

May 2017 subject reports

Philosophy

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-11	12-23	24-39	40-53	54-65	66-79	80-100

Higher level/Standard Level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-18	19-21	22-25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Stimuli and themes

Stimulus materials were varied and suitable in a vast majority of cases. 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.

Some students still submitted work based on an entire film, book or even TV series, which is not recommended and makes it difficult to achieve full marks for criterion A due to a loose connection between the stimulus and the philosophical issue.

In addition, a few students chose a stimulus that was too philosophical in nature (for example, an article on the ethics of abortion, or clearly philosophical quotes – even though not written by philosophers). This is also problematic because the whole point of the IA is to show the ability to make a connection between non-philosophical material and a philosophical issue. If the

stimulus is philosophical in nature, it becomes difficult for the candidate to show this ability, which can affect criterion A.

Examples of particularly successful IAs included:

- The analysis of a stimulus that considered the question: did Shakespeare really write all those plays? The analysis underlined that names are prominent actors in many philosophical problems and discussed Russell's descriptivism and two of Kripke's arguments against it.
- A metaethical analysis of the actions performed in the video game Grand Theft Auto.
- A reflection on determinism and libertarianism based on a scene from Stanley Kubrick's Clockwork Orange.
- A scene from Cloud Atlas gave rise to an effective discussion on Utilitarianism in democratic states.
- Two pictures of identical twins at two different points in their lives stimulated a thorough epistemological analysis of what it means to say that two things are identical.

Format and nature of the philosophical analysis

There are many ways to write a good philosophy essay and candidates can use all kinds of formats successfully, including dialogues. However, the following mistakes were common:

Too much emphasis on the stimulus itself: Some candidates spent too much time trying to establish parallels between the stimulus and philosophical theories or themes, leading to poorly structured essays and lack of focus. Although it is recommended to make use of the stimulus in the body of the essay, the structure should be focused on the philosophical analysis itself and not on a critique of the stimulus. The essay should be an analysis of a philosophical issue arising from the stimulus, rather than an analysis of the stimulus itself.

Not enough emphasis on the stimulus: Other candidates only mentioned their stimulus in one or two sentences in the introduction, which is a pity, as this approach does not let candidates fully demonstrate their ability to think of non-philosophical material in a philosophical way.

Misplacing the connection between the stimulus and the philosophical theme: Quite a few candidates established a connection between the stimulus and the philosophical theme in their stimulus summary rather than in their essay. The summary should only be focused on the stimulus itself and not yet on philosophy. In some cases, the connection was only established in the summary and not at all in the essay itself. This was particularly problematic when essays were already close to the word limit and pushed way above the word limit if moderators tried to consider the summary as part of the essay.

Some common features of successful candidates' essays:

A clear identification of one philosophical issue

A clear structure, where the essay is organised around the philosophical issue rather than the stimulus. For example, different paragraphs could contain different approaches to the central issue

Developed and detailed analysis and evaluation, where the candidate carefully and systematically considers various perspectives in the central issue and weighs their relative strengths and weaknesses throughout the essay (not just at the very end).

In the better cases 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. In these cases, the reference to the stimulus material was to highlight or clarify a philosophical concept. These good exercises developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly stating the tenets of a position and then conclude. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples always had a degree of a personal reflection. They indicated a very clear understanding and consistent achievement of the of the IA objectives. Further they presented specific, interesting topics for discussion, and were characterized by good command of philosophical language and critical analysis applied to non-philosophical material using different approaches and philosophical standpoints to foster interesting debates.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Although candidates generally performed quite well in this criterion, quite a few lost marks because their central philosophical issue was not identified explicitly and precisely enough. Some students identified several philosophical issues arising from the stimulus and did not make it clear which one they were going to tackle in their analysis. Other identified a very broad theme such as “freedom” without defining a more specific question or problem.

Criterion B

Candidates also did well in this criterion, using a variety of structures successfully. The most successful candidates were those who organised their essay around one clear philosophical issue, explaining, analysing and evaluating some of the perspectives one could adopt in response to this issue. Candidates whose response focused too much on the stimulus itself (for example, organising the essay according to the scenes in a film) did not perform as well.

Criterion C

Candidates were generally strong in this criterion and a very large majority displayed some philosophical knowledge of theories and / or scholars. Candidates and teachers are reminded that the difference between a 3 and a 4 in this criterion resides mainly in *detailed* knowledge and understanding, which is difficult to demonstrate if too many theories are tackled.

Criterion D

This is an area that can still be developed by many candidates, despite very good performance from a few. For candidates to improve in this criterion, they need to dedicate a substantial amount of their essay to analysis, going much beyond the mere description of theories. Theories need to be unpacked and tested with examples. Teachers and candidates may find it useful to go back to the IB definition of “analyse” (AO2): “*Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure*”.

Criterion E

This criterion was also a difficult one for students. Some candidates explained how the theories outlined had been criticised by other scholars, but this in itself does not constitute evaluation, as it does not come from the candidate. Candidates need to be careful to explain what, *according to them*, are the relative merits and faults of the different positions they have presented. These should be fully justified and not simple statements of opinion. This evaluative work should happen throughout the essay and not just in the conclusion.

A note about referencing and bibliographies:

Although poor referencing is not directly penalised, teachers and centres should advise their candidates to provide full references and a bibliography for all the material they use in their essay. Not only does this represent good academic practice that educates candidates about the expectations they will encounter in university and/or the professional world, but it also allows them to avoid academic honesty issues.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Focus on what constitutes a suitable philosophical issue and practice writing introductions that establish *one* issue clearly, precisely and explicitly. Peer work can be suggested: a student reading another's introduction for example, could feedback what they think the central issue is, helping the writer be as clear as possible.

Work on essay structures that are firmly grounded in the philosophical issue and various perspectives on this issue, rather than on the stimulus.

Encourage students to focus on two or three perspectives in response to the philosophical issue, so that they can add detail and depth to their explanations, analysis and evaluation.

Use techniques such as asking students "so what?" questions in order to encourage them to go further in their analysis and evaluation.

Insist on proper referencing and bibliographies to develop good academic practice.

Further comments

The overall quality of the IAs was good this year, and the understanding of the requirements of the task continues to improve, as it has in the last few sessions. Although some individual students were still on the wrong track, very few centres seemed to misunderstand the nature of the task as a whole. The standard of the samples in Spanish and French continued to be high with few very poor pieces and many strong pieces.

Some general characteristics of this year's samples:

Candidates performed better in criteria B and C than they did in criteria D and E.

Despite good overall performance in criterion A, some students lost marks unnecessarily in this criterion, which could be easily avoided.

Many candidates failed to include proper references and/or bibliographies. Generally speaking, teachers applied the marking criteria consistently. Some teachers tended to be over-generous with their best students and over-harsh with those falling at the bottom of their sample. Many teachers wrote helpful comments to justify their marks, which was useful and continues to be encouraged.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-14	15-26	27-36	37-46	47-56	57-75

General comments

In this session, the exams were assessed using markbands and the best-fit approach, which encourages positive marking. Candidates are expected to select from a wide range of ideas, arguments and concepts in response to the question they are answering. From this point of view this cohort presented in general a slightly weaker level of performance than the previous session's cohort.

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

A significant number of answers do not consider the actual demands of the question, some simply disregard the question and apply what they have learnt, thus remolding the aims of the question to suit their memorized response. In extreme cases, some of these responses deal solely with the optional theme in a very broad manner, focusing directly on, for example, ethics or philosophy of religion. There was a tendency this session too to take the question as a "stimulus" (something which was seen many times in this year's responses, particularly in the Spanish exams).

In general, many responses simply do not pay any attention to the central instruction given by the command terms "discuss" or "evaluate." Candidates should be reminded of the requirements of each command term as outlined in the Philosophy subject guide.

There was also a tendency this session to transform the question from the discussion of an issue, as stated and required by the question, into purely a request for a presentation of knowledge. These answers present two main issues: they are not focused on the specific

question (lacking relevance) and they transform analysis into exposition of knowledge. Knowledge must always develop into analysis as per the requirements of the question and component.

Section A elicited a large number of prepared answers; taking classical issues (freedom and determinism, dualism and monism), where not only the positions were equally presented, but even the examples were the same in a significant number of cases. In the extreme cases candidates just state the chosen issue without any attempt at relating it to the stimulus.

Spanish examiners reiterated for another session that there is a quite remarkable difficulty with evaluation skills and ideas development of a significant number of Spanish students. Further, a considerable group of Spanish exams presented a very colloquial style not academically appropriate.

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

The markbands assess a) structure and effective organization; b) identification of a philosophical issue / question, explanation of the relation and interrelated elaboration of it; c) knowledge and use of philosophical vocabulary; d) critical analysis, discussion and assessment of alternative interpretations, justification and development of a position. In general, the answers managed quite well (from satisfactory upwards) in a) and c), and to a good extent in the identification part of b).

Within this context, on the whole there seems to be a consolidation of some good characteristics already shown in previous sessions: many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a satisfactory and appropriate response in general terms to a challenging question; an increasing number of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the function of the introductory paragraph; a significant number of candidates displayed between satisfactory and good knowledge relevant to the core/optional theme to which the question referred.

Good levels of knowledge and understanding of philosophers, e.g. Plato, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Mill, Sartre, Rawls and Nozick.

A group of answers took the task of discussing and evaluating the central claims of the questions very seriously. These answers indicated specifically, on the one hand this point of this position does contribute to e.g. sustain the claim that ethics is more about self-interest, on the other hand ...etc. These answers show that what is expected in terms of critical analysis, discussion, evaluation and personal response is clearly achievable by candidates. However, it also confirms that it is mainly achievable when candidates are appropriately prepared.

Excellent answers took the risk of presenting more reflective, personal, and fresh answers. They presented different ideas and reflection, showing that they could produce individual responses, in contrast to answers which are, as said, more or less the same.

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

Section A

Core Theme: What is a human being?

Question 1

The answers were mainly focused on concepts of human nature and the degrees of freedom or determinism that arise from particular views of human nature. Good responses identified significant issues related to human nature and explained and evaluated theories such as: Rousseau and the noble savages; theory of evolution, the idea of “social Darwinism”; Hobbes’s view of all against all. The weaker answers did not follow the rubric and merely described parts of the text.

Question 2

This was the most popular choice in this section. The quality of answers covered all degrees from excellent to very poor. The responses considered a significant variety of issues including: what we can know of others and ourselves that persists over time; how identity is revealed to others and the self in stages; different identities in different contexts; the role of gender, religion, language, environment in the formation of identity; and the assumption of a core self only known to the individual.

Section B

Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

Question 3

Very good and some excellent answers to this question analyzed the function of art as a means to an end and as an end in itself, stressing that the quotation implied a view of art as connected to society, politics and, in wider terms, civilization. Weaker answers mainly attempted the question in general and descriptive terms.

Question 4

Here too very good to excellent answers approached the question from a Kantian view and investigated the nature of aesthetic judgment and its possibilities and the relationship between subjectivity and universality. Weaker answers just referred to the general aspects of the optional theme.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

Question 5

There were only few answers to this question. The good responses explored the notion of truth by means of a discussion and evaluation of the three classical theories of truth.

Question 6

Only few answers to this question too, and mainly weak. The very few good answers evaluated the issue applying Plato's ideas.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

Question 7

This was a quite popular choice. Many answers demonstrated at least satisfactory knowledge, and part of them demonstrated how to use it productively to justify personal responses to the claim that sympathy is the most important element for living an ethical life. The better answers explored among others the contrasts between moral sentimentalism and consequentialism, duty ethics, and virtue ethics as principals for ethics.

Question 8

This question was the most popular choice amongst candidates. Based on adequate knowledge, the majority of answers demonstrated at least a satisfactory level of performance. Some very good to excellent responses demonstrated very good knowledge of Aristotle, Kant and utilitarianism. They developed good analyses in relation to the good life, or a flourishing life as the aim of virtue ethics. The weaker answers here also tended to be descriptive.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

Question 9

The answers presented similar treatment of different groups and its marginalization, in most cases referring to the overall issue of power in society (eg Marx and Foucault).

Question 10

The responses considered human rights in many cases in connection with some other central notions including: natural rights, power in society, and positive and negative rights, reflecting the senses of "freedom from" and "freedom to".

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of religion

Question 11

Many good reasonable answers discussed at least adequately related issues including: God and the laws of logic; the paradox of the stone; omnipotence and omni-benevolence; God's

omnipotence and God being unable to cause evil/suffering; and why does an omnipotent God allow suffering? Further, many answers considered: If God is omnipotent, do humans have free will?

Question 12

Many answers to this question deployed very good knowledge. The good to excellent answers discussed and evaluated: what constitutes religious language and how it applies to statements that involve propositional knowledge claims; the long history of debate about religious language, from the medieval *via negativa*, to more recent interest in how philosophy can clarify the meaning of words through the work of philosophers like Hume, Kant, Russell, Ayer, Popper, and Wittgenstein.

Optional theme 6: Philosophy of science

Question 13

Only a small number of candidates attempted this question. They generally referred to Hume and Popper positions.

Question 14

As with question 13, few candidates attempted this question. These answers referred to the Kuhn's investigation of paradigm shifts and to some very common examples in the history of science.

Optional theme 7: Political philosophy

Question 15

This was a quite popular choice. In general, the answers showed good knowledge of social and political philosophy with reference to the positions of, e.g. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Rawls and Nozick. The answers discussed central issues including: Versions of justice as serving mutual advantage; the teleological approach where justice is the ordering principle through which a society (or humanity) pursues the individual good; and justice as a thin concept which provides a fair framework within which each person is enabled to pursue their own good.

Question 16

Many of the responses presented reasonable and good discussions and evaluations of human rights following two central features: its universality and inalienable character. They pointed out that since World War II, human rights have increasingly occupied a central position within the theory and practice of international law and politics and have received more attention within moral and political philosophy, stressing that the modern human rights movement was initiated by the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

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.

Ensure candidates read and understand the questions.

Candidates must 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.

It is important for teachers to explain to candidates how to plan their essays or responses, bearing in mind that the question at the top of the response will probably need to be explained in the first or second paragraph. Attention should be given to the command term used for the question so that the answer is properly focused.

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In general, in their responses candidates should:

- Present a response which is well structured, focused and effectively organized
- Identify the philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material in section A or the question in section B
- Present relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge
- Explain the issue in a well-developed way
- Use philosophical vocabulary throughout the response
- Critically analyze the issue
- Discuss and assess alternative interpretations or points of view
- Justify all, or nearly all, the main points
- Argue about the issue from a consistently held position

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	13-15	16-19	20-25

General comments

As stated in the Subject Guide: This element of the course provides an opportunity for students to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a primary philosophical text. This is a challenging but rewarding part of the course, providing an opportunity for the student as a philosopher to engage in dialogue with another philosopher. This view reflects very well the notion of 'doing philosophy' found at the heart of the DP Philosophy course and, at the same time, shows that the reading and analysis of a text written by a philosopher represents an interesting and challenging way of engaging in philosophical activity via the original writings of famous philosophers.

The May 2017 HL/SL Paper 2 examination questions are formulated according to the current Paper 2 examination question rubric which divides each question into Part A (explain a key concept, idea or argument from the text they have studied) and Part B (engage in critical discussion of that text). This question rubric presents candidates with opportunities to demonstrate clearly their knowledge and understanding of a prescribed text and, at the same time, allows them to focus their analytical and evaluative skills on a critical treatment of that text.

Teachers and candidates must keep in mind that the examination questions formulated for each of the twelve prescribed texts assume that candidates have read and studied **one** of the prescribed texts in class under the supervision of the teacher. It is also assumed that candidates have been introduced to the skills required for a clear demonstration of knowledge and understanding of a text along with those required for the critical and analytical assessment of a primary text in philosophy. These skills include the ability to develop a coherent, textually based argument in response to a question focused on a specific theme, issue, idea or argument drawn from of a text. Candidates also ought to be able to formulate their own position on the views and arguments of the author of a text and, most importantly, to engage critically and in an evaluative manner with the text. In studying the prescribed text and, especially in preparation for the Part B of the examination question, candidates should develop their ability to present a philosophical argument by testing their own position against the views of the author, and to use the author's ideas to expand their own thinking on the issue(s) under discussion. The use of supporting examples and illustrations along with the identification of counter-positions should be evident in the development of the treatment of the examination question.

It is interesting and useful to reflect upon the findings of the G2 documents received from teachers for the M17 HL/SL Philosophy Paper 2 examination. This year there were 43

respondents. 93% of these respondents judged the examination paper to be of an appropriate level of difficulty. Over half said that it was a similar standard in comparison with last year's paper while a small percentage judged that it was a little more difficult. While there were some comments regarding the wording of the John Stuart Mill questions, the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper generally seen to be very good.

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

Notwithstanding the observations made in the M16 component report, responses to the various Prescribed Text questions continued to bring to the forefront four major difficulties. These represent major problems and teachers must take them into account very seriously as they prepare their students for HL/SL Paper 2:

- A number of candidates did not understand that they were to answer completely only ONE question and to answer it completely (i.e. both Parts A and B). There was ample evidence demonstrating that several candidates attempted to answer each of the 24 questions set for the 12 prescribed texts or to answer a selection of several questions scattered amongst the 24 questions set for the 12 prescribed texts.
- Many candidates failed to answer distinctly and separately Parts A and B of the chosen question. Candidates in this situation produced a SINGLE response in which it was difficult and occasionally impossible to distinguish how the candidate addressed the requirements of the Part A question as opposed to those of the Part B question.
- Several candidates failed to follow the instructions on the Paper 2 examination cover sheet and, while answering both Parts A and B, failed to indicate in the answer booklet where Part A ended and Part B began.
- Candidates were generally successful in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the text with respect to what was asked in the Part A question but were unable to engage in an analytic and evaluative manner with the text with respect to what was asked in the Part B question.

Some specific difficulties experienced by candidates include the following:

Candidates need to read the Part A and Part B examination questions carefully and completely, paying particular attention to the specific command terms used in the questions. Some candidates occasionally fail to address in a focused and precise manner some or, in a small number of cases, all of the requirements stated in the question.

Some candidates fail to understand and/or address precisely the command term(s) of the question (e.g. explain, evaluate, to what extent do you agree).

Not all candidates are successful in demonstrating accurate, precise and/or detailed knowledge and understanding of the text and its arguments.

Not all candidates are able to identify and explore those arguments, themes and ideas of the text which are precisely relevant to answering the question set for a text.

The responses provide sufficient evidence that there exists a difficulty in engaging, in a critical, analytical and evaluative manner, with the demands and implications of the Part B examination question.

In their development of responses to both Parts A and B, many candidates had difficulty making references to and using relevant material drawn from the text.

It appears that many candidates find it difficult to formulate personal reflections on and demonstrate personal engagement with the arguments of the author of the text and/or with the arguments they develop in their own responses.

Candidates occasionally failed to incorporate into the response relevant supporting examples and illustrations and/or to identify and explore relevant counter-arguments, alternate views and alternate interpretations in the development of their responses.

Many candidates display a tendency to invest a disproportionate amount of time developing lengthy, descriptive summary outlines of the minute details of the supporting examples or illustration (e.g. the descriptive details of Plato's analogy of the cave).

A major difficulty is the failure to 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.

There exists a tendency on the part of some candidates to offer a simple descriptive, general outline of the main points of an author's overall philosophical perspectives much of which often bears little relevance to the question set for the text.

Candidates need to appreciate that their explanations (Part A) and analyses (Part B) both require development of ideas and information incorporated into their responses.

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

An analysis of the overall performance of candidates in the HL/SL Paper 2 examination in English, Spanish and French, provides satisfactory evidence that, in most cases, the prescribed text chosen for study had been read, analysed and evaluated under the direction of the classroom teacher. This judgement is based on the evidence provided by the examination scripts which generally demonstrated:

- satisfactory focus on the arguments of the texts relevant to the sense and demands of the questions set
- satisfactory knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the texts themselves as well as of the position of the authors of the various texts
- the use of appropriate philosophical terminology in general and, more specifically, the terminology of the texts and of their authors.

Factors which indicated that candidates had been well-prepared include:

- precise focus on the wording, demands and implications of the question set

- precise treatment of the command terms of the question
- consistent focus on the demands of the question
- evidence of a planned, coherent and focused response which exhibited a clear introduction 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 followed by a well-developed argument leading to a convincing concluding paragraph
- identification, understanding and use of the relevant material drawn from a text in developing a response to the question set
- analysis and evaluation of relevant material
- identification and use of relevant examples, illustrations and counter-arguments
- incorporation of a relevant personal response.

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

Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*, Vol. 1 part 1, Vol. 2 part 1 and Vol. 2 part 4

Question 1: Clearly, candidates who read and studied the text in class under the supervision of the teacher performed very well on this question as it focused upon a central, but sophisticated theme of the text. In these cases, both in terms of knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation, responses reflected insight into the relevant arguments of the text. Unfortunately, in many other cases, candidates demonstrated weak understanding of those sections of the text relevant to answering the question, offering only superficial observations that were not always founded on the arguments of the text. This impacted directly on the quality of the explanation in Part A and on the analysis and evaluation in Part B. In general, candidates were able to perform better in Part A than in Part B.

Question 2: This question appealed to several of the candidates who chose to answer it. However, far too many responses tended to present general views and observations about the situation of women in contemporary society without making direct connections with the relevant sections of the text. Only the strongest candidates were able to demonstrate sound understanding and knowledge of the text in relation to the demands of the question. Responses to Part B tended to be repeat in a more descriptive than evaluative manner some of the ideas explained in Part A.

René Descartes: *Meditations*

Question 3: This question was quite popular amongst candidates. In terms of Part A, responses ranged from focused, precise, detailed and convincing responses to the question to weaker responses that merely presented brief and undeveloped descriptions of Descartes's treatment of the three types of ideas. In terms of the Part B question, only the strongest candidates were able to develop a critique of the distinctions Descartes employed to distinguish the types of

ideas. Weaker candidates were tempted to repeat, in descriptive fashion, the characteristics of the distinctions without applying the required evaluative skills.

Question 4: While attention to detail and in-depth development varied, responses tended to demonstrate reasonably good to excellent overviews of Descartes's account of methodological doubt. However, not all candidates addressed the demand of the Part A question to show how he used this methodology to attain certainty. Part B appeared to be much more difficult as many candidates were drawn into presenting a descriptive summary and/or extension of what had already been outlined in Part A without the required analytical and evaluative treatment of the strengths and weaknesses of methodological doubt as conceived by Descartes.

David Hume: Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

Question 5: This question was not a very popular choice. With few exceptions, candidates answering this question were able to demonstrate only mediocre knowledge of the text in terms of explaining Philo's arguments regarding the perfection of God. Weaknesses in Part A directly impacted on the quality of evaluation and analysis presented in response to the Part B question. The most evident weakness for candidates was the failure to maintain focus on the development of an analytical and evaluative treatment of the relevant text material which treated of the possibility of a neutral God. In these cases, part B tended to resemble a descriptive and explanatory extension of part A responses.

Question 6: This question presented more difficulties in responding to the Part B question than to that of Part A. Responses to part A tended to present satisfactory explanations of textual material relevant to answering the question but lacked detailed development. Responses to part B struggled to evaluate the degree of success achieved by Hume through his use of the dialogic method.

John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*

Question 7: For the most part, responses to part A demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the text and a sound understanding of Mill's position on the relationship between personal opinion and personal standards of judgement and the requirements of living together with others in society. Responses to part B were also generally quite well constructed and presented. The better responses made relevant links to contemporary situations in the critical treatment of the demands of the question. These responses were able to treat successfully and in an evaluative manner Mill's positive estimation of social customs and conformity.

Question 8: Candidates were generally very successful in responding to part A of the question as the question focused upon Mill's views on education, a central theme of the text. In some cases, responses explained Mill's views on education quite well but were weaker in explaining why education should be required and compelled by the state. Many candidates displayed more difficulties in developing an argument, based upon the text, which demonstrated the possibility that Mill's views were self-contradictory.

Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Question 9: Part A of this question asked for an explanation of one of the most fundamental themes of the text and, thus, presented no major difficulties. Candidates were able to distil the key issues from the first essay of the text and develop satisfactory to good explanations. On the other hand, responses to part B tended to present some difficulties to many candidates. Several Part B responses fell into a descriptive treatment of how the genealogical method used by Nietzsche addressed value judgements (fundamentally an extension of the Part A response) rather than addressing the specific requirement of the question which asked for an analysis of the justifiability of the genealogical method as an approach to understanding the nature of morality.

Question 10: Candidates were generally successful in responding to this question. In most cases, candidates were able to engage with the arguments of the second essay of the *Genealogy* and then go on to make connections with the operations of the ability to make promises and memory as central aspects of becoming human. In terms of responses to part A, there was ample evidence that the text had been read, studied and understood. Responses to part B of the question enjoyed similar levels of success. Candidates appeared to be quite comfortable with the requirements of the Part B question and were able to formulate critical treatments of Nietzsche's views on the relationship between making promises and social bonds amongst people.

Martha Nussbaum: Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach

Question 11: Candidates were generally successful in responding to this question. Given that part A asked for an explanation of a central, fundamental themes of the text, responses demonstrated sound knowledge of the arguments of the text. Responses incorporated references to examples set out by Nussbaum in the text as well as illustrations drawn from the contemporary scene. There was a similar situation evidenced in responses to part B of the question. Most of the candidates answering this question were able to engage critically with the demands of the question and the relevant arguments of the text. In some of the weaker cases, responses showed a tendency to wander off into a descriptive explanation of feminism rather than engaging in an evaluation of the role of the capabilities approach to feminism as set out in the text.

Question 12: This question was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Several of the responses to the Part A question exhibited difficulties in addressing clearly and precisely the nature of cultural imperialism as set out in the text. Weaknesses in understanding Nussbaum's notion of cultural imperialism created difficulties in responding to the requirements of the Part B question which asked for an evaluative treatment of the connections between the capabilities approach and the notion cultural imperialism.

Ortega y Gasset: The Origins of Philosophy

Question 13: This was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Responses tended to demonstrate both weaknesses in terms of a detailed, precise and in-depth knowledge of the text (part A) and in terms of the development of an analytical and evaluative treatment of the text (part B).

Question 14: As was the case with question 13, this was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Those who did choose to answer this question provided general and occasional vague explanations of the arguments of the text and, as a direct consequence of weak knowledge of the text, were not able to develop focused and sustained evaluations of what was asked for in part B.

Plato: *The Republic*, Books IV–IX

Question 15: This was a very popular choice amongst candidates. The question (both parts A and B) focused on central themes of the text. Many, but not all candidates who chose to answer this question were able to demonstrate satisfactory to excellent knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text when responding to part A. Weaker candidates demonstrated a misunderstanding of what Plato meant by the Form of the Good and/or failed to explain why it was the goal of all striving. The weakest candidates failed to address the requirements of the question itself. Difficulties emerged in terms of the part B question. Many responses tended to present additional descriptive and fairly detailed explanations of the nature of the Form of the Good and tended to engage in descriptions of one or more of the central analogies used by Plato to provide a vision of it.

Question 16: This was a very popular choice amongst candidates. In many cases, responses to part A of the question demonstrated satisfactory to excellent explanations of Plato's programme for the education of the philosopher ruler. The stronger responses were able to engage in great detail and development with each phase of the education programme. On the other hand, it was quite disappointing to find that there were many instances of responses to the Part A question that were best described as minimal and displayed little knowledge of the relevant sections of the text. The development of an evaluative treatment of what was asked for in part B of the question presented difficulties for many candidates. There was a marked tendency for responses to continue a descriptive explanation of some of the details of the education programme without any attention to a critical treatment of the material.

Peter Singer: *The Life You Can Save*

Question 17: The stronger responses were able to present, in part A of the question, a convincing display of understanding and knowledge of the details of the text relevant to the demands of the question. In particular, these responses were able to show a secure appreciation of Singer's notion of philanthropy. Weaker responses tended to deal in generalities and occasionally vague references to some of the key points of the text. With regard to part B of the question, a major difficulty was the tendency to descriptively affirm the view that wealthy people ought to alleviate poverty because they have the financial means to do so. Such an approach produced responses that were very limited in terms of a critical treatment of the material of the text relevant to responding to the question.

Question 18: Responses tended to be general, relying on broad references to the arguments of the text itself and remained in need of additional development both in terms of part A and part B of the question.

Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

Question 19: The question focused on one of the central themes of the text. Hence, the question was answered quite successfully by almost all who made this choice. Responses to part A of the question demonstrated sound and, in the best cases detailed knowledge and understanding of Taylor's notion of being true to oneself and authenticity. Responses to part B of the question were equally successful as the association of the notion of authenticity with the idea of it being an ethical imperative. Weaknesses occurred only when the response to part B became more descriptive than analytical.

Question 20: Responses to the Part A question were, in almost all cases, textually well-informed and presented sound knowledge and understanding of central notions of the text relevant to the requirements of the question. Given the wording of the Part B question, candidates were generally able to enter into an analytical and evaluative treatment of the material.

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

Question 21: This question posed difficulties to many candidates who were unable to demonstrate detailed, precise and focused knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question in relation to the relevant material that could have been drawn from the text. Hence, responses to part A tended to be under-developed, lacking in detail and development. Responses to part B tended simply to continue a description of some of the consequences of the claim set out in part A.

Question 22: Responses to part A of this question tended to generalize some of the central notions put forth in the text concerning the nature of the *Tao* rather than to deal in detail with these notions. Unfortunately, responses to part B of the question usually offered an extension of the lengthy description of the qualities of the *Tao* without performing the evaluation asked for in the question.

Zhuangzi: *Zhuangzi*

Question 23: This question was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Responses to part A did not demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the textual material that could have been relevant to developing a sound response to the question. The analytical and evaluative requirements of part B of the question were seldom met in a satisfactory manner.

Question 24: Few candidates chose to answer this question. Of those that did, knowledge and understanding of the text (part A of the question) tended to range from poor to satisfactory. Responses to part B were generally unable to demonstrate a critical treatment of human feeling in relation to the claim set out in the Part A question.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers must choose for critical study only ONE prescribed text irrespective of 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.

Teachers must insure that the prescribed text selected for study is read in its entirety by their students. While the use of commentaries and text summaries can provide useful supporting resources for the reading of the text, they cannot replace it.

Teachers should supply their students 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, to what extent, etc.*).

Teachers should supply their students with a copy of the P2 markbands (both for Part A and for Part B) and carefully explain and discuss them with their students. Moreover, all formative and summative written work done in preparation for the formal P2 examination ought to be marked using these markbands.

Students must learn to read carefully, address clearly, and answer completely the examination question. This is especially the case with the current examination question rubric which divides each question into 'Part A' and Part B'. 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.

Teachers must clearly explain to their students that the examination rubric requires a response to the TWO parts of the ONE question selected from the two options for the single prescribed text selected for study in the course. Students must understand that in writing their response, they must clearly indicate where Part A begins and ends and where Part B begins. This separation of the two parts is absolutely essential and must be indicated unambiguously in the answer booklet.

Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination questions that ask candidates to make connections or establish relationships between or amongst ideas, themes, or issues raised in a prescribed text.

Teachers should help their students understand the difference between the simple exposition, description or explanation of the arguments of the text relevant to the question set for Part A and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the arguments of the text relevant to the question set for Part B. The definitions of, for example, the skills of analysis and evaluation can be found in the glossary of terms at the end of the current subject guide.

Teachers might want to encourage students 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 students understand the importance of making direct and indirect references to the prescribed text in the development of their responses.

Teachers should introduce their students to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information can be used effectively in the development of the response to the question set for Part B of the question.

Teachers should help their students identify relevant examples and illustrations which serve to support the analysis of the arguments of a prescribed text. However, students must be cautioned in how they use these examples and illustrations in the development of their own responses. For example, an over-emphasis on the explanation of the minute details of an example or illustration could potentially detract from the development of the actual treatment of the question set for the text.

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 students.

Teachers should provide their students 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. Similarly, teachers might want to collect sample scripts from their own students that can be made anonymous and used in class to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in actual student 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 of the Philosophy examination.

Teachers ought to take advantage of completing and submitting the official G2 form at the end of every examination session.

Teachers might want to consider enrolling for an IB Philosophy workshop (online and face to face; Categories 1 (new and less experienced teachers) and Category 2 (experienced teachers)).

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-25

General comments

This session was the fourth session guided by the new Subject Guide and especially the new assessment rubric and a best-fit approach to assessment. Paper 3 continues to provide Higher Level candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish a HL student from his or her SL counterpart. The purpose of this examination uses the same approach since the introduction of Paper 3 (using, as it does, an unseen text extract to provide the context of candidate responses). The task is described as the requirement “to write a response to [a] text, comparing and contrasting their experience of philosophical activity with the view(s) of philosophical activity found in the text.” It is also important to note that “[t]his allows them to deepen their understanding of philosophy as an activity by providing a space in the course for critical examination of philosophy itself, and its methods. It is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their own experience of ‘doing philosophy’.” The emphasis is firmly on the “critical examination” of philosophy as an experience, practice and discipline. There is a clearly defined expectation that students approach the task with a clear understanding of the need to be critical in their engagement with the claims of the unseen text.

The best-fit approach to assessment

The best-fit model of assessment has now applied to Paper 3 for four sessions. The examiners all noted again how this approach provided a more confident assessment of the responses.

Purpose of the Report

It is hoped that this information will:

- Enable teachers to reflect upon the examination performance of their students.
- Help teachers prepare more effectively their future students for this examination paper.
- Enable teachers to make the most of the opportunities, challenges and innovations afforded by HL Paper 3.

A review of the information supplied by teachers on the teacher comments document provides important and relevant information about how teachers in the May 2017 examination session viewed the examination paper. It must be emphasised that the comments provide the formal channel for teachers to make observations regarding the content, presentation and quality of the examination paper. The senior examination team reads these comments as part of an evidentially-based approach to the assessments. Teachers should not overlook this valuable opportunity for feedback in future examination sessions.

The Text Extract

The text extract that appeared in May 2017 HL Paper 3 examination was regarded by teachers submitting comments as an approachable discussion of the idea of philosophy and doing

philosophy and enabled candidates to reflect satisfactorily on the nature of philosophy, the skills involved in philosophical activity, as well as the experience of doing philosophy from a variety of perspectives.

There were 27 respondents (down from 29 last year). 92.59% said that the paper was an appropriate level of difficulty. 66.67% said that it was a similar standard in comparison with last year's paper; 3.7% said it was a little more difficult. It is worth noting that last year (May 2016) a relatively high number (24%) felt it was a little easier than the previous year (May 2015). All respondents agreed that the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper was generally excellent.

Consequently, it can be stated that it maintained the right balance between readability/approachability and a stimulus to analysis and evaluation of the issues of doing philosophy/philosophical activity. The number of issues associated with doing philosophy or philosophical activity that would have been able to be identified by the average student was fair. Interesting, there is still a concern expressed by some examiners that the text did not offer challenging ideas about doing philosophy (DP) or philosophical activity (PA) that would have prompted students to think deeply about some central assumptions regarding doing philosophy or philosophical activity. Instead, this response again offered fairly straightforward statements about DP/PA that are reflected in many 'introduction to philosophy' texts.

In the previous Subject Guide, the approach to the analysis of the extract and its consideration was not made explicit. However, it was expected that the format of the response would be an essay. The new Subject Guide is much clearer on this expectation, requiring candidates to undertake a compare and contrast approach in the format of an essay, not as a report or a reflection piece. This year's cohort clearly understood this requirement resulting in a far greater number of students achieving a 3 and a 4 than the previous year. It is still that case that the more successful responses were those of candidates who identified, made reference to and utilized the pertinent issues arising from the extract in the development of their responses. To do this they drew upon the 1) numerous aspects of the course they had studied at HL (individual philosophers, schools of philosophy, critics of philosophy as an endeavour) in order to critically assess the nature of philosophy described in the text extract, including 2) their own experience of doing philosophy in the course. This is now the key differentiator between a standard response and one that deserves higher marks.

As mentioned, the extract was again drawn from an introduction from a textbook, by J Perry and M Bratman (1999), *Introduction to Philosophy*, pages 1–6. On the whole, most candidates understood the claims in the extract, and as a result, they were provoked into reflecting upon the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy, though not necessarily using these categories. There were varying degrees of depth to the understanding of the extract and a varying number of points selected. It is worth noting that a few selected points leading to an in-depth analysis (and evaluation) is considered to be a worthwhile response. The standard response should be a sufficient number of points (5-6) treated individually as part of a holistic assessment of the unseen extract. Regardless, the main challenge was to delve deeper into the basic or summative insights offered in the extract and demonstrate a relatively sophisticated understanding of philosophy. For example, a student was given the opportunity to reflect on the nature of philosophy as an abstract discipline, how philosophy might affect what we do in life, the personalized nature of how we see the world and critique it, how philosophy is not limited

to personalized reflections, criticism and discussion, but also involves reading past ideas and arguments and so on. These lead mostly to straightforward observations or insights on philosophy as a discipline, but further reflection could have opened up other areas of investigation and therefore comparison. For example, the issues could have been developed further by the nature of applied philosophy in relation to theoretical discussions, the influence/impact of conceptual frameworks (or ideologies) on problem identification and solving, and the issue of subjectivity as a possible outcome of this kind of investigation.

The last issue is always a very popular topic for analysis and is a common topic in these kinds of introductory extracts. While some of the better responses avoided this temptation, there was a tendency for students to use this as an opportunity to 'throw their hands up in the air' philosophically speaking and deny there was a valid definition for philosophy as a discipline. This provides an opportunity to explore claims to objectivity over the history of philosophical debate, including motivations and methodologies used.

This frequent response to defining philosophy in introductory textbooks should not be taken as definitive. Rather, it is indicative of the number of approaches to doing philosophy that could be canvassed and each of these approaches has many advocates, who often have very clear ideas as to what doing philosophy is as an endeavour. Students should be encouraged to make a commitment to their understanding of doing philosophy as a philosopher, not a commentator on philosophy. This is essential to the success of their engagement with the course as it is currently designed – the emphasis is on doing philosophy, not simply a history of ideas course.

Some teacher comments summarised misconceptions of the paper 3 response, often mentioned in workshops and discussion forums. That is, the discussion on 'how many points should be discussed?'. The examiners are asked to look at the quality of the discussion that occurs. One point can be explored in detail for the entire response or some of them in a sound level of detail. These are always preferable to all the issues raised in the extract with little detail in the analysis or evaluation. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate a quality understanding of what philosophy is, as an activity, drawing critically on the extract and the student's own understanding and experience of doing philosophy from the course.

As always, relevant experiences of doing philosophy could have included the experience of the philosophy classes themselves (e.g. the experience of debate, group discussion, or research for assignments), specific experiences had during the treatment of the various course components (including the Internal Assessment and Extended Essay), a comparison between the activity of philosophy and that encountered with other subjects in the IB Diploma and finally, references to how skills learned in the philosophy course find application outside the classroom situation (e.g. reading a newspaper article, viewing a film, listening to the lyrics of a song, etc.). Some of the more sophisticated responses used these experiences to compare and contrast the experiences of a science classroom and therefore reflect on the nature of knowing and the generation and affirmation of knowledge in the two disciplines. These responses were clearly aware of how their studies in TOK, including their experiences in this classroom, were relevant to their understanding of the nature of philosophy in relation to other subjects.

Like previous years, candidates failed to use many of the more recent conceptions of philosophy. Candidates seemed unaware of some of the major debates about doing philosophy. These include the different methodologies, perceived purpose of doing philosophy,

and so on. Students who had clearly completed an optional theme in Ethics seemed unaware of the implications of the meta-ethical element required to be studied for the issue of doing philosophy and philosophical activity. As such they missed some of the more nuanced avenues for analysis. Another example of this is the idea of the study of contested concepts, or Mary Midgley's conceptual engineering/plumbing; a common point of discussion in contemporary commentaries about doing philosophy. This lack of depth to their understanding of what philosophy has meant, and could mean, resulted in only a few students constructing an overall argument by referencing their own understanding of philosophy as a coherent practice. It is worth noting that in Spanish responses there was a slightly greater tendency to include more sophisticated perspectives, such as those from Baudrillard, Taylor, Foucault and Singer.

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

While the evidence provided by candidate responses demonstrates that the extract provided a reasonable number of opportunities for candidates to engage personally with the text and its arguments, the use of the different perspectives and experiences was limited. This does not seem to be changing. For example, candidates continue to tell a story about the attitude to Philosophy as a subject expressed by their parents or friends and their introduction to philosophy in their first few lessons of their Diploma Programme without offering a sophisticated understanding of the unique nature of philosophy as a discipline, its role in exploring humanity and the world within which we exist, as well as the tools, methodologies, and skills it draws upon to do so. For example, very few responses explore the challenges of argument and justifying in philosophy given the diverse nature of the evidence available to support a philosophical position. Instead, they were often simply statements of classroom experiences rather than illustrations of the nature, function, methodology and meaning of philosophy. Similarly, though most candidates demonstrated they recognized the experience of 'doing philosophy' as part of their course, many failed to understand that they were required to relate this experience to their evaluation of the philosophical perspective and/or issues raised in the text. For example, many responses contained references to classroom debate in relation to an ethical issue and occasionally the nature of truth that 'opened their eyes to different perspectives'. Very few, however, contained an explanation of how this came about, leaving many examiners wondering about the meaning and/or implications of these experiences and the insights they supposed to bring to the issue of doing philosophy and the question of what philosophy is as a discipline and as an activity. Many examiners frequently annotated the responses they were marking with 'Why?' as well as 'And?' indicating that the point being made was not being developed, but rather it was being simply stated or asserted as a self-evident truth. 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.

The suggestion from many scripts is that students are not being prepared with reference to contemporary debates, relying instead on broad, historical examples of the role of philosophy in society and as a tool to understand the world, both natural and/or human.

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

- The presentation of clearly organized, coherent responses using appropriate philosophical language.
- The ability to remain focused on the arguments of the text and to develop responses following the main arguments of the text extract from beginning to end.
- The incorporation of clear, specific and concise references to the text either by citing specific words and/or short phrases or by referring to the relevant line numbers of the text.
- The ability to identify concisely the main ideas, themes and topics raised in the text extract.
- The ability to make references to their own experience of doing philosophy throughout the course in a convincing and effective manner.
- The ability to use their analysis of the text extract as the reference for discussing their own personal view of philosophical activity in relation to that presented in the text extract.
- The ability to identify and incorporate relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions to points made and arguments found in the text extract.
- The ability to incorporate relevant information learned in the course (ideas, information, philosophical approaches, arguments of philosophers, etc.) into the response. The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions.

Weaknesses in the approach to the task

- A prevalent tendency to develop a very detailed and fundamentally descriptive summary of all of the arguments and points raised in the text extract. The exam rubric asks only for a concise description of philosophical activity as presented in the text.
- Failure to make specific references to relevant portions of the text itself (key words, short phrases, brief sentences, paraphrases, etc.) and to incorporate these references into a textually relevant, focused and coherently developed response.
- Failure to incorporate a personal, textually informed response to the issues regarding philosophical activity as raised in the extract.
- Failure to develop an effective and focused evaluation of the issues raised in the text extract.
- Failure to make clear, specific and relevant references to the personal experience of philosophy and philosophical activity encountered throughout the whole HL course.
- Failure to provide an indication of how a candidate personally understands the nature of philosophical activity in relation to that raised in the text extract.

Other comments

An effective and systematic method of addressing the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of the question is to explore them in terms of the formal HL Paper 3 assessment criteria:

The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.

Candidates were generally successful in this respect. Responses were organized, the language was appropriate to philosophy, responses were easy to follow and the answers tended to be, in most cases, adequately focused and sustained. Weaker candidates failed to develop coherent responses because of an apparent absence of planning and organization. Interestingly, the trend to write a plan at the start or end of the booklet was almost non-existent. Nonetheless, planning was evident in many responses however there is always room for improvement.

There is clear identification of the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text. Effective references are made to the text.

Since the introduction of paper 3, many more candidates can systematically delineate and identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text. However, there is still many responses that are not sufficiently identifying points made in the unseen text. While the identification of the issues is a skill, the referencing of these points is only procedural. It assists the examiners if points are supported by either quotes or at least lines number (preferably both).

Stronger responses take time to identify the point using a quote and then explain the meaning of the point and its implications for doing philosophy.

The student draws explicitly on their personal experience of philosophical activity, using well-chosen examples or illustrations to support their points.

This requirement for a success response in Paper 3 used to be a problematic area for candidates, but recent sessions have indicated that this was no longer the case. This session's responses, however, were more likely to use their own personal experience of doing philosophy rather than different perspectives encountered during their course. Students are still referencing their study of Descartes' Mediations, the concerns about the existence of God in their Philosophy of Religion Optional Theme, or applied debates in the Ethics Theme. However, these tend to be descriptive rather than used to support a critical response to a point identified in the unseen text. Those that were able to accomplish this specific requirement did so in a relatively clear and convincing manner. There are still candidates who are clearly not comfortable with the expectations of this requirement of the examination. There is a tendency for students to connect a point in the text with a relevant experience and illustration without making a point. They need to be prepared to make relevant references to their own experience of doing philosophy and its implications as a result of following the course and to draw upon the perspectives encountered and explored in the process.

There is clear analysis of both similarities and differences between the student's personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented.

There is now an explicit expectation that candidates will structure their response using a compare and contrast approach. It was felt by the examiners that this clear expectation of a compare and contrast structure had benefited students as they were able to respond systematically to the extract.

The response contains well-developed critical analysis. All, or nearly all, of the main points, are justified. The response argues to a reasoned conclusion.

The best responses demonstrated a detailed, focused and in-depth understanding of philosophy as a discipline and therefore the nature of philosophical activity discussed in the text extract. The better responses developed a coherent critical analysis of the issues raised in the text regarding the nature of philosophical activity. While almost all candidates made reference to ideas presented in the text, only the better candidates used the text in the strategic development of a convincing and compelling response. The weaker responses tended to remain descriptive, only summarizing what was said in the text extract and thus lacked the levels of personal understanding required by this criterion.

This dot point assesses a candidate's ability to develop an evaluation of the points made in the text. It is also the most challenging one. This requires them to assess the validity of the insights into the nature of philosophy contained within the text in relation to the candidate's own understanding. Similarly, this ability is not demonstrated by simply stating agreement or disagreement with the positions identified in the extract or by making a series of assertions on what philosophy is. Candidates are expected to provide evidence of weighing the arguments of the text against their own views of what constitutes philosophical activity. The best responses avoided making generalized and/or over-simplified statements of broad opinion, but contained considered and textually-justified comments on points contained within the extract. In response, they offered a position that was justified. If there was agreement evidence was required to be offered to demonstrate why they agreed with the explicit use of examples and insight. If they disagreed, there is a similar expectation. The strongest responses offered a focused and convincing critical evaluation of the main points made in the text. This remains the most challenging aspect of the paper 3 (and one across all sections of the philosophy exam). Subsequently, candidates struggled to offer justification of their positions and therefore the development of an evaluation of the philosophical activity raised in the unseen text. Some of the weakest responses were characterised by the incorporation of general remarks about philosophy or philosophical activity that bore little, if any relation to the perspectives of the text itself.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Carefully read and reflect upon the portions of the new Subject Guide that outline the nature of this course component.
- Carefully read the new Teacher Support Material (TSM) devoted to HL Paper 3 and incorporate relevant ideas and resources into the teaching of this component of the course.
- Introduce candidates early in the course to the HL Paper 3 specification (rubric and format) and seek to embed the expectations (and terminology) of Paper 3 in their learning experiences.
- Develop an understanding of the different approaches to, and goals for, doing philosophy and their associated issues. These can be developed using the framework of nature, function, meaning and methodology suggested in the Subject Guide for investigating of philosophical activity.

- Identify points in the course where these aspects of doing philosophy can be introduced and then later developed further. This should involve integrating HL Paper 3 related exercises into each of the course components. This is critically important as preparation for Paper 3 should take place throughout the course and not be devoted to a single block of teaching time (e.g. in the final weeks of the course). The new set of inquiry questions offered in the Subject Guide (p. 34) provide an excellent framework for designing specific, focused investigation into the issues of philosophical activity as the course progresses or during class time devoted to the HL programme.
- Identify, explain and practice the various skills that will be required in the examination situation. Many of these skills are an important of other subjects, especially the Group 1: Language A subjects. The compare and contrast command term requires a specific essay response. The requirements for this type of essay response can be developed from, and reinforced by, a candidate's learning experiences in this subject.
- Consult the relevant discussion threads on the Philosophy OCC devoted to various aspects of HL Paper 3 and the resource links that contain materials relevant to HL Paper 3 preparation.
- Develop a collection of sample texts extracts of varying lengths that can be used in class to practice the skills that are required in the examination situation.
- Previous exam papers are still relevant to the current assessment. Markschemes are useful for developing an understanding of the common themes that emerge in unseen texts and even possibilities for teaching these in class. This knowledge bank is now an essential tool for developing candidates successfully.
- Help candidates learn how to make references to their experience of doing philosophy and of following the philosophy course when reading texts that provide descriptions of philosophical activity.
- Encourage students to identify and appreciate how the skills associated with philosophical activity are engaged outside of the classroom situation in daily, real-life situations.
- Help candidates understand the difference between a descriptive summary of a text which describes the nature of philosophical activity and a detailed, textually-based analysis of such a text along with an evaluation of the issues raised in the text.
- Invite students to formulate in writing their personal views of what constitutes philosophical activity and have them revisit it throughout the course as their understanding of philosophical activity grows.
- Help candidates develop the ability to formulate a personal response both to the issues raised in the text extract and to their personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. Encourage them to recognize their own philosophical understanding, and subsequent commitments, that emerge as the course processes.
- Provide sufficient in-class unseen text 'practice essays' in order to gain experience and confidence in writing examination responses.
- Participate in IB Philosophy workshops which, by default, offer sessions on Paper 3 presentation and preparation.

Philosophy

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-11	12-24	25-35	36-49	50-62	63-75	76-100

Higher level/Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16-18	19-21	22-25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Stimuli and themes

Stimulus materials were varied and suitable in a vast majority of cases. 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.

Some students still submitted work based on an entire film, book or even TV series, which is not recommended and makes it difficult to achieve full marks for criterion A due to a loose connection between the stimulus and the philosophical issue.

In addition, a few students chose a stimulus that was too philosophical in nature (for example, an article on the ethics of abortion, or clearly philosophical quotes – even though not written by philosophers). This is also problematic because the whole point of the IA is to show the ability to make a connection between non-philosophical material and a philosophical issue. If the stimulus is philosophical in nature, it becomes difficult for the candidate to show this ability, which can affect criterion A.

Examples of particularly successful IAs included:

- The analysis of a stimulus that considered the question: did Shakespeare really write

all those plays? The analysis underlined that names are prominent actors in many philosophical problems and discussed Russell's descriptivism and two of Kripke's arguments against it.

- A metaethical analysis of the actions performed in the video game Grand Theft Auto.
- A reflection on determinism and libertarianism based on a scene from Stanley Kubrick's Clockwork Orange.
- A scene from Cloud Atlas gave rise to an effective discussion on Utilitarianism in democratic states.
- Two pictures of identical twins at two different points in their lives stimulated a thorough epistemological analysis of what it means to say that two things are identical.

Format and nature of the philosophical analysis

There are many ways to write a good philosophy essay and candidates can use all kinds of formats successfully, including dialogues. However, the following mistakes were common:

Too much emphasis on the stimulus itself: Some candidates spent too much time trying to establish parallels between the stimulus and philosophical theories or themes, leading to poorly structured essays and lack of focus. Although it is recommended to make use of the stimulus in the body of the essay, the structure should be focused on the philosophical analysis itself and not on a critique of the stimulus. The essay should be an analysis of a philosophical issue arising from the stimulus, rather than an analysis of the stimulus itself.

Not enough emphasis on the stimulus: Other candidates only mentioned their stimulus in one or two sentences in the introduction, which is a pity, as this approach does not let candidates fully demonstrate their ability to think of non-philosophical material in a philosophical way.

Misplacing the connection between the stimulus and the philosophical theme: Quite a few candidates established a connection between the stimulus and the philosophical theme in their stimulus summary rather than in their essay. The summary should only be focused on the stimulus itself and not yet on philosophy. In some cases, the connection was only established in the summary and not at all in the essay itself. This was particularly problematic when essays were already close to the word limit and pushed way above the word limit if moderators tried to consider the summary as part of the essay.

Some common features of successful candidates' essays:

A clear identification of one philosophical issue

A clear structure, where the essay is organised around the philosophical issue rather than the stimulus. For example, different paragraphs could contain different approaches to the central issue

Developed and detailed analysis and evaluation, where the candidate carefully and systematically considers various perspectives in the central issue and weighs their relative strengths and weaknesses throughout the essay (not just at the very end).

In the better cases 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. In these cases the reference to the stimulus material was to highlight or clarify a philosophical concept. These good exercises developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly stating the tenets of a position and then conclude. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples always had a degree of a personal reflection. They indicated a very clear understanding and consistent achievement of the of the IA objectives. Further they presented specific, interesting topics for discussion, and were characterized by good command of philosophical language and critical analysis applied to non-philosophical material using different approaches and philosophical standpoints to foster interesting debates.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Although candidates generally performed quite well in this criterion, quite a few lost marks because their central philosophical issue was not identified explicitly and precisely enough. Some students identified several philosophical issues arising from the stimulus and did not make it clear which one they were going to tackle in their analysis. Other identified a very broad theme such as “freedom” without defining a more specific question or problem.

Criterion B

Candidates also did well in this criterion, using a variety of structures successfully. The most successful candidates were those who organised their essay around one clear philosophical issue, explaining, analysing and evaluating some of the perspectives one could adopt in response to this issue. Candidates whose response focused too much on the stimulus itself (for example, organising the essay according to the scenes in a film) did not perform as well.

Criterion C

Candidates were generally strong in this criterion and a very large majority displayed some philosophical knowledge of theories and / or scholars. Candidates and teachers are reminded that the difference between a 3 and a 4 in this criterion resides mainly in *detailed* knowledge and understanding, which is difficult to demonstrate if too many theories are tackled.

Criterion D

This is an area that can still be developed by many candidates, despite very good performance from a few. For candidates to improve in this criterion, they need to dedicate a substantial amount of their essay to analysis, going much beyond the mere description of theories. Theories need to be unpacked and tested with examples. Teachers and candidates may find it

useful to go back to the IB definition of “analyse” (AO2): “*Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure*”.

Criterion E

This criterion was also a difficult one for students. Some candidates explained how the theories outlined had been criticised by other scholars, but this in itself does not constitute evaluation, as it does not come from the candidate. Candidates need to be careful to explain what, *according to them*, are the relative merits and faults of the different positions they have presented. These should be fully justified and not simple statements of opinion. This evaluative work should happen throughout the essay and not just in the conclusion.

A note about referencing and bibliographies:

Although poor referencing is not directly penalised, teachers and centres should advise their candidates to provide full references and a bibliography for all the material they use in their essay. Not only does this represent good academic practice that educates candidates about the expectations they will encounter in university and/or the professional world, but it also allows them to avoid academic honesty issues.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Focus on what constitutes a suitable philosophical issue and practice writing introductions that establish *one* issue clearly, precisely and explicitly. Peer work can be suggested: a student reading another’s introduction for example, could feedback what they think the central issue is, helping the writer be as clear as possible.

Work on essay structures that are firmly grounded in the philosophical issue and various perspectives on this issue, rather than on the stimulus.

Encourage students to focus on two or three perspectives in response to the philosophical issue, so that they can add detail and depth to their explanations, analysis and evaluation.

Use techniques such as asking students “so what?” questions in order to encourage them to go further in their analysis and evaluation.

Insist on proper referencing and bibliographies to develop good academic practice.

Further comments

The overall quality of the IAs was good this year, and the understanding of the requirements of the task continues to improve, as it has in the last few sessions. Although some individual students were still on the wrong track, very few centres seemed to misunderstand the nature of the task as a whole. The standard of the samples in Spanish and French continued to be high with few very poor pieces and a number of strong pieces.

Some general characteristics of this year's samples:

Candidates performed better in criteria B and C than they did in criteria D and E.

Despite good overall performance in criterion A, some students lost marks unnecessarily in this criterion, which could be easily avoided.

Many candidates failed to include proper references and/or bibliographies. Generally speaking, teachers applied the marking criteria consistently. Some teachers tended to be over-generous with their best students and over-harsh with those falling at the bottom of their sample. Many teachers wrote helpful comments to justify their marks, which was useful and continues to be encouraged.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-16	17-22	23-29	30-35	36-50

General comments

Generally there was evidence that the entry this year was stronger than previous years. There were the usual candidates who failed to respond to enough questions but in contrast to previous session, very few showed that they had not studied philosophy.

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

The paper as a whole seemed to be without significant difficulties for the candidates. In some optional areas, as will be seen below, very few questions were attempted. This implies that schools are narrowing their choice for options to study. As always, some responses appeared in the optional area that were least popular and this might suggest that the candidates were just randomly picking questions.

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

There was evidence that the candidates are now learning not to produce learnt answers for responses in Section A. The responses generally were well focused on the stimulus. In Section B, contrary to last year's phenomena, candidates used the questions as a question and not merely as a stimulus, subsequently responding to the answers as actually set. Most answers were better structured, and knowledge seems to be well used.

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

Section A

Both question were attempted in equal number. There was not a sense of this year's students favouring one question more than another.

Question 1

Hobbes was well used as a knowledge base to respond to the stimulus. Some candidates took the quotation apart but nearly all stayed well-focused on the stimulus and showed that they knew the challenges that concern human nature and the human condition.

Question 2

For the most part this was seen as a question revolving around identity issues. With the strong answers the concerns of existentialism were well explored.

Section B

Question 3

Very few candidates attempted this question and those that did produced weak answers.

Question 4

Very few candidates attempted this question and those that did produced weak answers.

Question 5

Responses to this question were few but those read revealed that candidates could explore the three theories of truth and could attempt an evaluation and answer to the question.

Question 6

This question produced very weak answers as students did not answer the question but wrote generally about knowledge and not about the access rights and the related benefits.

Question 7

Here, a good knowledge base was used to support clear responses to the question. A very popular question.

Question 8

The most popular question and generally well-answered using a good knowledge base. However, only few answers did a clear concept analysis of 'good' and the difference between character and person.

Question 9

Few candidates attempted this question. The answers did not reveal a sound philosophical base or clear philosophical analysis.

Question 10

Very few responses and those that did this question did not analyse the quotation or the implications behind 'nonsense'.

Question 11

A popular question with only a few candidates falling into the trap of trying to prove God's existence. Most attempted and analysed the conceptual issues related to omnipotence

Question 12

A popular question with good answers. Many showed in-depth knowledge of the argument that related to religious language.

Question 13

Not a popular question and when answered showed little knowledge and understanding of the theories of how science works.

Question 14

This rather open-ended question drew very few responses. Those that were presented did not show any evidence of an understanding of scientific progress or the nature of imagination.

Question 15

Poorly answered in general as the value of justice for a society was not explored. Good answers, and there were few, did show a knowledge base to sustain an argument.

Question 16

Quite popular but responses tended to show a US constitutional base of argument and not a broad global perspective. Good answers tended to investigate the issues surrounding universality and cultural relativism

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The quality of responses in Section A has risen significantly in that there the responses are generally being focused on the stimulus and using a knowledge that related to 'what it is to be human'.

In Section B training in writing an argument-driven essay is important, as is showing clear concept analysis when unpacking the question.

There were only a few examples of the listing and reciting of learnt knowledge. Such a practice is not to be encouraged. There could be more reference, if relevant, to the texts encountered in paper 2 to support arguments.

Both introductions and conclusions need to be stronger.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	13-15	16-19	20-25

General comments

As stated in the Subject Guide: This element of the course provides an opportunity for students to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a primary philosophical text. This is a challenging but rewarding part of the course, providing an opportunity for the student as a philosopher to engage in dialogue with another philosopher. This view reflects very well the notion of 'doing philosophy' found at the heart of the DP Philosophy course and, at the same time, shows that the reading and analysis of a text written by a philosopher represents an interesting and challenging way of engaging in philosophical activity via the original writings of famous philosophers.

The May 2017 HL/SL Paper 2 examination questions are formulated according to the current Paper 2 examination question rubric which divides each question into Part A (explain a key concept, idea or argument from the text they have studied) and Part B (engage in critical discussion of that text). This question rubric presents candidates with opportunities to demonstrate clearly their knowledge and understanding of a prescribed text and, at the same time, allows them to focus their analytical and evaluative skills on a critical treatment of that text.

Teachers and candidates must keep in mind that the examination questions formulated for each of the twelve prescribed texts assume that candidates have read and studied **one** of the prescribed texts in class under the supervision of the teacher. It is also assumed that candidates have been introduced to the skills required for a clear demonstration of knowledge and understanding of a text along with those required for the critical and analytical assessment of a primary text in philosophy. These skills include the ability to develop a coherent, textually based argument in response to a question focused on a specific theme, issue, idea or argument drawn from of a text. Candidates also ought to be able to formulate their own position on the views and arguments of the author of a text and, most importantly, to engage critically and in an evaluative manner with the text. In studying the prescribed text and, especially in preparation for the Part B of the examination question, candidates should develop their ability to present a philosophical argument by testing their own position against the views of the author, and to use the author's ideas to expand their own thinking on the issue(s) under discussion. The use of supporting examples and illustrations along with the identification of counter-positions should be evident in the development of the treatment of the examination question.

It is interesting and useful to reflect upon the findings of the G2 documents received from teachers for the M17 HL/SL Philosophy Paper 2 examination. This year there were 43 respondents. 93% of these respondents judged the examination paper to be of an appropriate level of difficulty. Over half said that it was a similar standard in comparison with last year's paper while a small percentage judged that it was a little more difficult. While there were some comments regarding the wording of the John Stuart Mill questions, the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper generally seen to be very good.

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

- Notwithstanding the observations made in the M16 component report, responses to the various Prescribed Text questions continued to bring to the forefront four major difficulties. These represent major problems and teachers must take them into account very seriously as they prepare their students for HL/SL Paper 2:
- A number of candidates did not understand that they were to answer completely only ONE question and to answer it completely (i.e. both Parts A and B). There was ample evidence demonstrating that several candidates attempted to answer each of the 24 questions set for the 12 prescribed texts or to answer a selection of several questions scattered amongst the 24 questions set for the 12 prescribed texts.
- Many candidates failed to answer distinctly and separately Parts A and B of the chosen question. Candidates in this situation produced a SINGLE response in which it was difficult and occasionally impossible to distinguish how the candidate addressed the

- requirements of the Part A question as opposed to those of the Part B question.
- Several candidates failed to follow the instructions on the Paper 2 examination cover sheet and, while answering both Parts A and B, failed to indicate in the answer booklet where Part A ended and Part B began.
 - Candidates were generally successful in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the text with respect to what was asked in the Part A question but were unable to engage in an analytic and evaluative manner with the text with respect to what was asked in the Part B question.

Some specific difficulties experienced by candidates include the following:

Candidates need to read the Part A and Part B examination questions carefully and completely, paying particular attention to the specific command terms used in the questions. Some candidates occasionally fail to address in a focused and precise manner some or, in a small number of cases, all of the requirements stated in the question.

Some candidates fail to understand and/or address precisely the command term(s) of the question (e.g. explain, evaluate, to what extent do you agree).

Not all candidates are successful in demonstrating accurate, precise and/or detailed knowledge and understanding of the text and its arguments.

Not all candidates are able to identify and explore those arguments, themes and ideas of the text which are precisely relevant to answering the question set for a text.

The responses provide sufficient evidence that there exists a difficulty in engaging, in a critical, analytical and evaluative manner, with the demands and implications of the Part B examination question.

In their development of responses to both Parts A and B, many candidates had difficulty making references to and using relevant material drawn from the text.

It appears that many candidates find it difficult to formulate personal reflections on and demonstrate personal engagement with the arguments of the author of the text and/or with the arguments they develop in their own responses.

Candidates occasionally failed to incorporate into the response relevant supporting examples and illustrations and/or to identify and explore relevant counter-arguments, alternate views and alternate interpretations in the development of their responses.

Many candidates display a tendency to invest a disproportionate amount of time developing lengthy, descriptive summary outlines of the minute details of the supporting examples or illustration (e.g. the descriptive details of Plato's analogy of the cave).

A major difficulty is the failure to 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.

There exists a tendency on the part of some candidates to offer a simple descriptive, general outline of the main points of an author's overall philosophical perspectives much of which often bears little relevance to the question set for the text.

Candidates need to appreciate that their explanations (Part A) and analyses (Part B) both require development of ideas and information incorporated into their responses.

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

An analysis of the overall performance of candidates in the HL/SL Paper 2 examination in English, Spanish and French, provides satisfactory evidence that, in most cases, the prescribed text chosen for study had been read, analysed and evaluated under the direction of the classroom teacher. This judgement is based on the evidence provided by the examination scripts which generally demonstrated:

- satisfactory focus on the arguments of the texts relevant to the sense and demands of the questions set
- satisfactory knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the texts themselves as well as of the position of the authors of the various texts
- the use of appropriate philosophical terminology in general and, more specifically, the terminology of the texts and of their authors.

Factors which indicated that candidates had been well-prepared include:

- precise focus on the wording, demands and implications of the question set
- precise treatment of the command terms of the question
- consistent focus on the demands of the question
- evidence of a planned, coherent and focused response which exhibited a clear introduction 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 followed by a well-developed argument leading to a convincing concluding paragraph
- identification, understanding and use of the relevant material drawn from a text in developing a response to the question set
- analysis and evaluation of relevant material
- identification and use of relevant examples, illustrations and counter-arguments
- incorporation of a relevant personal response.

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

Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*, Vol. 1 part 1, Vol. 2 part 1 and Vol. 2 part 4

Question 1: Clearly, candidates who read and studied the text in class under the supervision of the teacher performed very well on this question as it focused upon a central, but sophisticated

theme of the text. In these cases, both in terms of knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation, responses reflected insight into the relevant arguments of the text. Unfortunately, in many other cases, candidates demonstrated weak understanding of those sections of the text relevant to answering the question, offering only superficial observations that were not always founded on the arguments of the text. This impacted directly on the quality of the explanation in Part A and on the analysis and evaluation in Part B. In general, candidates were able to perform better in Part A than in Part B.

Question 2: This question appealed to several of the candidates who chose to answer it. However, far too many responses tended to present general views and observations about the situation of women in contemporary society without making direct connections with the relevant sections of the text. Only the strongest candidates were able to demonstrate sound understanding and knowledge of the text in relation to the demands of the question. Responses to Part B tended to be repeat in a more descriptive than evaluative manner some of the ideas explained in Part A.

René Descartes: *Meditations*

Question 3: This question was quite popular amongst candidates. In terms of Part A, responses ranged from focused, precise, detailed and convincing responses to the question to weaker responses that merely presented brief and undeveloped descriptions of Descartes's treatment of the three types of ideas. In terms of the Part B question, only the strongest candidates were able to develop a critique of the distinctions Descartes employed to distinguish the types of ideas. Weaker candidates were tempted to repeat, in descriptive fashion, the characteristics of the distinctions without applying the required evaluative skills.

Question 4: While attention to detail and in-depth development varied, responses tended to demonstrate reasonably good to excellent overviews of Descartes's account of methodological doubt. However, not all candidates addressed the demand of the Part A question to show how he used this methodology to attain certainty. Part B appeared to be much more difficult as many candidates were drawn into presenting a descriptive summary and/or extension of what had already been outlined in Part A without the required analytical and evaluative treatment of the strengths and weaknesses of methodological doubt as conceived by Descartes.

David Hume: Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

Question 5: This question was not a very popular choice. With few exceptions, candidates answering this question were able to demonstrate only mediocre knowledge of the text in terms of explaining Philo's arguments regarding the perfection of God. Weaknesses in Part A directly impacted on the quality of evaluation and analysis presented in response to the Part B question. The most evident weakness for candidates was the failure to maintain focus on the development of an analytical and evaluative treatment of the relevant text material which

treated of the possibility of a neutral God. In these cases, part B tended to resemble a descriptive and explanatory extension of part A responses.

Question 6: This question presented more difficulties in responding to the Part B question than to that of Part A. Responses to part A tended to present satisfactory explanations of textual material relevant to answering the question but lacked detailed development. Responses to part B struggled to evaluate the degree of success achieved by Hume through his use of the dialogic method.

John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*

Question 7: For the most part, responses to part A demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the text and a sound understanding of Mill's position on the relationship between personal opinion and personal standards of judgement and the requirements of living together with others in society. Responses to part B were also generally quite well constructed and presented. The better responses made relevant links to contemporary situations in the critical treatment of the demands of the question. These responses were able to treat successfully and in an evaluative manner Mill's positive estimation of social customs and conformity.

Question 8: Candidates were generally very successful in responding to part A of the question as the question focused upon Mill's views on education, a central theme of the text. In some cases, responses explained Mill's views on education quite well but were weaker in explaining why education should be required and compelled by the state. Many candidates displayed more difficulties in developing an argument, based upon the text, which demonstrated the possibility that Mill's views were self-contradictory.

Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

Question 9: Part A of this question asked for an explanation of one of the most fundamental themes of the text and, thus, presented no major difficulties. Candidates were able to distil the key issues from the first essay of the text and develop satisfactory to good explanations. On the other hand, responses to part B tended to present some difficulties to many candidates. Several Part B responses fell into a descriptive treatment of how the genealogical method used by Nietzsche addressed value judgements (fundamentally an extension of the Part A response) rather than addressing the specific requirement of the question which asked for an analysis of the justifiability of the genealogical method as an approach to understanding the nature of morality.

Question 10: Candidates were generally successful in responding to this question. In most cases, candidates were able to engage with the arguments of the second essay of the *Genealogy* and then go on to make connections with the operations of the ability to make promises and memory as central aspects of becoming human. In terms of responses to part

A, there was ample evidence that the text had been read, studied and understood. Responses to part B of the question enjoyed similar levels of success. Candidates appeared to be quite comfortable with the requirements of the Part B question and were able to formulate critical treatments of Nietzsche's views on the relationship between making promises and social bonds amongst people.

Martha Nussbaum: Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach

Question 11: Candidates were generally successful in responding to this question. Given that part A asked for an explanation of a central, fundamental themes of the text, responses demonstrated sound knowledge of the arguments of the text. Responses incorporated references to examples set out by Nussbaum in the text as well as illustrations drawn from the contemporary scene. There was a similar situation evidenced in responses to part B of the question. Most of the candidates answering this question were able to engage critically with the demands of the question and the relevant arguments of the text. In some of the weaker cases, responses showed a tendency to wander off into a descriptive explanation of feminism rather than engaging in an evaluation of the role of the capabilities approach to feminism as set out in the text.

Question 12: This question was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Several of the responses to the Part A question exhibited difficulties in addressing clearly and precisely the nature of cultural imperialism as set out in the text. Weaknesses in understanding Nussbaum's notion of cultural imperialism created difficulties in responding to the requirements of the Part B question which asked for an evaluative treatment of the connections between the capabilities approach and the notion cultural imperialism.

Ortega y Gasset: The Origins of Philosophy

Question 13: This was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Responses tended to demonstrate both weaknesses in terms of a detailed, precise and in-depth knowledge of the text (part A) and in terms of the development of an analytical and evaluative treatment of the text (part B).

Question 14: As was the case with question 13, this was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Those who did choose to answer this question provided general and occasional vague explanations of the arguments of the text and, as a direct consequence of weak knowledge of the text, were not able to develop focused and sustained evaluations of what was asked for in part B.

Plato: *The Republic*, Books IV–IX

Question 15: This was a very popular choice amongst candidates. The question (both parts A and B) focused on central themes of the text. Many, but not all candidates who chose to answer this question were able to demonstrate satisfactory to excellent knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text when responding to part A. Weaker candidates demonstrated a misunderstanding of what Plato meant by the Form of the Good and/or failed to explain why it was the goal of all striving. The weakest candidates failed to address the requirements of the question itself. Difficulties emerged in terms of the part B question. Many responses tended to present additional descriptive and fairly detailed explanations of the nature of the Form of the Good and tended to engage in descriptions of one or more of the central analogies used by Plato to provide a vision of it.

Question 16: This was a very popular choice amongst candidates. In many cases, responses to part A of the question demonstrated satisfactory to excellent explanations of Plato's programme for the education of the philosopher ruler. The stronger responses were able to engage in great detail and development with each phase of the education programme. On the other hand, it was quite disappointing to find that there were many instances of responses to the Part A question that were best described as minimal and displayed little knowledge of the relevant sections of the text. The development of an evaluative treatment of what was asked for in part B of the question presented difficulties for many candidates. There was a marked tendency for responses to continue a descriptive explanation of some of the details of the education programme without any attention to a critical treatment of the material.

Peter Singer: *The Life You Can Save*

Question 17: The stronger responses were able to present, in part A of the question, a convincing display of understanding and knowledge of the details of the text relevant to the demands of the question. In particular, these responses were able to show a secure appreciation of Singer's notion of philanthropy. Weaker responses tended to deal in generalities and occasionally vague references to some of the key points of the text. With regard to part B of the question, a major difficulty was the tendency to descriptively affirm the view that wealthy people ought to alleviate poverty because they have the financial means to do so. Such an approach produced responses that were very limited in terms of a critical treatment of the material of the text relevant to responding to the question.

Question 18: Responses tended to be general, relying on broad references to the arguments of the text itself and remained in need of additional development both in terms of part A and part B of the question.

Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

Question 19: The question focused on one of the central themes of the text. Hence, the question was answered quite successfully by almost all who made this choice. Responses to part A of the question demonstrated sound and, in the best cases detailed knowledge and understanding of Taylor's notion of being true to oneself and authenticity. Responses to part B of the question were equally successful as the association of the notion of authenticity with the idea of it being an ethical imperative. Weaknesses occurred only when the response to part B became more descriptive than analytical.

Question 20: Responses to the Part A question were, in almost all cases, textually well-informed and presented sound knowledge and understanding of central notions of the text relevant to the requirements of the question. Given the wording of the Part B question, candidates were generally able to enter into an analytical and evaluative treatment of the material.

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

Question 21: This question posed difficulties to many candidates who were unable to demonstrate detailed, precise and focused knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question in relation to the relevant material that could have been drawn from the text. Hence, responses to part A tended to be under-developed, lacking in detail and development. Responses to part B tended simply to continue a description of some of the consequences of the claim set out in part A.

Question 22: Responses to part A of this question tended to generalize some of the central notions put forth in the text concerning the nature of the *Tao* rather than to deal in detail with these notions. Unfortunately, responses to part B of the question usually offered an extension of the lengthy description of the qualities of the *Tao* without performing the evaluation asked for in the question.

Zhuangzi: *Zhuangzi*

Question 23: This question was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Responses to part A did not demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the textual material that could have been relevant to developing a sound response to the question. The analytical and evaluative requirements of part B of the question were seldom met in a satisfactory manner.

Question 24: Few candidates chose to answer this question. Of those that did, knowledge and understanding of the text (part A of the question) tended to range from poor to satisfactory. Responses to part B were generally unable to demonstrate a critical treatment of human feeling in relation to the claim set out in the Part A question.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers must choose for critical study only ONE prescribed text irrespective of 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.

Teachers must insure that the prescribed text selected for study is read in its entirety by their students. While the use of commentaries and text summaries can provide useful supporting resources for the reading of the text, they cannot replace it.

Teachers should supply their students 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, to what extent, etc.*).

Teachers should supply their students with a copy of the P2 markbands (both for Part A and for Part B) and carefully explain and discuss them with their students. Moreover, all formative and summative written work done in preparation for the formal P2 examination ought to be marked using these markbands.

Students must learn to read carefully, address clearly, and answer completely the examination question. This is especially the case with the current examination question rubric which divides each question into 'Part A' and Part B'. 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.

Teachers must clearly explain to their students that the examination rubric requires a response to the TWO parts of the ONE question selected from the two options for the single prescribed text selected for study in the course. Students must understand that in writing their response, they must clearly indicate where Part A begins and ends and where Part B begins. This separation of the two parts is absolutely essential and must be indicated unambiguously in the answer booklet.

Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination questions that ask candidates to make connections or establish relationships between or amongst ideas, themes, or issues raised in a prescribed text.

Teachers should help their students understand the difference between the simple exposition, description or explanation of the arguments of the text relevant to the question set for Part A and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the arguments of the text relevant to the question set for Part B. The definitions of, for example, the skills of analysis and evaluation can be found in the glossary of terms at the end of the current subject guide.

Teachers might want to encourage students 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 students understand the importance of making direct and indirect references to the prescribed text in the development of their responses.

Teachers should introduce their students to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information can be used effectively in the development of the response to the question set for Part B of the question.

Teachers should help their students identify relevant examples and illustrations which serve to support the analysis of the arguments of a prescribed text. However, students must be cautioned in how they use these examples and illustrations in the development of their own responses. For example, an over-emphasis on the explanation of the minute details of an example or illustration could potentially detract from the development of the actual treatment of the question set for the text.

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 students.

Teachers should provide their students 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. Similarly, teachers might want to collect sample scripts from their own students that can be made anonymous and used in class to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in actual student 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 of the Philosophy examination.

Teachers ought to take advantage of completing and submitting the official G2 form at the end of every examination session.

Teachers might want to consider enrolling for an IB Philosophy workshop (online and face to face; Categories 1 (new and less experienced teachers) and Category 2 (experienced teachers)).