International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
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PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 25	26 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 65	66 - 78	79 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 64	65 - 77	78 - 100

Higher and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

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

General comments

This is the first November session with the new single work requirement, the critical analysis. In general, the results look very promising. There still were problems of format and administration in some samples, i.e. bibliographies absent, no word count, and no connection to the syllabus. The absence of either a word-count or connection to the syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the candidate from receiving a high mark in Criterion A, but the absence of references is another matter. It does compromise the integrity of the work.

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

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

Range and suitability of the work submitted

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

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

Examples of topics and issues:

- Karzai's review of marriage law amid international condemnation. Does an universal morality exist that can be justifiably imposed by one nation upon another?

- A Nietzschean reading of P. Süskind's *Perfume*

- Trumbo's dilemma: an analysis of free will and moral responsibility

- Was Simba's choice correct? Does man have an ethical obligation to be active in the interest of others or can he abdicate in favor of his own self-interest?

- *Nighthawks* (1942) by Edward Hopper. An examination of existential solitude

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

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of organization; they could assemble an argument with clarity of expression and use appropriate philosophical language. Very few of the samples exceeded the 2000 word limit.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

A large majority of the candidates comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues. They were able to construct arguments to support the positions they were presenting, though they were not always convincing or coherent. The majority of teachers assessed this criterion accurately, though there is still a tendency to be liberal. Some teachers still reward candidates for mentioning or listing philosophical ideas and arguments without demonstrating knowledge or understanding of them. Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase (poorly and often in a cursory and perfunctory manner) philosophical ideas without demonstrating that they actually understood what they were writing about.

Criterion C: Identification and Analysis of Relevant Material

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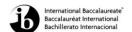
Criterion D: Development and Evaluation

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

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

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Read carefully and attentively the instructions in the current Subject Guide for the Internal Assessment exercise. A particular focus on the formatting is needed: title, new limit of strictly 2000 words, connection to syllabus, bibliography, and so on. Also, specific reference to the sourcing and inclusion of stimulus material should continue to be emphasized.

- Incorporate the IA requirement into the curriculum at an early opportunity, and revisit this task over the 18 months prior to final submission. This will greatly help in the understanding and development of ideas.

- Candidates should also have a copy of the requirements and assessment criteria to aid their understanding of the nature and assessment of the task.

- Encourage candidates to display a personal as well as an intellectual engagement with the topics and issues discussed.

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A concluding general remark: the syllabus is grounded in one leading idea which supports its structure from a conceptual point of view: the emphasis on doing philosophy. This idea holds the central approach to philosophy and structures all activities suggested and assessment components. It applies to the themes (Paper 1), the texts (Paper 2), and a specific kind of text with a definite content: philosophical activity itself (Higher level paper 3). It also guides the exercise of philosophical analysis for the internal assessment. The approach to the internal assessment as depicted in the Guide (pages 26 and 33-35) already makes clear that it is an integral part of the philosophy course. It offers an opportunity to develop the skills required e.g. for P1 in the context of the class work. Therefore it opens a strong link between class activity and exam. Whereas IA stresses philosophical analysis, P1 underlines the construction of an argument. However, both are main activities of what the program understands as doing philosophy, and, ideally, they are synthesized in one main way.

This relation between IA and the external assessment might be further explored to intensify and expand its possible effect on both: the practice in the course and the improvement of the exam results.

Furthermore, a strong point to develop in this context refers to the possibilities opened by this exercise since in it the philosophical writing is right on the center of the activity. From the point of view of the new approaches to conceptual writing, writing is no longer a subsidiary activity, but rather a primary way of learning. In this context writing is a way to think philosophically. This approach is consistent and complementary with the central idea of doing philosophy, and might be developed as a teaching approach by means of different techniques.

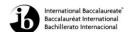# Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 31	32 - 44	45 - 57	58 - 70	71 - 90

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 30	31 - 37	38 - 45	46 - 60

General comments

Only one school submitted the G2 form which found the level of difficulty of this exam to be appropriate. Teachers are encouraged to send their comments by means of the G2 form. This feedback is very useful and it is taken into account during the grade award meeting, and also in the preparation of future examinations.

There was no evidence of time mismanagement in HL or SL.

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

A group of candidates were simply not prepared for this exam. Similarly to previous years, there was no area of the program that stood out as unusually difficult. The main difficulties raised were in terms of specific knowledge, skills, or approach. The main difficulties can be synthesized following the rubric of the paper:

a) Present an argument in an organized way.

Only some candidates had a clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and knew exactly where they were going and how each point contributed to the answer.

b) Use clear, precise and appropriate language.

There were answers that did not employ clear, precise or appropriate language to philosophy. There were examples where candidates did not know how to write essays, where a series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection were presented.

c) Identify any assumptions in the question.

This seems to be a difficult or unusual task for candidates.

d) Develop a clear and focused argument.

There is still a problem with candidates being overly descriptive and not philosophical enough. In the weakest cases there was evidence that only general knowledge had been shared and candidates did not really appreciate how to attempt a philosophy essay.

e) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response.

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

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

A significant group of answers were convincingly concerned with the presentation and examination of counterarguments. The weaker responses did not show any concern with it at all.

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

The use of examples presented basic difficulties. The role of examples is crucial in an essay. Where specific examples are called for, many candidates seemed unable to connect particular examples to general ideas. Examples are also all too often left unexplained or not analyzed.

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

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

A problem, which is reflected at different levels of achievement, lies in a misunderstanding of the kind of answer that should be presented. In the philosophy exams in general, but specifically in Paper 1, *answers are expected to develop an argument*. To show knowledge of specific philosophical theories, names, or positions is not an end in itself, but a means to develop the answer as a specific argument regarding the issue addressed by the question.

In a similar line of thought examiners pointed out that as can be seen from the total number of marks available in the assessment criteria for knowledge and understanding (5), as opposed to those available for critical analysis (10) and evaluation (10), it is vital that students realize that the IB Philosophy course is not primarily a test of knowledge (e.g. of past philosophical positions, arguments and writers). In this course it is critical that students should be given the chance to develop their own skills of philosophical analysis and evaluation. In the best answers, awareness of past contributions offers a platform from which the candidate can express his or her own position.
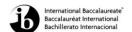
Taking into account that few schools and candidates were involved in this session, the exams submitted suggest that the possibilities open by the program are very little explored and developed. This refers to both content and approach. The syllabus is grounded in one leading idea which supports its structure from a conceptual point of view: the emphasis on doing philosophy. This very core idea calls for the development of teachers' and students' creativity, opening a wide scope for flexible interpretation, adaptation and development.

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

Most of the candidates prepared within the context of the current syllabus and its objectives and performed, in general at least, reasonably well. Good preparation was displayed in two main ways, correspondingly identified in two main groups of exams.

One group was at a satisfactory level, these candidates demonstrated:

- secure knowledge and understanding of the subject going beyond the mere citing of isolated, fragmentary, irrelevant or 'common sense' points

- some ability to structure answers but with insufficient clarity and some repetition; an ability to express knowledge and understanding in philosophical terminology

- some understanding of the way in which information and philosophical knowledge may be related and embodied in principles and concepts

- some ability to develop ideas and substantiate assertions

- use of knowledge and understanding which is more descriptive than analytical

- some ability to compensate for gaps in knowledge and understanding through rudimentary application or evaluation of that knowledge.

The second group, clearly different in terms of skills and abilities showed an excellent performance. At the excellent level candidates demonstrated:

- conceptual awareness, insight, and detailed knowledge which were evident in the skills of critical thinking and understanding

- a high level of ability to provide answers which were are fully developed, structured in a logical and coherent manner and illustrated with appropriate examples

- a precise use of philosophical which is specific to philosophy; familiarity with philosophical literature

- the ability to analyse and evaluate evidence and to synthesize philosophical knowledge and concepts

- awareness of alternative points of view and the ability to come to reasonable, albeit tentative, conclusions; consistent evidence of critical reflective and personal thinking

- a high level of proficiency in analysing and evaluating information and philosophical issues.

At HL, some schools gave evidence that their course was focused on some main topics, since all candidates chose the questions from two or three optional themes. In all these cases answers were good at least. Good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill were deployed by these schools. They prepared candidates well, for they could handle examples and counter-examples effectively while addressing the topic head on. Moreover, this session showed a progress in some schools with regards to specific philosophical knowledge. More detail with regard to these general considerations and the recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates can be found in the M09 subject report.

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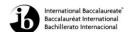
Section A

Since a new format for the answers is required, it is worth mentioning that there was a significant agreement between examiners and teachers that the Core Theme is much better in this format. The transformation into an essay question is a clear improvement from a holistic point of view.

Its structure is still guided by three prompts however, which allows for better and more coherent analysis and narrative, while maintaining the benefits and guidance of the separated prompts.

Core Theme: What is a human being?

Question 1 Stimulus material, passage: E. Fromm, *The anatomy of human destruction*

About three out of four candidates chose this question. Answers presented different approaches and were of diverse quality too, ranging from excellent to poor. Candidates who did well on this question reflected on how humans make sense of their own existence.

Existentialism, particularly in its Sartrean version, proved to be an effective one of the two approaches required for exploration; nihilism and Nietzschean views were adequate tools to explore the question too from the point of view of the creation or absence of possible meaning to existence. The debate between freewill and determinism was well developed in most cases with relation to the specific question. Occasionally candidates contrasted existentialism with Christianity on the issue of freedom. Because of omniscience as characteristic of God, some candidates describe Christianity as being a deterministic account as if destiny is set by God.

The idea of free-will seems ignored or downplayed by these candidates. A small number of answers took the question as if it were simply the core theme itself: what is a human being?

**Question 2 Stimulus material: Image of Tweedledum and Tweedledee (L. Carrol,
Trough the looking glass)**

Candidates who did well on this question considered monism and dualism in a relevant way, explored the nature of identity and characterized humans as being unique and separate individuals. Some answers, satisfactory in general took a route orientated by issues such as: political manipulation, conformity, mass society, and genetic engineering. A couple of answers analyzed intersubjectivity.

Some main issues discussed were: how far is the body a defining feature of the person?; the role of genetics and genetic engineering in the creation of humans; how far does naming make a difference to identity and even create an identity?; is the uniqueness of the individual a defining factor of humans?; the possible relation between being the same and thinking the same. Some answers took the question as if it were simply the core theme itself: what is a human being?
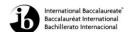
Section B

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology

Question 3

The question invited an evaluation of the differences and similarities that might exist between these philosophical perspectives as sources of knowledge. A reasonably satisfactory job was done by many of the candidates. In general candidates seemed to feel confident with the question. The better answers were clearly relevant and even proposed the notion of synthetic a priori as a way of reconciling both claims.

Question 4

A group of answers fought with the question trying to accommodate it to learned information. This shows a problem with the approach to learning, since it should be more orientated towards the development of skills which make possible flexible adaptation to the issue at hand presented by the question than towards the repetition of fixed segments of knowledge. The better answers were able to analyze skepticism as a position regarding knowledge. The weaker answers had only a general idea of the term in a common sense use.

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics

Question 5

This question elicited some interesting responses from candidates who took the view that Emotivism represented a normative approach to ethics that required emotional engagement; the better example of using emotions in coming to normative conclusions would be Virtue Ethics, since Emotivism is a meta-ethical critique of language (involving a sense of aiming to influence - but not to make an actual ethical judgment). For some candidates this question was difficult.

Question 6

This question elicited a significant number of answers, but only in general terms. Many candidates mainly considered this question as an opportunity to present general views on ethics. Only the better answers tackled the specific issues involved in the question. Many answers were descriptive.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

Question 7

Only two answers to this question, one gave a descriptive account of the issue, while the other was well focused and presented a good analysis of religious belief.

Question 8

No answers to this question.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

Question 9

Quite a popular question though with very diverse results. A group of answers showed no specific preparation to tackle this question. On the other hand, a significant number of answers were very good or excellent. They displayed specific knowledge and by means of historical examples were able to evaluate the issue, and to evaluate the possible reach of art. This was a question where examples really played a key role.

Question 10

A reasonable satisfactory job was done by the few candidates who attempted it.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

Question 11

This was a very popular question with some good responses. Answers explored the emergence and continuing existence and authority of the state, and the historical development of social contract theories. They showed good knowledge of Locke's, Hobbes's, and Rousseau's theories. Very good answers discussed issues such as ways in which the will of the people can be expressed (*e.g.* representative *versus* direct democracy).

Question 12

Different performances with regards to this question: very good answers, satisfactory and even less. The better ones did discuss the concept of human rights. Some of them explored the concept of natural rights and their relation to the human condition.

Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives

Question 13

No candidates chose to answer this question.

Question 14

No candidates chose to answer this question.

Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues

Question 15

No relevant answers to this question.

Question 16

No relevant answers to this question.

Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures

Question 17

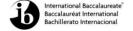No candidates chose to answer this question.

Question 18

No candidates chose to answer this question.

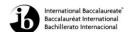# Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Since the new syllabus continues and deepens the approach of the previous one, and it is strongly orientated towards the development of skills synthesized under the expression 'doing philosophy', the main lines of guidance remain very much the same.

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

- Candidates have to pay particular attention to, and carefully follow, the initial bullet points displayed at the beginning of the exam to show them what they are expected to do; they should:

    - present an argument in an organized way

    - use clear, precise and appropriate language

    - identify any assumptions in the question

    - develop a clear and focused argument

- - identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response

    - identify counter-arguments to their response, and address them if possible

    - provide relevant supporting material illustrations and/or examples where appropriate

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

- During the course these ideas should be understood and exercised by means of producing arguments. Candidates are expected to construct an argument - the more candidates can practice this, the better.

- Learn to be clearly focused on the question. Candidates need to be made aware that the beginning of an essay in philosophy must examine the precise nature of the question being asked, and which terms need careful definition. They must also be aware that a plan or strategy for tackling the problem should also appear near the beginning, so that the reader can follow the argument as it unfolds. Therefore, more work on using the introduction as an outline of the proposed approach to the problem would be very useful.

- Structure: few candidates have a very clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and know exactly where they are going and how each point contributes to the answer. Perhaps it would be good if teachers trained them in these analytical essay-writing skills.

- Questions posed in philosophy in general, and in Paper 1 in particular, rarely have one simple answer; different sides might be taken into account, with counter arguments being presented, as appropriate, to demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives on an issue.

- Candidates need to ensure that their answers pertain to the question being asked, rather than being a recitation of everything that the candidate knows about that topic, relevant or not. Whenever reference is made to philosophers and their ideas, it is needed to show exactly how those ideas are relevant to the question posed. What is required is the ability to show how that information helps answer the questions asked.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

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

General comments

Only 1 school completed the official G2 document for the HL Paper 2 component. The same school completed the document for the SL Paper 2 component. This level of response is extremely disappointing as the G2 document constitutes an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the HL and SL Paper 2 examination scripts can be evaluated critically from the perspective of the teacher.

In addition, the information supplied in the G2 document can help improve the quality of future examination scripts in several ways (*e.g.* the nature of the questions set, clarity of wording, presentation of the paper, syllabus coverage). Lastly, the G2 document constitutes a crucially important document at the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the setting of the final grade boundaries.

Schools and/or the IB Coordinator ought to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme. The G2 document is always available online on the Philosophy OCC site. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by a school's IB co-ordinator.

The one teacher who responded to the questions asked in the official G2 document indicated that, in comparison to last year's examination session, the November 2009 HL and SL Paper 2 examination papers were of a similar standard. This teacher judged the syllabus coverage, clarity of wording and presentation of the 2 examination papers to be good and the level of difficulty of the HL and SL papers to be appropriate. The detailed comments regarding specific aspects of the HL and SL papers presented by the teacher responding were noted and taken into account during the proceedings of the November Grade Award Meeting.

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

With regard to the performance of candidates in the November 2009 session, there was satisfactory evidence that the selected prescribed text had been read, studied under the direction of the teacher, and appropriately analysed in a classroom situation.

Hence, all examination responses were situated comfortably within the scope of the various achievement levels of the official assessment criteria. However, and the following points must be taken most seriously, the evidence provided by the examination scripts once again, and unfortunately, also suggests that a number of teachers are still choosing to ignore the unambiguous statement of the Subject Guide which indicates that a teacher should select for formal study *only one* prescribed text whether the course is taught at HL or SL. The phenomenon of studying more than one text has been a recurring problem over the years. The study of a single prescribed text facilitates an in-depth, detailed, focused and comprehensive analysis of the text as required by the Subject Guide, the examination rubric and the assessment criteria. Failure to take seriously the observations regarding the problems the study of multiple texts will create in the future, just as it has in the past and as it has in this examination session, a situation which is counter-productive and certainly not in the spirit of the overall philosophy programme as it is currently formulated.

In general, while acknowledging varying levels of performance in terms of the achievement levels of the assessment criteria, most candidates were able to perform successfully in this component of the programme. Particular and specific difficulties and/or problems with regard to performance in terms of the various assessment criteria will be discussed later in this report. However, it is useful to highlight here the most notable difficulties that emerged in this year's examination session. Amongst these were the failures to:

- read the question carefully and completely

- appreciate the precise focus and the potential scope of the examination question

- understand and address the precise command terms of the question (*e.g.* Critically evaluate, explain and discuss, to what extent, discuss and critically evaluate)

- engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question and its implications

- offer personal reflections and demonstrate personal engagement with the text and the question

- incorporate into the response relevant supporting examples and illustrations

- identify and briefly explore relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions

- distinguish between a simple exposition or description of the arguments of a text from a critical evaluation, examination and discussion of those arguments

- offer more than a simple descriptive outline of the main points of a particular author's overall philosophical perspective rather than develop an argument incorporating those aspects of a particular author's general philosophical perspective relevant to the content of the prescribed text and the demands of the question

- develop conclusions that include relevant evaluative and critical comments and observations.

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

In general terms, candidates demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of familiarity with content of the variously chosen prescribed texts. This was true not only in terms of the knowledge of the text, but also in terms of the use of the language and idiom of the selected texts and of their authors, and in terms of knowledge of the arguments developed by the various authors of the texts. Therefore, when judged from the point of view of an understanding of key terms, major textual issues, and an appreciation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the arguments developed by the various authors, candidates generally performed with a satisfactory degree of success. Stronger candidates gave evidence of a certain level of expertise and sophistication in the areas noted above.

In more specific terms, only the strongest candidates began their responses with useful introductory paragraphs situating the argument in the general context of the prescribed text as a whole. This is an important factor in the development of a coherent, focused and convincing textually based argument. Again, the stronger candidates were able to proceed to an analysis of the portions of the selected text which were, in fact, relevant to the question set, incorporate useful illustrations and examples, acknowledge relevant counter positions and counter arguments, and go on to develop a convincing conclusion – again, relevant to the selected text and the question set. Lastly, some of the stronger candidates displayed a knowledge of the perspectives gleaned from secondary source material regarding the academic interpretation of a text. This information was particularly useful in the development of the critical analysis of relevant information drawn from the text studied. These candidates were also able to include in their responses convincing and textually relevant concluding paragraphs.

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

Question 1 Bhagavad Gita

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those that did were able to develop an adequate treatment of the question broadly based upon the arguments presented in the text itself. However, answers did not enter effectively into a critical evaluation (the actual demand of the question) of the claim that the Bhagavad Gita provides answers to the questions of the meaning of life and tended to present descriptively generalities concerning the philosophical views found in some sections of the text.
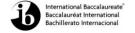
Question 2 Bhagavad Gita

No candidates chose to answer this question.

Question 3 Confucius: The Analects

No candidates chose to answer this question

Question 4 Confucius: The Analects

No candidates chose to answer this question

Question 5 Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

This question received a very limited response from candidates. Those that did choose this question presented a satisfactory explanation and discussion of the importance of knowing when to act and when not to act. The responses demonstrated a sound knowledge of the text and a good ability to quote and/or paraphrase portions of the text relevant to the question. Candidates were also able to formulate contemporary applications of the *wu-wei* principle in the political and ethical realms. Responses were weaker in terms of a critical analysis of the relevant material and an evaluation of the overall arguments of the text.

Question 6 Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

This question received a very limited response from candidates. Answers were somewhat vague and general offering a description of some of the broad characteristics of the *Tao* rather than indicating to what extent it is possible to have knoweldge of the *Tao*. Responses were not able to enter into a critical analysis of the relevant textual information, nor were candidates able to incorporate a satisfactory personal response to the arguments of the text.

Question 7 Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX

Once again, as has been the case in several past examination sessions, the Plato question was one of the most popular choices amongst candidates. Candidates generally chose to approach this question by means of a general description of Plato's epistemology as presented in the text. While it was encouraging to note that candidates were able to present a clearly organised, coherent and complete description of the main points of his epistemology, not all candidates addressed specifically what the question asked both in terms of relevant information and in terms of the command terms 'Discuss and critically evaluate'.

Several of the answers entered into precise, lengthy and extremely detailed descriptive accounts, for example, of the analogy of the cave, the divided line or the simile of the sun without any significant reference to the demands of the question. Others simply acknowledged without analysis or evaluation that it was indeed the case that 'the power to approach Beauty and behold it as itself is rare indeed'. The more successful candidates developed responses that not only outlined Plato's epistemology but also went on to note, explain and critically evaluate his view that the power to know the forms in themselves was not only difficult, but rare, providing reasons to justify the argument.

Question 8 Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX

This question on Plato's text was the most popular choice amongst candidates. Almost all candidates were quite successful in developing a response to the question, outlining the various forms of government – from the best to the worst – and the corresponding personality types associated with each form.

However, not all candidates were able to enter into the critical evaluation of the statement cited in the question nor were they all able to explore relevant counter-arguments. Positive aspects of several responses included the incorporation of contemporary applications to political situations along with an evaluation of the relevance of Plato's conception of democracy vis-à-vis the contemporary expressions of democracy.

Question 9 René Descartes: Meditations

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. Almost all candidates were able to address the question directly and assembled arguments which incorporated relevant information drawn from the text. Many responses presented a critical analysis of the relevant material and went on to evaluatively assess the success of Descartes's position. Other responses remained somewhat descriptive in their approach and failed to demonstrate a textually informed personal response.

Question 10 René Descartes: Meditations

This question was also a very popular choice amongst candidates. Most candidates approached the question by outlining the various steps of Descartes's argument for the existence of *res cogitans* as an independently existing substance. The weakness of many of these arguments was making the simple assumption that this conclusion fully accounted for the independent existence of *res extensa* and by inclusion, the physical body. Another notable weakness of many responses was the absence of a personal response to Descartes's position. Lastly, not all candidates were able to construct an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of Descarte's perspectives.

Question 11 John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

Few candidates chose to answer this question. Those that did demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the text and were generally able to descriptively outline Locke's arguments with regard to ownership based on the principle of the investment of one's labour. However, very few of the candidates answering this question were able to engage in the critical evaluation demanded by the question, nor were they able to offer a personal response to Locke's arguments.

Question 12 John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

Few candidates chose to answer this question. While all those who did were able to explain and discuss Locke's view of the social contract, not all focused adequately on the role of consent in the social contract. Hence, answers only partially addressed the demands of the question. In addition, few candidates were able to offer a critical analysis of the relevant material nor were they able to incorporate an evaluation of Locke's overall perspective.

Question 13 John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

This question received very limited response. Those candidates who chose to answer this question were only able to offer descriptive, summative overviews of some of the general perspectives Mill presented in the text. Moreover, the arguments often lacked sufficient organisation for them to develop a convincing treatment of the question.

Question 14 John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

Candidates opting for this question were generally quite successful in developing an argument based on relevant textual information. Mill's views of the status of the individual, minorities, the majority and those holding political power were addressed. The general weakness of responses was found in the absence of the critical evaluation asked for by the question. However, most responses did include a personal response to Mill's views with some contemporary applications to current political situations in the world.

Question 15 Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

This question received a limited response. Answers were successful in outlining Nietzche's notion of the ascetic ideal. However, not all candidates focused precisely on Nietzsche's estimation of how and why science is a form of the ascetic ideal. Additionally, few candidates developed the critical evaluation asked for by the question and/or incorporated some level of personal response to Nietzsche's argument.

Question 16 Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Few candidates answered this question. Those candidates that did approached the question by outlining the main points of the differences between the master and slave personality types along with a description of the slave revolt in morality. While accurate in these descriptions, this material was only partially relevant to answering precisely the question set. Hence, lacking a satisfactory exploration of Nietzsche's views on justice and how it functions within the lives of the masters and slaves, answers tended to fall short of the demands of the question. Moreover, there was a notable absence of critical analysis and evaluation of material assembled in the responses.

Question 17 Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

This question was a fairly popular choice amongst candidates. Responses demonstrated sound knowledge of the relevant portions of the text, an ability to use correctly the language and idiom of the text, and a familiarity with the author's arguments. Responses maintained satisfactory focus on the statement cited in the question and thus, were generally successful in addressing the demands of the question.
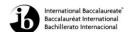
The only notable weaknesses in some of the responses was the partial, and in some cases, complete absence of the critical evaluation asked for by the question and/or the failure to offer some degree of personal response or engagement with the arguments of the text.

Question 18 Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

This question received a fair number of responses. Similar to the candidates responding to question 17 (the first of the options on this text), candidates responding to this question demonstrated sound knowledge of the relevant portions of the text, an ability to use correctly the language and idiom of the text, and a familiarity with the author's arguments. Responses maintained satisfactory focus on the statement cited in the question and thus, were generally successful in addressing the demands of the question. Once again, a surprisingly large number of candidates responding to this question experienced some difficulties developing the critical evaluation asked for by the question.

Question 19 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

A somewhat limited number of candidates chose to answer this question. Responses tended to offer general summaries of several of Arendt's key ideas expressed in the text, made broad reference to the importance of action in the political sphere and highlighted the significance of Arendt's perspective regarding politics and political action. In these regards, candidates demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the text. However, not many of the candidates responding to this question were able to develop an evaluation of Arendt's views or indicating a personal response to the arguments of the text,

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Question 20 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

No candidates opted for this question.

Question 21 Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Authenticity

This question was not chosen by candidates.

Question 22 Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Authenticity

No candidates chose this question.

Question 23 Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

This question received a very limited response by candidates. Answers tended to outline, in a descriptive fashion the three sicknesses which characterise modern society in Taylor's estimation, and the need for active engagement on the personal and social level. Hence, in terms or organisation, knowledge of the central elements of the text, and a familiarity with the language and idiom of the text, answers were all satisfactory. However, they tended to fall short in the area of the critical analysis of the relevant material and the development of an evaluation of Taylor's argument.

Question 24 Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

This question received a very limited response by candidates. Responses tended to fail to engage in a critical evaluation of the claim presented by the question. The responses were quite successful in explaining the importance Taylor attaches to the activity of dialogue in developing an authentic life style

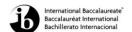## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Several schools that presented candidates for the November 2009 session have shown that their teachers study *one* prescribed text whether at HL or SL as required in the current Subject Guide. However, there is still strong evidence that some teachers continue to study several texts with their students. Some examples of this practice include the following concrete examples: a school with 3 candidates presenting 3 different texts; a school with 4 candidates presenting 4 different texts; a school with 5 candidates presenting 4 different texts. This practice ought to be checked as it is extremely counter-productive. 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.

  This observation has been included in several previous Subject Reports. However, it unfortunately appears that it goes unheeded.

- Candidates must be reminded to read and take into account the following list of bullet points found on page 2 of the HL and SL examination paper that precede the actual examination questions and follows the heading '*In your response you are expected to:*' These bullet points provide clear, precise and helpful suggestions that can help candidates develop successful responses.

- present an argument in an organized way

- use clear, precise and appropriate language, demonstrating that you understand the author's specific terminology

- show an understanding of the specific demands of the question

- give detailed references to the ideas and arguments presented in the text

- provide relevant supporting material and examples where appropriate

- analyse the supporting material

- state a clear, personal response to the position expressed by the author

- Candidates must learn to read carefully, address clearly, and answer completely the examination question. The omission of parts of the question and/or the failure to perform the required task(s) set out in the question can have serious consequences for the assessment of a candidate's essay.

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

- While the discussion, analysis and evaluation of a prescribed text in a classroom situation is absolutely essential, it might be a good idea to provide students with or direct students to at least one dependable 'commentary' on the relevant text. If the purchase of such a text is not possible for budgetary reasons, internet sites can be explored for electronic copies of such texts. Recommendations for websites providing access to electronic versions of philosophical texts can be found on the philosophy OCC site (resources link).

- Students should be encouraged to use 'chat lines' and 'discussion forums' provided by some of the reputable and acknowledged philosophy internet sites (e. g. www.radicalacademy.com). In this way, students can enter into virtual discussions with other philosophy students and philosophy teachers regarding the texts they are examining.

- Teachers ought to help students understand the difference between the simple exposition and/or description of an author's argument and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the elements of that argument.

- Teachers should encourage 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 text in the development of their responses. It might be helpful to introduce them to some of the techniques used: quoting key words or short, key phrases; summarising lengthier central arguments, *etc.*

- Teachers should introduce their students to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information should be used in the development of counter-arguments.

- Students should be taught to develop contemporary applications of the arguments of the prescribed texts studied in class. This is especially the case with those authors that tend to treat of political matters.

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- 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.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

General comments

Paper 3 offers Higher Level candidates the chance to demonstrate several important skills. In fact, the stated purpose of this examination (using, as it does, an unseen text extract to provide the context of candidate responses) is "to allow candidates to demonstrate an understanding of philosophy as an activity by means of a holistic application of the philosophical skills...they have developed throughout the course." Important amongst these skills are the following:

- Critically read, understand and analyse an unseen text written by a philosopher about philosophical activity.

- Identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text and engage in an evaluation of that activity.

- Drawn upon and make reference to the experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole of the philosophy course.

- Develop a personal response to the issues raised in the text.

As this is the first November examination session which offers HL Paper 3, the following Subject Report will attempt to offer critical observations, guidance and suggestions to teachers so that they might reflect on the evidence of the November 2009 session.

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Hopefully, this information will enable teachers to better prepare their students for future examinations and, at the same time, enable them to make the most of the opportunities and challenges afforded by HL Paper 3.

Unfortunately, none of the teachers whose students sat the Paper 3 examination submitted the official G2 document by means of which observations can be formally registered regarding the quality of the examination paper, the difficulty of the various tasks set by the paper, the nature of the unseen text, *etc.* The failure to submit the G2 document is very disappointing as this document constitutes an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the HL and SL Paper 2 examination scripts can be evaluated critically and specifically from the perspective of the teacher. In addition, the information supplied in the G2 document can serve to help improve the quality of future examination scripts. In addition, the G2 document constitutes a crucially important document at the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the setting of the final grade boundaries. Schools and/or the IB Coordinator in these schools ought to encourage more strongly their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme.

The G2 document is always available online on the Philosophy OCC site. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by the school's IB co-ordinator.

The Text Extract

The text extract that appeared in November 2009 HL Paper 3 examinations enabled candidates to reflect on the nature of philosophy, the skills involved in philosophical activity, and the experience of doing philosophy. In the absence of evaluative input via the G2 form, it can only be assumed that the overall quality, content and presentation of the November 2009 HL Paper 3 was satisfactory and appropriate. While there is no correct or incorrect way to respond to the content of the text extract, the more successful responses are those from candidates who identified, made reference to and utilised the issues arising from the extract in the development of their responses and then drew upon all aspects of the course they studied at HL showing how the nature of philosophy as described in the text extract reflected their own experience of doing philosophy in the course. Relevant experiences can include the delivery of philosophy classes (*e.g.* the experience of debate, group discussion or research for assignments) the specific experience of course components (including the Internal Assessment) and perhaps a comparison between the activity of philosophy and that encountered with other subjects in the IB Diploma.

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

Major areas of concern include the following:

- The tendency on the part of the majority of candidates to treat Paper 3 as an invitation to develop a simple, descriptive summary of the main points raised in the unseen text extract

- The failure on the part of several candidates to make specific references to relevant portions of the text itself (key words, short phrases, brief sentences, paraphrases, *etc.*)

- The failure to incorporate a personal response to the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text

- The failure to incorporate or, if incorporated, adequately develop an effective evaluation of the issues raised in the text

- The most obvious weakness was the failure to make clear, specific and relevant references to the personal experience of philosophy encountered in their HL course

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

The major areas in which candidates appeared well prepared include the following:

- Candidates presented clearly organised, coherent responses using appropriate philosophical language

- Candidates were able to remain focused on the arguments of the text and were able to develop their responses following the arguments of the text extract from beginning to end

- Wherever references to the text were made, they were made clearly and concisely

- In most cases candidates were able to identify, at least descriptively, the main ideas, themes and topics raised in the text extract

- Candidates who made references to their own experience of doing philosophy throughout the course did so convincingly and effectively. This skill constitutes one of the central expectations of Paper 3 and all candidates should be encouraged to use their analysis of the text extract as a basis for discussing their own reflections of what doing philosophy actually involves

- Better candidates were able to offer critical counter-arguments and/or counter-positions to some of the points made in the text extract.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

Candidates were generally successful in the aspects of the response covered by this criterion. Responses were clearly organised, the language was appropriate to philosophy, the responses were easy to follow and the answers tended to be, in most cases, adequately focused and sustained. The various achievement levels of this assessment criterion operated clearly and consistently in distinguishing the best from the mediocre responses.

Criterion B: Exploration

Criterion B proved to be one of the more problematic areas for candidates. The evidence of the examination scripts confirms that most candidates were not sufficiently prepared (or in some cases not at all prepared) to draw on their experience of the whole course or to make relevant references to their own experience of doing philosophy as a result of following the course. In a more positive light, most candidates were able to identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text. Surprisingly, many candidates were unable to incorporate relevant supporting examples and/or illustrations into their responses.

It is worthwhile noting that a rich source of these examples and illustrations is constituted by their own personal experience of following the philosophy course.

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

The best responses demonstrated a detailed, relevant and in-depth understanding of the philosophical activity discussed in the text extract. Moreover, the better candidates were able to develop 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 a strategic development of a convincing and compelling response. The weaker responses tended to remain descriptive, summarising what was said in the text extract and thus lacked personal understanding demanded by this criteria.

Criterion D: Evaluation and personal response

This criterion assesses a candidate's ability to engage personally with the text. The best responses were not generalised and/or over-simplified statements of broad opinion, but contained considered and textually-justified comments on how the extract enabled them to reflect on philosophical activity and their experience of the HL course. Not all candidates were able to respond optimally to the expectation of this criterion in terms of the development of an evaluation of the philosophical activity raised in the text extract

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Carefully read and reflect upon the portions of the current Subject Guide that outline the nature of this course component (see pages 27-28, 49-52)

- Carefully read and reflect upon the part of the Teacher Support Material (TSM) devoted to HL Paper 3

- Consult the relevant discussion threads on the Philosophy OCC devoted to various aspects of Paper 3 and the resource links that contain materials relevant for Paper 3 preparation

- Integrate 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

- Develop a collection of sample text extracts of varying lengths that could be used in class to practice the skills that are required in the examination situation

- Make certain that 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

- 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

- 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

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