

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

There still were some problems of format and administration in some samples, *i.e.* bibliographies absent, no word count, nor connection to the syllabus. The absence of either a word-count or connection to syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the candidate from receiving a high mark in Criterion A, but the absence of references is another matter. It does compromise the integrity of the work.

Candidates, generally, are producing very suitable and assessable pieces of work. The 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 increased word limit has made the assessment by teachers, and the moderation of these marks, clearer. 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.

The 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.

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 word limit meant the good samples developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly state the tenets of a position and then conclude. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples always had a degree of a personal reflection.

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.

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, 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 marking 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 discuss

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 (HL 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 centre 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 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

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

Similarly to previous years, there was no area of the program that stood out as unusually difficult. The main difficulties raised 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 exams where candidates did not know how to write essays: instead they offered a series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection.

- c) Identify any assumptions in the question.

This seems to be a difficult or unusual task for some 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 candidates do not have a grasp of the nature and function of logical argument as support for theoretical conclusion.

When answering Section A (Core Theme) questions, candidates still find it hard to impose a clear structure on their responses which asks for one philosophical issue raised from the source to be approached through two different philosophical approaches.

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 candidates realize that the IB Philosophy course is not primarily a test of knowledge (e.g. of past philosophical positions, arguments and writers). In this course it is critical that candidates should be given the chance to develop their own skills of philosophical analysis and evaluation. 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 centres and candidates were involved in this session, the exams submitted suggest that the possibilities open by the program are explored and developed only to some extent. 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 candidates' 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 programme and its objectives did in general at least reasonably well. Within this general frame, a good preparation was displayed by 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. Some candidates excelled without reaching 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 fully developed, structured in a logical and coherent manner and illustrated with appropriate examples; a precise use of philosophical language 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; and, a high level of proficiency in analysing and evaluating information and philosophical issues.

Some centres gave evidence that their course was focused on some main topics, since all candidates chose the questions between two or three optional themes at HL. In all these cases answers were good at least. Good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill were deployed by these centres. They prepared candidates well, for they could handle examples and counter-examples effectively while addressing the topic directly. Moreover, this session showed a progress in some centres 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 May 2010 Subject Report.

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

Core Theme: What is a human being?

Question 1

The passage encouraged a reflection on some of the central concepts associated with our understanding of the person, the human condition, and our existence in relationship to others and to the world around us on several levels. A third of the candidates chose this question; most of them were able to identify a relevant philosophical issue, and related to the peculiar characteristics of the human being. Reason, freedom and will were oft identified as main distinctive human possibilities. A significant number of answers were able to explore, at least in general terms, two philosophical positions. Analysis and discussion were mostly focused on the mentioned issues and only some answers questioned what a human being's responsibility to the cosmos is.

Question 2

In general answers were able to identify a relevant philosophical issue here too. Answers reflected on the phenomenon that human beings feel challenged by the question of the meaning, direction, or goal of life. Many explored a variety of approaches to the “in between stuff” that might help individuals understand what it means to be a human being. Determinism vs. free-will was a debate oft analyzed in different forms. The opposition between Plato and Nietzsche was also quite often referenced and gave rise to good responses.

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

Two group of answers to this question, only chosen by a small group. A group understood skepticism as a sort of general position towards life, without specific knowledge related content. The smaller group uses Descartes’s position to provide at least a satisfactory analysis.

Question 4

No answers to this question.

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

This was a popular question. A significant part of the answers accepted the terms of the statement without challenging it in any sense. For a group of answers there was quite a bit of confusion between descriptive relativism and normative relativism – just because there are different practices does not mean that there is no single morally correct system. Good answers were able to discuss and critically evaluate ethical/moral relativism. The very good answers analyzed, with purpose and knowledge, the nature of morality and the ways in which different communities establish and develop moral values and codes of conduct.

Question 6

This was another popular question with many doing extremely well. These answers demonstrated a very good and wide knowledge and good construction of arguments They analyzed and evaluated the notion of a human in the context of an assessment of the intended goals and objectives of our actions and choices. In that context they were able to identify central issues such as: notions of a person’s rights (attributed, acquired, achieved, inalienable), hierarchy of goals and objectives (priorities, obligations, circumstances), and the greater good vs. the common good vs. the private, personal good. Weaker answers did have some, at least basic, knowledge on ethical issues and positions, but many answers just exposed them. Some candidates persist in describing Kant’s ethics as aiming towards a utopian future (as opposed to a rational present).

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

There was much discussion about various approaches to the problem of evil; most candidates asked the question about whether the existence of evil disproved God or questioned God's nature - which was a good example of wrestling with the implications of the question.

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

This was a popular question 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. Plato's, Aristotle's, Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's were relevant views, effectively employed to answer the question.

Question 10

Candidates performed reasonably satisfactorily on this question.

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

This was another very popular question with at least satisfactory results. The good answers discussed and critically evaluated the notion of justice. They identified central issues such as: distributive and retributive justice, the right or will of the strong; substantive vs. procedural justice, relations to fairness, the moral and positive law, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.

Question 12

Performances varied for this question. The better answers discussed the specific possibility of a right to revolution. In the weaker answers it would have been good to have seen a more rigorous analysis of the conditions by which some thinkers (especially Locke and Marx) would justify revolution.

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

No answers to this question.

Question 14

No answers to this question.

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

No answers to this question.

Question 16

No philosophically relevant answers to this question

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

There were only a few answers to this question. Only a couple of them demonstrated some minimal specific preparation to tackle this theme. These answers effectively employed Arendt's and Taylor's ideas.

Question 18

No philosophically relevant answers to this question

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

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. Answers are expected to construct an argument - the more candidates can practice this, the better.
- Learn to be clearly focused on the question. Candidates need to be made aware that the beginning of an essay in philosophy must examine the precise nature of the question being asked, and which terms need careful definition.

They must also be aware that a plan or strategy for tackling the problem should also appear near the beginning, so that the reader can follow the argument as it unfolds. Therefore, more work on using the introduction as an outline of the proposed approach to the problem would be very useful.

- 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. 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.
- Make sure the structure for Section A (Core Theme) responses is properly understood by candidates.
- Make sure that counter-examples are dealt with explicitly when answering a question.
- Ensure that candidates do not make unsupported assertions.

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

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

Few centres took advantage of the opportunity of completing the G2 document. Once again, it must be noted that this level of response is very 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 classroom 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 an important tool at the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the establishment of the definitive grade boundaries. Centres and/or the IB Coordinators of the centres ought to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme. The G2 document is always available online on the Philosophy OCC site. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by a centre's IB co-ordinator.

The G2 responses submitted indicated that the syllabus coverage, clarity of wording and presentation of the Paper 2 HL and SL examination papers were deemed to be good and the level of difficulty of the HL and SL papers to be appropriate.

Regarding the overall performance of candidates, there was satisfactory evidence that, in most cases, 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, the evidence provided by the examination scripts indicates the re-emergence of a chronic and serious problem. Despite the indications of previous Subject Reports for HL and SL Paper 2 examination sessions, a number of teachers still choose to ignore the clear and unambiguous indication of the Subject Guide which states that a teacher should select for formal study **only one** prescribed text whether the course is taught at HL or SL.

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 warnings against the study of multiple texts creates a situation which is counter-productive and contrary to the spirit of the Prescribed Text component of the philosophy programme.

While the performance of candidates varied in terms of the achievement levels marked out by the formal 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, some of the more outstanding difficulties could be addressed successfully by assuring that candidates:

- read and observe the bullet-pointed recommendations found at the top of the second page of the examination script. These recommendations are intended to help candidates write their responses as best as possible
- read the examination question carefully and completely
- appreciate the precise focus and the scope of the examination question
- understand and address the precise command terms of the question (e.g. Explain and discuss, To what extent, *etc.*)
- 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 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, general outline of the main points of an author's overall philosophical perspective
- develop a response which incorporates those elements of the text which are relevant to the demands of the question.
- develop conclusions that include relevant evaluative, critical comments and observations

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

A good percentage of the candidates demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of familiarity with content of the variously chosen prescribed texts. Within this range of performance, these candidates exhibited knowledge of the text, use of the appropriate language and idiom of the selected texts and of their authors, and awareness of the arguments developed by the authors of the selected texts. When judged from the point of view of an understanding of key terms, major textual issues, and an appreciation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the arguments developed by the various authors, many candidates were able to perform with a satisfactory degree of success. Stronger candidates gave evidence of a certain level of expertise and sophistication in the areas noted above. Weaker candidates were unable to engage with the text in more than a superficial manner.

In more specific terms, only the strongest candidates began their responses with 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, stronger candidates were able to proceed to an analysis of the portions of the selected text which were, in fact, relevant to the question set, incorporate useful illustrations and examples, acknowledge relevant counter positions and counter arguments, and go on to develop a convincing conclusion. Lastly, some of the stronger candidates displayed knowledge of the perspectives gleaned from secondary source material regarding professional, academic interpretations of a text.

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

Question 1 Bhagavad Gita

No candidates chose to answer this question

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 limited response from candidates. The responses from those that did choose to answer this question ranged from superficial to satisfactory. Responses demonstrated familiarity with the major issues presented in the text relevant to the question and the better candidates were able to cite and/or paraphrase relevant ideas found in the text. Some candidates were able to formulate contemporary applications of the political perspectives of the text. Responses were weaker in terms of a critical analysis of the relevant material and an evaluation of the arguments of the text. The weakest candidates demonstrated a superficial awareness of the arguments of the text and of the author.

Question 6 Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

This question received a limited response from candidates. Answers were generally well organised and focused upon the relevant arguments of the text in relation to the question asked. The better responses were able to identify and explain the relationship of the notion of *sheng ren* to other key ideas of the text. Many of the responses were able to enter into a satisfactory critical analysis of the material presented in the answer and offer satisfactory personal responses to the arguments of the text.

Question 7 Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. Responses were generally quite well presented when measured from the point of view of familiarity with the simile of the divided line. Unfortunately, several candidates spent far too much time describing in detail the various elements of the line without entering into an analysis and evaluation of the information. The best responses dealt concisely with the divided line, demonstrated the relationships this simile has with the relevant elements of the simile of the sun and the analogy of the cave, and then went on to draw out the epistemological implications of the information assembled. Weaker candidates were only able to explain the very fundamental elements of the divided line without entering into a discussion of the information.

Question 8 Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. Responses tended to be textually well-informed with regard to the qualities expected of the philosopher. However, not all candidates were able to critically evaluate why these qualities qualify the philosopher to rule in the state. A major weakness of several responses was a tendency to develop a strictly descriptive account of the text's position on the question of the philosopher without incorporating counter-positions and/or counter-arguments.

Question 9 René Descartes: Meditations

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. A good percentage of the candidates answering this question were able to address the question directly and assemble arguments which incorporated relevant information drawn from the text. The best responses included the clear and precise use of relevant text information along with a convincing incorporation of critical analysis and reflective evaluation. The weaker responses tended to identify the general characteristics of mind and body without exploring the relationship of mind and body in terms of these characteristics. The weakest candidates demonstrated a superficial awareness of the arguments of the text. The absence of a personal response was evident in many of the responses.

Question 10 René Descartes: Meditations

This question was also a very popular choice amongst candidates. The better responses addressed the question and its implications clearly and in a textually informed manner. These responses did, just as the question asked, enter into a critical evaluation of the arguments of the text. However, a noteworthy weakness of several responses was the tendency to offer a basic outline of Descartes' method as described in Meditations 1-3 without dealing critically with that information in light of the question asked. The weaker candidates were unable to critically evaluate the centrality of the notions of 'clear' and 'distinct' as the hallmarks of certain and indubitable knowledge. The absence of personal engagement and/or response was also noted in several responses.

Question 11 John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

Few candidates chose to answer this question. Responses indicated a very general familiarity with the text and its arguments relevant to the question asked. A descriptive outline of some of Locke's key notions regarding family and political society were put forth without focusing on the distinctions and relationships between the two in terms of Locke's position. Notably absent from responses were analysis, evaluation and personal response.

Question 12 John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

No candidates chose to answer this question.

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 presented by Mill regarding the liberty of the individual in the context of the political situation. Responses were unable to deal successfully with the demand of the question to address the extent to which the balance that ought to exist between the liberty of the individual and the expectations of the state.

Question 14 John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

Very few candidates opted for this question. Those that did were able to develop a general description of the relationship between the minority and the majority in a political situation. However, responses were less successful in assessing the role of contrary opinion in a democratic society. Another general weakness of responses was the absence of the critical evaluation asked for by the question.

Question 15 Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

This question received a limited response. Those candidates that chose to answer this question demonstrated a very cursory knowledge of the relevant arguments and terminology of the text and generally only put forth a basic description of bad conscience. Thus, the demands of the question were neither addressed precisely nor fully and there was only a superficial level of critical analysis of the information included in the responses.

Question 16 Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Few candidates answered this question. Those candidates that did approached the question by presenting a general, descriptive outline of the principle aspects of the ascetic ideal. The major weakness of these responses was the failure to explore the meaning of the ascetic ideal, especially in the context of arguments of the third essay of the prescribed text. There was also a notable absence of personal response in answers.

Question 17 Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

This question was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Responses demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the author's position on the topic and a generally correct use of the language and idiom of the text relevant to the question asked. Responses maintained satisfactory focus on the statement cited in the question and were successful in addressing the demands of the question in an adequate manner. The notable weaknesses of 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 very limited number of responses. Candidates responding to this question demonstrated a very basic knowledge of the relevant portions of the text, a limited ability to use correctly the language and idiom of the text, and a cursory familiarity with the author's arguments. Answers tended to be somewhat descriptive summaries of the very general spirit of Russell's view of philosophy.

Question 19 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

A very limited number of candidates chose to answer this question. Responses tended to offer general summaries of only some of Arendt's key ideas expressed in the text, made broad references to the nature and importance of action in the political sphere. Candidates demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of some of the key concepts of the text. Unfortunately, in summarising Arendt's ideas, some candidates lost sight of the precise demands of the question. Candidates responding to this question experienced difficulty in developing a critical evaluation of Arendt's views or in incorporating a personal response to the arguments of the text,

Question 20 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition

Only a few candidates opted for this question. The better candidates addressed the question clearly and effectively, grounding their answers in the arguments presented by the author in the text. The weaker answers tended to offer general summaries of some of the relevant concepts developed by Arendt without paying close attention to the demands of the question. In all cases, not enough attention was paid to developing a critical evaluation of the material incorporated into the responses.

Question 21 Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Authenticity

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those candidates who did answer this question displayed a good knowledge of the text and a reasonably precise use of the language and idiom of the author. The answers focused on the question and developed very good analyses and critical evaluations of the relevant material. There was also present a successful attempt to situate the text in the more general context of existentialist philosophy.

Question 22 Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Authenticity

No candidates chose to answer this question.

Question 23 Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

No candidates chose to answer this question.

Question 24 Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

This question received a limited response by candidates. However, responses tended to focus precisely on the question and incorporate relevant concepts and arguments from the text. In all cases, the level of analysis and evaluation was good. Supporting examples and the identification of counter-arguments were present in the better responses. Responses also attempted to incorporate a degree of personal response.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Several centres that presented candidates for the November 2010 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 candidates. In the worst cases, the number of texts studied was equal to the number of candidates presenting scripts for assessment. 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 all previous Subject Reports for the current Philosophy programme. However, it unfortunately appears that it continues to go unheeded, a phenomenon that impacts negatively on the performance of some candidates in the course component.
- Candidates must be reminded to read and take into account the list of bullet points found on page 2 of the HL and SL examination paper that precede the actual examination questions and follows the heading '*In your response you are expected to:*' These bullet points provide clear, precise and helpful suggestions that can help candidates develop successful responses.
- 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 candidates with or direct candidates 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).

- Candidates 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, candidates can enter into virtual discussions with other philosophy candidates and philosophy teachers regarding the texts they are examining.
- Teachers ought to help candidates understand the difference between the simple exposition and/or description of an author's argument and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the elements of that argument.
- Teachers should encourage candidates to develop concise introductory and concluding paragraphs that help set the stage for the development of the response and assist in bringing the essay to a successful and convincing conclusion.
- Teachers should help candidates understand the importance of making direct and indirect references to the text in the development of their responses. It might be helpful to introduce them to some of the techniques used: quoting key words or short, key phrases; summarising lengthier central arguments, and so on.
- Teachers should introduce their candidates to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information should be used in the development of counter-arguments.
- Candidates should be taught to develop contemporary applications of the arguments of the prescribed texts studied in class. This is especially the case with those authors that tend to treat of political matters.
- Teachers should use more effectively the IB's online resources (OCC) for assistance and sharing of information regarding the prescribed texts studied in class. Whenever appropriate, this information should be shared with candidates.
- Teachers should provide their candidates with past Paper 2 examination questions. In this way, candidates will become familiarised with the style and format of typical Paper 2 examination questions appropriate to the prescribed text(s) studied in class. Similarly, teachers might want to collect sample scripts from their own candidates that can be made anonymous and used in class to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in actual candidate responses.
- Teachers ought to read carefully the annual Subject Reports that are published on the OCC philosophy site. The information supplied in these reports offer useful observations and suggestions for the preparation of candidates for the various components 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 provides Higher Level candidates the chance to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish an HL candidate from his or her SL counterpart. 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.” In this context, the following skills should be highlighted:

- 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
- Draw 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

The experience of Paper 3 is still quite new to the Philosophy programme. Therefore, the information, comments and suggestions incorporated into the Subject Report should serve as a useful resource for teachers presenting this component to their HL candidates. Hopefully, this information will enable teachers to better prepare their candidates for future examinations and, at the same time, enable them to make the most of the opportunities, challenges and innovations afforded by HL Paper 3.

The Text Extract

The text extract that appeared in the November 2010 HL Paper 3 examination enabled candidates to reflect on the nature of philosophy, the skills involved in philosophical activity, and the experience of doing philosophy. While there is no correct or incorrect way to respond to the content of the text extract, the more successful responses are those of 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. The more obvious 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. However, it must not be overlooked that candidates can make reference to how they use the skills of philosophical activity in their daily lives as well (e.g. reading the daily newspaper, discussing issues at home or with their friends

in a social setting). It is important to note that candidates ought to attempt to engage personally with the text and its arguments.

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

Major areas of concern include the following:

- The failure to take into account the bullet points found at the top of page two under the heading *In your response you are expected to*: These points are intended to help candidates optimise their performance in this examination paper
- The failure to address **each** of the tasks identified in the four bullet points that constitute the directions for writing the response. These bullet points follow the indication *In your response include*:
- 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 exam rubric asks only for a concise description of the nature of philosophical activity as it is raised in the text.
- The failure on the part of several candidates to make specific references in their responses to relevant portions of the text itself (key words, short phrases, brief sentences, paraphrases, *etc.*) and to incorporate these references into a focused and developed response to the text
- 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 absence of an indication of how the candidates themselves understand the nature of philosophical activity

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

The major areas in which many (but not all) candidates appeared well prepared include the following:

- The presentation of clearly organised, coherent responses using appropriate philosophical language
- The ability to remain focused on the arguments of the text and to develop their responses following the arguments of the text extract from beginning to end
- The incorporation of clear and concise references to the text
- The ability to identify, at least descriptively, 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. 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
- The ability to identify and incorporate relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions to points made and arguments found in the text extract

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

A very respectable percentage of the 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 determining the best from the mediocre responses. Weaker candidates failed to develop coherent responses based upon some minimal degree of planning.

Criterion B: Exploration

Criterion B continues to be one of the more problematic areas for candidates. A disappointingly small number of candidates were able to make references to their own experience of doing philosophy throughout the course.

Those that did, did so in a clear and convincing manner. However, the overwhelming evidence of the examination scripts confirms again that most candidates are not familiar with this requirement of the examination and/or 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. The negative aspect of this point is that many candidates were unable to offer much more than an identification of points raised in the text itself. 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. 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 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 criterion.

Criterion D: Evaluation and personal response

This criterion assesses a candidate's ability to engage personally with the text. The best responses avoided making 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. The best response offered a focused and convincing critical evaluation of the main arguments of the text. Unfortunately, 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

- Introduce candidates early on in the course to the format and rubric of the Paper 3 examination script.
- Identify, explain and practice the various skills that will be required in the examination situation.
- 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.