to discuss the universality (or otherwise) of the Golden Rule. This led to the broader topic of moral and cultural relativism. The essay did not dwell on the clichés of the topic, but jumped straight into a discussion of the merits and problems of maintaining moral relativism.

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

- 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.
- 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; the problem had been given time to develop intellectually and personally.

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. Clearly, this is under the 1600 word minimum. As mentioned above, the main problem in this criterion was in candidates meeting the full set of formal requirements, not in the clarity of expression.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

A large majority of the candidates 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 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 problem still remains with the analysis aspect of this criterion. It was often the distinguishing feature between poor, good, and excellent 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. In these cases, a description of the concept or idea was given, but with no distinguishing points made: there was no emphasis on one point (or set of points) and so rather than analysis of an idea, it became an exercise in giving a description.

Some counter positions must be discussed, not just mentioned or stated in passing, 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.

With development, what is important is the linking of ideas in some sort of logically justifiable manner. Jumping from premises to conclusions with little material in between, or with material that was discussed in earlier sections and suddenly re-emerges into the argument without having a solid basis for its inclusion were the main problems in this criterion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must be reminded to read carefully and attentively the instructions in the current Subject Guide for the Internal Assessment exercise. 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

IB guide.

- Included with the checklist could be a rationale for why the formal requirements are important. First, the selection of stimulus material helps to frame and place in context the philosophical issue or argument. It should help the candidate from wondering off the topic. Secondly, the emphasis in the type of IA, a critical analysis, helps the candidate to prepare for Paper 1, 2 (and for HL candidates) 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 again 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 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

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 32	33 - 45	46 - 57	58 - 70	71 - 90

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 16	17 - 24	25 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 45	46 - 60

Higher level paper one

General comments

The majority of the G2 (teacher feedback) responses stated that, compared with last year's paper, this exam was of a similar standard. However, around 20% thought it a little more difficult. Nearly all found the level of difficulty appropriate.

From the side of Spanish speaking teachers a concern regarding the vocabulary employed was expressed. It might be useful to recall that although the exams are reviewed by native Spanish speakers from different cultural areas trying to find an acceptable confluent middle way, sometimes it is difficult to find expressions which might be equivalent to all Spanish speakers. Furthermore, the teams which are related to the productions of the Spanish papers use as background the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (Real Academia Española, 2001) and, when appropriate, the *English-Spanish lexicon of IB terms* (IBO, 2010), which was developed by the IB language services department as a working tool for all who are involved with the IB programmes delivered in Spanish as a language of instruction and examination.

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 satisfactory level in general terms. However, there still is a significant gap between the central and more demanding IB Philosophy programme expectations and the actual work produced. The main goal is the construction of an argument, though descriptive answers are still common. Regarding the approach to the exam and the task, many candidates do not consider the actual requests of the question, some disregard the question and apply what they have learnt. This results in prepared answers or general expositions which consider the general theme of the question (knowledge, truth) and write about that without considering the requests of the question *per se*. 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, were as follows:

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.

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 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 have the chance to develop their own skills of philosophical analysis and evaluation, which can be deployed in the examination and the IA.

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

Many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a satisfactory appropriate response in general terms to a challenging question. They showed a reasonably 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. A significant number of candidates displayed between satisfactory and good knowledge and arguments relevant to the core/optional theme to which the question referred. Within this group of candidates, some exams presented abilities, levels and depth of understanding ranging 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.

Compared with previous sessions the scripts presented a relatively significant improvement regarding two central aspects: a) the writing of outlines which are really helpful in the structure of the answer, and b) the effort to present counter-arguments (even though in many of these cases they were artificial to some extent).

In correspondence with the approach to the previous section, 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 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.

Question 1

In general the answers to this question reflected on the extent to which the relationships with others or being a social animal is essential to the human condition and marks the very idea of human nature. They presented different approaches, e. g. Existentialist theories, Non-Western views that stress the community over the individual, friendship and love; the notion of *philia*, I-Thou relationships compared to I-It relationships and socialization theories. Lengthy descriptions and commentaries on the stimulus were only partially effective in the best of the cases. Many answers did not present two approaches. A significant number of answers were practically not able to give a conceptual identification of an issue.

Question 2

Many good answers explored the mind–body problem. Forms of monism and dualism were well explored. Answers analyzed among others issues: the relationship of mind and brain, brain and body; identity theory, functionalism, cognitive ideas of identity, hemispherical theories of the brain, Buddhist notions of self, the role of memory and experiences, the role of the body in preserving continuity of the self, parallelism, what defines death and artificial intelligence. Many exams discussed questions such as: what makes the self or can brains contain the qualities of self? Weak answers mainly described the stimulus and speculated about aspects of it.

Section B

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology

Question 3

This question invited an explanation and discussion of the claim that arises from developments in the empirical tradition that the truth of a statement is discovered when the

method of verifying the statement is known. Among the satisfactory and good answers some were broad in scope in dealing with the general problem of establishing knowledge, and others more narrowly focused on the specific account of meaning and truth raised by proponents of verificationism.

Question 4

Satisfactory answers analyzed the claims of rationalism about the origin of knowledge and/or the counter-position of empiricism and the *tabula rasa*, the status of knowledge that is claimed to be innate – the certainty of *a priori* knowledge compared with the contingent claims from experience gained *a posteriori*, the notion of innate knowledge in radical theories that all knowledge can be accounted for from before birth, e.g. Plato, or that some knowledge can be implanted before birth, e.g. Descartes, Hume's claim that some innate ideas may be explained by tracing them back to original sense experience, and Kant's response to empiricism and to Hume's challenge

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics

Question 5

Without doubt the most popular choice. Many answers to this question were of a good level with an appropriate amount of analysis. The answers addressed (amongst other issues): the claims that the truth of moral judgments is relative to the conventions of a social group or even to the individual taste of the person issuing the judgment, and that these conventions or tastes are not themselves subject to any further justification, and the by contrast, deontological views posit some principle or being that is the foundation or source of moral truths. The guiding principles are either based on reason, duty, or faith. Regardless of what the moral judgments are, they are erroneous if the judgments are not based on these principles. A reasonable group of answers related the question with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Question 6

Some very good answers analyzed the goals of applied ethics, evaluating the scope and limits of practical ethics in relation to the claim that human beings are the sole concern of ethical theory and ethical action. Utilitarian and Kantian approaches were often analyzed and discussed. Environmental and animal issues.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

Question 7

The claim that any proof for the existence of God is based on the experience of the individual was very well answered by a significant number of responses. They evaluated the forms of religious experience as a basis for proof of the existence of God and discussed the standard arguments. Many answers demonstrated a very good knowledge of them.

Question 8

There were few who attempted to answer this question, though many of them were of a good standard. They assessed the extent to which religious ideas and practices are products of cultural/historical determinants or are related to them.

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

Very few attempted this question which invited an evaluation of the possibility of aesthetic judgments being made on an objective or cognitive basis. The contraposition subjectivity vs. objectivity was discussed by almost all responses.

Question 10

Very few answers here too. Weak answers in general which referred to a general notion of authenticity. A couple of good answers analyzed the argument that emphasizes the experience of contemplation by the observer over the need for accurate representation by the artist.

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

With regards to the question that for punishment to be just its severity must reflect the gravity of the offence answers developed arguments focused on the notions of justice, and more generally, society and power. The better answers were able to draw relations and conclusions regarding the specific question. Weak answers only provided common sense considerations showing no proper preparation for this optional theme.

Question 12

The challenge of evaluating whether democracy is the best form of government was answered in different ways. Rousseau's and Locke's conceptions were appropriately employed to develop the argument of the case. Plato's political philosophy was often discussed. Here too, weak answers only provided common sense considerations showing no proper preparation for this optional theme.

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

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

Question 14

Again, very few attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

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

This question, asking for an evaluation of the claim that more information and knowledge might not create freedom but rather establish mechanisms to oppress people both in an

individual and a social context, elicited very few answers only a couple of which showed knowledge and specific arguments with regards to the optional theme chosen.

Question 16

The same applies here; in both Optional 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 Optional Themes 7 and 8, no matter how familiar they might seem to be.

Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures

Question 17

This question was poorly answered by quite a small 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.

Question 18

A group of good answers examined properly the claim that the purpose of culture is primarily to serve the material needs of the individual. They evaluated different theories of the nature and origin of culture, and explored materialistic theories of culture along with those which reject the view that culture is primarily materialistic in its purpose and origin.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The course is strongly oriented towards the development of skills synthesized under the expression “doing philosophy”. The following comments are the result of the shared examiner experience which might contribute to improve the performance of future candidates.
- Make sure candidates read the questions. Candidates can also use the internal rubrics 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 must 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, candidates 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.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 – 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 – 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

General comments

It is worthwhile to situate the comments, observations and suggestions incorporated into the HL and SL Paper 2 Subject Report which follow in the context of the responses submitted by teachers via the G2 Document. In this session several teachers took advantage of the opportunity of completing the G2 document for M12 HL and SL Paper 2. This represents an encouraging level of participation especially since the G2 document constitutes an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the HL and SL Paper 2 examination

scripts can be evaluated critically from the perspective of the classroom teacher. In addition, the information supplied in the G2 document helps to improve the quality of future examination scripts in several ways (e.g. the nature of the questions set, clarity of wording, presentation of the paper, syllabus coverage). Finally, the G2 document constitutes a critically important tool at the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the establishment of the definitive grade boundaries. School administrators and especially IB Coordinators of their respective schools 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 and can be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by a school's IB co-ordinator.

The findings of the G2 documents received can be briefly summarised as follows:

- i. In terms of the level of difficulty of this year's paper, 67 teachers responded with 60 indicating that this year's paper was 'appropriate' in terms of level of difficulty and 7 indicating that the paper was 'too difficult'. There were no responses indicating that the paper was 'too easy'.
- ii. Compared to last year's paper, 68 responses were received with 41 indicating that the paper was 'of a similar standard', 8 reporting that it was 'a little easier', 7 observing that it was 'a little more difficult', 7 noting that it was 'much more difficult', none reporting that it was 'much easier' and 5 indicating 'not applicable'.
- iii. With regard to the clarity of the wording of this year's paper, 42 teachers observed that it was 'good', 13 that it was 'satisfactory' and 12 that it was 'poor'. In terms of the presentation of the paper, 51 teachers judged that it was 'good', 14 that it was 'satisfactory' and 1 that it was 'poor'. It is worthwhile noting that of the teachers responding to this section of the G2 document, several noted concerns with the wording of questions 7 and 8 (Plato) and 9 and 10 (Descartes). These observations were acknowledged and were taken into careful consideration during the Grade Award procedure.

32 teachers agreed that the questions were accessible to candidates with special needs, 7 disagreed and 33 were neutral on this topic. With regard to the question as to the accessibility of the questions to candidates irrespective of their religion, gender or ethnicity, 61 teachers agreed, 4 disagreed and 7 were neutral on the topic.

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

Weaker candidates often found it difficult to focus on the precise demands of the question chosen, provided broad, general outlines of the philosophical positions of the author of the text rather than focusing on relevant text material vis-a-vis the question asked, failed to enter into a critical treatment of the material incorporated into the response, and gave little or no evidence of personal engagement with the pertinent arguments of the text. The weakest candidates often demonstrated little or no knowledge of the text selected.

Reflecting upon the overall performance of candidates in English, Spanish and French, there was satisfactory evidence that in the majority of cases the prescribed text chosen by teachers had been read, studied under the direction of the teacher, and appropriately analysed in a

classroom situation. This judgement is based, in part, on the evidence provided by the examination scripts which demonstrated the ability of most candidates to focus on those arguments of the text which were relevant to the question asked, demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the arguments of the text as expressed by the author of the text and to use the appropriate philosophical terminology drawn from the text. All examination responses were situated comfortably within the scope and parameters of the various achievement levels of the four criteria of the formal assessment criteria and were able to be assessed without any difficulties.

While the performance of candidates certainly varied in terms of the achievement/performance levels described by the formal assessment criteria, most candidates were able to perform successfully in this component of the programme. Some of the difficulties faced by candidates and weaknesses in the formulation of their responses could be addressed strategically by assuring that candidates:

- Read and observe the bullet-pointed recommendations found at the top of the second page of the examination script. These recommendations are intended to help candidates write their responses in the best possible manner.
- Read and reflect upon the examination question carefully and completely. In several instances, candidates failed to address in a focused manner the precise requirements stated in the question. This difficulty was apparent in response that often began with the phrase 'Before I answer the question I would like to first explain ...'
- Appreciate the precise focus and the scope of the examination question.
- Understand and address precisely the command terms of the question (e.g. evaluate, to what extent, explain and discuss).
- Engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question, its implications and with the textual material incorporated into the response.
- Offer personal reflections and demonstrate personal engagement with the text and the question.
- Incorporate into the response relevant supporting examples and illustrations that help in the development of the overall argument.
- Avoid investing a disproportionate amount of time developing summary outlines of the details of the supporting examples or illustration.
- Identify and appropriately explore relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions.
- Distinguish between a simple exposition, description, summary or explanation of the relevant arguments of a text from a focused analysis, critical evaluation, examination and discussion of those arguments.
- Offer more than a simple descriptive, general outline of the main points of an author's overall philosophical perspectives much of which bears little relevance to the question

set for the text.

- Develop a response which incorporates those elements of the text which are relevant to the demands of the question.
- Develop a concluding paragraph that includes critical comments and observations and might also indicate briefly outstanding issues outside the specific focus of the question but relevant to the argument.

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

A good percentage of the candidates demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of familiarity with the content of the variously chosen prescribed texts. Within this range of performance, candidates exhibited knowledge of the text, use of the appropriate language and idiom of the selected texts and of their authors, and awareness of the arguments developed by the authors of the selected texts. 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 authors of the prescribed texts, candidates were able to analyse and evaluate the relevant material with a degree of success that ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Stronger candidates gave evidence of a certain level of expertise and sophistication in their handling of the text. Weaker candidates were unable to engage with the text in more than what was, occasionally, a superficial manner.

In more specific terms, only the strongest candidates began their responses with introductory paragraphs which situated the argument in the general context of the prescribed text as a whole, briefly identified the objectives of the forthcoming response and highlighted important issues that would be addressed in the response. This is an important factor in the development of a coherent, focused and convincing textually based argument. Again, 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. Lastly, some of the stronger candidates displayed knowledge of the perspectives gleaned from secondary source material regarding professional, academic interpretations of a text.

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

As a result of improvements in the electronic marking programme used by the IB, it was possible (for this examination paper only) to provide accurate statistical information regarding the number of candidates answering specific questions. Therefore, along with observations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions, you will see the total number of candidates who selected each question along with the place ranking for the ten most popular questions.

Question 1: Bhagavad Gita

139 candidates answered this question making it the eighth most popular choice. Those that did presented responses that were generally quite well focused on the requirements of the question itself and demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text. Most responses outlined a textually-based perspective on the nature of the true self and explained how the physical body and the physical plane of existence could stand in the way of the realization of the true self. The strongest responses explored some of the paths and techniques that could be used in the search for the true self as they are described in the text. The weaker responses listed broad generalities about the approach of Eastern philosophy to physicality and the true self with little connection to the arguments of the text. Critical evaluation and detailed analysis of material incorporated into the response remained a matter of concern for almost all candidates answering this question.

Question 2: Bhagavad Gita

This was the less popular question of the two set for the Bhagavad Gita with only 27 candidates presenting responses. For the most part, responses tended to deal in broad generalities about the nature of heaven and hell. Moreover, some responses gave evidence of little familiarity with the arguments of the text regarding heaven and hell. The best responses were able to outline Krishna's account of the nature of heaven and its virtues and the nature of hell and its physical characteristics. Similarly, the better responses were able to engage in an evaluative manner with the arguments of the text and provide some indication of the paths that lead to release from physicality, selfishness and human passions. The weaker essays demonstrated a very basic appreciation of the relevant portions of the text and usually failed to engage critically with the material assembled in the response.

Question 3: Confucius: The Analects

This was a surprisingly popular choice with 72 candidates choosing to answer this question. The majority of the responses to this question demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the text and, especially in the case of this question, the relevant terminology. The strongest candidates were not only able to assess each of the three elements of the question, but were able to bring the information together into a coherent and comprehensive perspective on the nature of a gentleman. In addition, the stronger candidates were able to present a sound treatment of technical terms in relation to the demands of the question. Weaker candidates tended to assemble information that, in some instances, had no connection with the views expressed in the text. These responses offered broad, overly generalized outlines of the nature of a gentleman and the meaning of 'rites'. While analysis was usually handled quite well in the better responses, there was a clear need for the development of the critical evaluation of points raised.

Question 4: Confucius: The Analects

This question was the less popular of the two on The Analects with only 34 candidates presenting responses. The better candidates were able to construct clear, coherent and textually-based responses to the question. The best responses developed wide-ranging treatments of several key Confucian virtues that were required for the correct attitude. In addition, these responses were able to link the practical and moral implications of the relevant textual material. The weaker

responses usually provided little evidence that the text had been read and studied in sufficient detail and usually relied on common sense generalizations about good behaviour in Eastern philosophical traditions.

Question 5: Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

This was the less popular of the two questions set on the Tao Te Ching with 40 candidates presenting responses. Responses were generally disappointing and tended to show little knowledge of how the text approached the theme outlined in the question. Due to this phenomenon, responses generally provided outline descriptions of some of the key notions of the text (e.g. the nature of the Tao, a description of wu-wei) without indicating how this information addressed the demands of the question. In very few instances was a candidate able to construct a clear, coherent, textually-based response which included careful analysis and evaluation.

Question 6: Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

With 226 candidates selecting this question, this question ranked as the fourth most popular choice. As the question asked for a treatment of one of the most central concepts of the text and of Confucian philosophy, most answers were quite well constructed. Almost all candidates were able to demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of wu-wei. In general, responses explored the practical, moral and intellectual aspects of the claim raised in the question. The implications of non-action with the natural flow of events in one's personal life, in the world and in nature were treated in a satisfactory manner. In these cases, an analytical and evaluative exploration of the precise meaning of inaction was developed. Only the weakest of candidates were unable to do more than repeat the claim that 'by doing nothing everything gets done.'

Question 7: Plato: The Republic, Books IV - IX

This was one of the most popularly chosen questions. This year, 524 candidates answered this question making it by far the most popular choice. The question dealt with one of the central and fundamental themes of the entire text and allowed the best candidates to explore and evaluate the claim of the question from a number of perspectives and at a number of levels. The best responses demonstrated assured knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text, a precise understanding of the appropriate philosophical terminology, and a clear and convincing appreciation of the nature and function of justice in the individual and in the state. These responses also offered clear evidence of precise analysis and convincing evaluation of the differences between blind adherence to conventional rules and a regard for rules as a result of the intention to preserve order in the soul. Weaker responses tended to offer a summary description of the definition of justice in the individual and in the state without focusing on the specific demands of the question. Because many of these weaker responses were descriptive and expository, they were not conducive to inviting analysis, evaluation and personal response.

Question 8: Plato: The Republic, Books IV - IX

This was another one of the most popularly selected questions and, with 483 candidates presenting responses, it ranked as the second most popular choice.

While the question focused attention on the Form of the Good – a quintessential element of the arguments of the text – it asked that it be explored and evaluated with regard to the theoretical purposes of philosophers in relation to the moral expertise required of rulers. It is this aspect of the question that presented difficulties to many candidates who chose to answer this question. In almost every case, candidates were able to explore, explain, analyse and evaluate the relevant arguments of the text with regard to the Form of the Good. However, not all candidates were as successful in addressing the manner in which the theoretical purposes of philosophers were unified with the moral expertise required of rulers. Taking into account the best responses, candidates were able successfully to take into account the epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political aspects and implications of the Form of the Good. These candidates presented coherent analyses and evaluations of the relevant textual material. Weaker candidates were unable to go beyond a descriptive explanation of the Form of the Good and its relation to the simile of the sun, the divided line and the analogy of the cave.

Question 9: René Descartes: Meditations

With 127 candidates answering this question, it ranked in tenth place in terms of popularity. The best responses were those that were able to address the specific demands of the question by incorporating relevant arguments from the text itself in an analytical and evaluative manner. These responses demonstrated clear and precise knowledge and understanding of Descartes's arguments and were familiar with the appropriate philosophical terminology associated with those arguments. Weaker responses tended to launch into a descriptive outline of major elements of Descartes's philosophical position without focusing precisely on the demands of the question. Only the very best candidates were able to offer evidence of a personal response to the strengths and weaknesses of Descartes's position on the notions of intellect and will and their interaction.

Question 10: René Descartes: Meditations

This question was, by far, the more popular of the questions set for the Meditations. A total of 445 candidates answered this question placing it in third place in terms of popularity. As it focused in on some of the most central arguments of the text (in particular those of Meditations 3 and 5), most candidates were able to construct responses which were based upon the relevant textual material. Stronger candidates presented precisely informed responses that focused directly on the demands of the question. They were also able to enter critically into the arguments of the text demonstrating a good appreciation of arguments for and against the positions developed by Descartes and were able to demonstrate personal engagement with the text. Weaker candidates tended to invest most of their responses in a summary description of Descartes's methodological doubt, the nature of the cogito and the role played by reason in achieving clear and certain ideas without focusing directly and specifically on the arguments presented by Descartes for the necessary existence of God. Others made general references to the trademark argument without including any treatment of any other relevant textual material.

Question 11: John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

A total of 61 candidates answered this question. In almost all instances, candidates outlined Locke's view of the movement from the state of nature to civil society by means of a social contract. Candidates took note, usually in a descriptive manner, of the rights enjoyed by individuals in the state of nature and how some of those rights were handed over to civil authority in order for the state to preserve and protect them. Some of the better responses considered the right to dissolve government if the government failed to maintain the sovereignty of the people or failed to protect their rights. Weaker responses tended to present general and often random summaries of some fundamental key points derived from Locke's philosophy in general rather than from the relevant arguments of the text.

Question 12: John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

A total of 35 candidates chose to respond to this question. In almost all cases, candidates were able to provide evidence of a sound understanding of Locke's views on private property both in the state of nature and in civil society, the investment of labour into property to establish rights of ownership, and the role of the state in the protection of the right to private property. However, not all candidates were able to address the specific demand of the question to explore the extent to which Locke's conception of the role of the state rests on his conception of property. The tendency to present descriptive outlines of key ideas taken from the text without any attempt to analyse and evaluate the material was also evident in several responses.

Question 13: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

With 184 candidates responding to this question, it ranked in sixth place in popularity. Responses were generally quite well focused on the relevant arguments of the text. In almost all instances, Mill's 'harm principle' was brought into the picture as was his distinction between self and other-regarding acts. Treatment was usually given to the rights that individuals enjoy in civil society and the responsibilities that surround these rights. The notion of the state as the protector and arbitrator of common interests was usually highlighted. The better responses included references to, and applications of, Mill's views to contemporary political situations. Also, the best responses included focused and well-developed evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages of Mill's position on the theme of the question. Weaker responses tended to produce brief descriptive outlines of some of the key points of Mill's arguments and failed to enter into a critical treatment of the material.

Question 14: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

This was the more popular choice of the two questions set for Mill's text with 134 responses. In terms of popularity, this question ranked in ninth place. In almost all instances, candidates were able to deal successfully with the general sense of the question, focusing on an exploration of Mill's views on dissent. Only the very best responses effectively tackled the central demand of the question which asked why dissent was essential for a civilized society. In most cases, responses explored the relevant arguments of the text with regard to the right to dissent, the tyranny of the majority, dead dogma, the role of minority opinion in the development of truth, the danger of the notion of infallibility and the role of the state in protecting the rights of the minority. The better responses entered into a critical and evaluative dialogue with the arguments proposed by Mill and incorporated relevant examples and illustrations

drawn from the contemporary political situation in the world. Weaker responses remained on the level of the basic, descriptive summary of some of the key points of Mill's perspectives.

Question 15: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. With 193 responses submitted, it ranked in fifth place this session. It focused the attention of candidates on some of the most central arguments of the text. In almost all cases, candidates demonstrated familiarity with the text, with the main arguments of the text regarding master and slave moralities and typologies and with the relevant terminology used in the text. However, only the better responses actually demonstrated how the values of justice, equality and compassion resulted from the violent struggle between master and slave morality. Weaker responses tended to develop very detailed summary outlines of Nietzsche's notions of the noble and the slave along with aspects of master and slave morality. Several responses failed to include careful, focused critical evaluation of the text's arguments.

Question 16: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Of the 63 candidates who responded to this question, most were able to write answers that generally focused successfully on the relevant arguments of the second essay of the text. The stronger responses placed those arguments in the context of pertinent issues raised in the first and third essays of the text. Candidates demonstrated satisfactory to excellent knowledge of some of the key notions (for example, conscience, bad conscience, debtor-creditor relationships, guilt, punishment, pain, memory, promise). The better responses included not only a demonstration of detailed text knowledge but also included careful analysis, critical evaluation, supporting examples and illustrations and personal response. Weaker responses tended to offer descriptive summaries of key points without fully developing the relationships amongst ideas.

Question 17: Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

This question was not a very popular choice amongst candidates with only 19 responses. Those that answered this question demonstrated satisfactory to very good knowledge of Russell's arguments as set out in the text and familiarity with the relevant terminology but tended to offer descriptive summaries of key points, themes and ideas.

Question 18: Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

As was the case with the first of the questions on Russell's text, this question was not popularly chosen by candidates with only 30 responses received. Again, as was the case with the previous question, responses demonstrated a satisfactory to very good knowledge of the text in general and, more specifically, of the relevant arguments of the text in light of the demand of the question. Responses tended to show weaknesses in the detailed analysis and critical evaluation of the material incorporated into the response, in the precise development of the argument, and in a treatment of counterarguments.

Question 19: Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

A total of 68 candidates chose to answer this question making it the more popular of the two set on this text. In almost all instances, candidates were able to provide a description or informative outline, based upon the arguments of the text, of what Arendt meant by work and labour. The better responses were able to develop these presentations with attention to detail. In addition, these responses provided clear evidence of analytical and evaluative treatment, incorporated useful supporting examples and illustrations, attempted to deal with counterarguments, and demonstrated coherent personal response. Weaker essays tended to remain on the descriptive level without developing connections amongst ideas and without incorporating a critical treatment of the themes and issues.

Question 20: Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

This question was the less popular choice amongst candidates with only 17 responses submitted. The better responses dealt effectively with a discussion and evaluation of the importance of the public sphere in the life of an individual human being. These responses situated Arendt's understanding of the public sphere into the context of the main themes and perspectives of the arguments of the text. Weaker responses were generally unable to base responses specifically on information drawn from the text and dealt in generalities drawn from contemporary political situations.

Question 21: Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Ambiguity

A total of 63 candidates selected this question and those that did were able to present satisfactory to very good explanations of key points drawn from the arguments of the text which were relevant to the question. In some cases, responses moved away from de Beauvoir's position and tended to rely more heavily on the position developed by Sartre. Weaknesses were apparent in the ability to analyse, evaluate and develop arguments incorporated into the response. The weakest responses failed to engage with the text in any significant manner and presented somewhat personal reflections on the human condition and the importance of interpersonal relationships.

Question 22: Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Ambiguity

Only 16 candidates chose to answer this question. In general, responses were weak in terms of connections with the relevant arguments of the text and tended to engage in a discussion of the relationships between parents and children in general. The best of the responses demonstrated an awareness of de Beauvoir's perspectives and attempted to engage in a critical treatment of the key themes and ideas.

Question 23: Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

A total of 107 candidates submitted responses to this question. As the question asked about a central and absolutely fundamental theme of the text, especially the first three chapters of the text, almost all candidates responding to the question demonstrated satisfactory to excellent knowledge and understanding of the relevant arguments of the text and were precise in the use of appropriate terminology drawn from the text. The majority of candidates were able to develop connections amongst several main themes of the entire text in relation to those parts of the text that were specifically

related to the demands of the question. In many cases, candidates provided very convincing supporting examples and illustrations drawn from real life experiences or from contemporary situations developing in the world. Weaker essays were still able to present descriptive summaries of the main points of Taylor's arguments about the 'worry' raised by individualism. Weaknesses in analysis, evaluation and critical development of the argument were apparent in some of the responses.

Question 24: Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

With 140 candidates responding to this question it became the seventh most popular choice. As was the case with the first question set for this text, attention was focused on the most central concern of the entire text, i.e. authenticity. In most instances candidates demonstrated very convincing familiarity with the relevant arguments of the text and accurately and effectively used the appropriate textually based terminology. The best responses introduced convincing counter positions drawn from the thoughts of famous philosophers on the topic of authenticity. Candidates developed arguments which incorporated key points from almost every chapter of the text. While almost all responses were very strong in terms of a descriptive treatment of relevant material, not all responses provided evidence of a focused critical treatment of the material. Similarly, not all responses included evidence of personal engagement with the arguments of the text.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must choose for critical study only *one* prescribed text whether the course is taught at HL or SL. The study of *one* text allows for a reasonable degree of precision, insight and critical appreciation into the prescribed text chosen at each of the subject levels. The study of more than *one* text is a practice which has been shown to be counterproductive. This observation has been included in all previous Subject Reports for the current Philosophy programme and ought to be heeded by all teachers and candidates.
- Candidates must be reminded to read and take into account the list of bullet points found on page 2 of the HL and SL examination paper that precede the actual examination questions and follows the heading '*In your response you are expected to:*' These bullet points provide clear, precise and helpful suggestions that can assist candidates in the development of successful responses. Teachers should explain and discuss the meaning of these bullet points in order to help candidates perform successfully in the examination.
- Teachers should supply their candidates with a copy of the glossary of command terms found in the current Subject Guide and should explain and discuss these terms in class. This document contains the terms that occur in the examination questions (for example, *analyse, evaluate, discuss, explain, etc.*) and it would be strategically useful for candidates to understand them clearly.
- 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 can have serious consequences

for the assessment of a candidate's response.

- Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination questions that ask candidates to make connections between or amongst ideas, themes, or issues raised in a prescribed text.
- While the discussion, analysis and evaluation of a prescribed text in a classroom situation is absolutely essential, it might be a good idea to provide candidates with or direct candidates to at least one dependable 'commentary' which offers a critical exploration of the text chosen for study. 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 should be encouraged to use 'chat lines' and 'discussion forums' provided by some of the reputable and acknowledged philosophy internet sites. 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 description of an author's argument and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the elements of that argument.
- 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.
- Teachers should help candidates understand the importance of making direct and indirect references to the text in the development of their responses. It might be helpful to introduce them to some of the techniques used: quoting key words or short, key phrases; summarising lengthier central arguments, *etc.*
- Teachers should introduce their candidates to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information should be used in the development of counter-arguments.
- Candidates should be taught to develop contemporary applications of the arguments of the prescribed texts studied in class. This is especially the case with those authors that tend to treat of political matters.
- Teachers should use more effectively the IB's online resources (OCC) for assistance and sharing of information regarding the prescribed texts studied in class. Whenever appropriate, this information should be shared with candidates.
- Teachers should provide their candidates with past Paper 2 examination questions. In this way, candidates will become familiarised with the style and format of typical Paper 2 examination questions appropriate to the prescribed text(s) studied in class. This suggestion can be addressed quite readily since the IB has published the *IB Philosophy question bank* which contains past questions, markschemes and subject reports. Similarly, teachers might want to collect sample scripts from their own

candidates that can be made anonymous and used in class to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in actual candidate responses.

- Teachers ought to read carefully the annual Subject Reports that are published on the OCC philosophy site. The information supplied in these reports offer useful observations and suggestions for the preparation of candidates for the various components.
- Teachers ought to take advantage of completing and submitting the official G2 form at the end of every examination session.

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 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 30

General comments

Many scripts were disappointing in that they showed that candidates are not doing a good job of critically analyzing and evaluating a previously unseen philosophical text, or of relating their own experience of doing philosophy to matters raised in that text.

The small minority of candidates who do these things stand out. Large numbers of candidates (including a good many who wrote thoughtful essays) seem not to have taken on board that these are the tasks required of them. Instead, they summarize the text, or use the text as though it is a stimulus for word associations, or express unsubstantiated opinions about various philosophical topics, or wax lyrical about various topics they have covered in the classroom, or furnish the reader with autobiographical remarks about how doing the IB philosophy course affected them personally.

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

In light of the general remarks above the most plausible conclusion to draw is that many candidates were not prepared well for this component. Too many candidates appear to have come to the examination armed with material that they intended to write about regardless of what was in the unseen text. Often those who approached the task in this way showed evidence of having been provided with a certain line about philosophy. The upshot was that candidates found it difficult to focus on the unseen text, subject it to critical analysis and evaluation, and then relate their experience of doing philosophy to the textual analysis and evaluation. Thus they did least well in relation to criterion C and criterion D.

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

Candidates performed best in relation to criterion A and criterion B in that answers were generally quite well expressed, the issues to be explored were often accurately identified, and appropriate examples or illustrations used. Even so, few candidates recognized the importance of using their introductory paragraphs to set out an essay plan establishing a clear structure for the essay that followed. Those who did set out and follow such plans were invariably those who handled the required tasks best. It should come as no surprise that those who gave careful thought before writing the essay to how they would organize their response were those who handled the required tasks best.

Though most candidates showed they had given thought to their experience of doing philosophy, many failed to understand that they were required to relate that experience to their evaluation of the philosophical activity raised in the text. Candidates who understood the importance of satisfying this requirement again stood out - it seems likely that they were made aware of the significance of this requirement when being prepared for the examination.

Candidate performance against each criterion

IB philosophy teachers should teach candidates how to critically read a philosophical text. The unseen text was not difficult - it was written for those new to the subject. Even so, significant numbers of candidates misread it in the same ways, ways that suggested they were attributing to Nagel views they already held regardless of what he wrote. In particular, many mistook points he made simply for pedagogical reasons as reflective of his philosophical views. Consider just one example: in saying that he was not going to discuss the great philosophical writings of the past Nagel was not gainsaying the importance of those writings (as many candidates claimed), but, instead, wanting candidates to begin to philosophize by reflecting directly on questions that people have long found puzzling without having their thinking filtered through the great philosophical writings of the past.

As mentioned previously, the major strengths were in clarity of structure and the identification of topics to be explored. Even given these strengths many candidates relied too heavily on making unexplained and unjustified assertions and too few took the opportunity to look at methodological issues - especially in connection with, for example, the text's claims about differences between philosophy, logic and science. Few responses developed material about the assumptions underlying what was being claimed in the extract. Some candidates pleasingly used counter-examples, but they were generally rather blunt and under-developed and appeared to be reflective of philosophical commitments (e.g. to positions like existentialism or to the views of thinkers like Nietzsche) that had not been given any serious critical thought. Most significantly, too few candidates undertook the key tasks of critical analysis and evaluation of the ideas in the text and, in consequence, attempts at conveying their own experience of doing philosophy were usually unconnected to that analysis and evaluation.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should read the assessment criteria for paper 3 carefully and, in particular, take note that the key tasks required of them are, first, critical analysis and evaluation of the text and, second, relating their own experience of doing philosophy to that critical analysis and evaluation. Because these tasks are text-based the scope for use of prepared material is, and should be, very limited.
- Candidates should be urged to consider the assumptions and presuppositions underpinning the extract so as to get them to engage in critical analysis and evaluation of it rather than mere description of the contents of the extract.
- Candidates should be advised that when a text seems to them to make an obvious error, they should re-read the text to confirm that the problem isn't the result of their own reading of the text. Since candidates are writing under the pressure of time, it is important that they do not skip this step because doing so may ultimately weaken their essay.
- Teachers should prepare candidates by making use of previous papers by way of practice. They should also make use of the conceptual framework for analysis of a text like that in paper 3 which has been made available to them via the OCC. They should ensure that candidates have familiarized themselves with the key assessment tasks (see 1. above).