

Markscheme

May 2019

Philosophy

Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

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How to use the Diploma Programme Philosophy markscheme

The assessment markbands constitute the formal tool for marking examination scripts, and in these assessment markbands examiners can see the skills being assessed in the examinations. The markschemes are designed to assist examiners in possible routes taken by candidates in terms of the content of their answers when demonstrating their skills of doing philosophy through their responses. The points listed are not compulsory points, and not necessarily the best possible points. They are a framework to help examiners contextualize the requirements of the question, and to facilitate the application of marks according to the assessment markbands listed on page 7 for the core theme and page 10 for the optional themes.

It is important that examiners understand that the main idea of the course is to promote *doing* philosophy, and this involves activity and engagement throughout a two-year programme, as opposed to emphasizing the chance to display knowledge in a terminal set of examination papers. Even in the examinations, responses should not be assessed on how much candidates *know* as much as how they are able to use their knowledge in support of an argument, using the skills referred to in the various assessment markbands published in the subject guide, reflecting an engagement with philosophical activity throughout the course. As a tool intended to help examiners in assessing responses, the following points should be kept in mind when using a markscheme:

- The Diploma Programme Philosophy course is designed to encourage the skills of *doing* philosophy in the candidates. These skills can be accessed through reading the assessment markbands in the subject guide
- The markscheme does not intend to outline a model/correct answer
- The markscheme has an introductory paragraph which contextualizes the emphasis of the question being asked
- The bullet points below the paragraph are suggested possible points of development that should *not* be considered a prescriptive list but rather an indicative list where they might appear in the answer
- If there are names of philosophers and references to their work incorporated into the markscheme, this should help to give context for the examiners and does *not* reflect a requirement that such philosophers and references should appear in an answer: They are possible lines of development.
- Candidates can legitimately select from a wide range of ideas, arguments and concepts in service of the question they are answering, and it is possible that candidates will use material effectively that is *not* mentioned in the markscheme
- Examiners should be aware of the command terms for Philosophy as published on page 54 of the Philosophy subject guide when assessing responses
- In Paper 1, examiners must be aware that a variety of types of answers and approaches, as well as a freedom to choose a variety of themes, is expected. Thus, examiners should not penalize different styles of answers or different selections of content when candidates develop their response to the questions. The markscheme should not imply that a uniform response is expected
- In markschemes for the core theme questions in Paper 1 (section A) the bullet points suggest possible routes of response to the stimulus, but it is critical for examiners to understand that the selection of the philosophical issue raised by the stimulus, is *entirely at the choice of the candidate* so it is possible for material to gain credit from the examiner even if none of the material features in the markscheme.

Note to examiners

Candidates at both Higher Level and Standard Level answer **one** question on the core theme (Section A). Candidates at Higher Level answer **two** questions on the optional themes (Section B), each based on a different optional theme.

Candidates at Standard Level answer **one** question on the optional themes (Section B).

Paper 1 Section A markbands

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable essay structure there is minimal focus on the task. • The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material is implied but not explicitly identified. There is minimal or no explanation of how the issue relates to the stimulus material or links to the question of what it is to be human. • There is little relevant knowledge demonstrated, and the explanation is superficial. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately. • The essay is descriptive and lacking in analysis.
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some attempt to follow a structured approach although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey. • The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material is implied but not explicitly identified. There is some limited explanation of how the issue relates to the stimulus material or links to the question of what it is to be human. • Knowledge is demonstrated but lacks accuracy and relevance, and there is a basic explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • There is some limited analysis but the response is more descriptive than analytical. There is little discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Few of the main points are justified.
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear attempt to structure the response, although there may be some repetition or a lack of clarity in places. • The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material is explicitly identified. There is a basic explanation of how the issue relates to the stimulus material and to the question of what it is to be human. • Knowledge is mostly accurate and relevant, and there is a satisfactory explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • The response contains analysis, but this analysis lacks development. There is some discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Many of the main points are justified.
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is structured and generally organised, and can be easily followed. • The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material is explicitly identified. There is good justification of how the issue relates to the stimulus material and to the question of what it is to be human. • The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge. There is a good explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately. • The response contains critical analysis. There is discussion and some assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view. Most of the main points are justified.
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is well structured, focused and effectively organised. • The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material is explicitly identified. There is a well-developed justification of how the issue relates to the stimulus material and to the question of what it is to be human. • The response contains relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge. There is a well-developed explanation of the issue. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response. • The response contains well developed critical analysis. There is discussion and assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view. All or nearly all of the main points are justified. The response argues from a consistently held position about the issue.

Section A

Core theme: Being human

1. Passage on the human condition

With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, discuss a philosophical issue related to the question of what it means to be human. [25]

The following paragraphs provide only a framework to help examiners in their assessment of responses to this question. Examiners should be responsive to a variety of philosophical perspectives and approaches. Examiners should be aware that candidates might respond to this passage in a variety of ways including ones not mentioned in the summary below.

This question invites candidates to identify and discuss philosophical issues and/or concepts associated with the human condition or human nature. The passage implies that pain and toil are not just necessary elements in life, but essential for making meaning and providing a purpose in life.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The similarities between Arendt’s view and religious ones as to the meaning and purpose of the human condition
- When does suffering become intolerable and hence, to be actively avoided? Does this somehow diminish the “quality” of my life?
- Arendt’s suggestion that “for mortals, the ‘easy life of the gods’ would be a lifeless life”
- The role of striving in philosophical discourse: Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Nussbaum all comment that results and success are not necessarily the most important aspects of a good life, but the attempts in finding and making one
- The role of suffering and toil as an indicator of a life of meaning and integrity, *eg* Nietzsche, Augustine, Irenaeus, Kierkegaard, Camus
- Other considerations such as: altruism, love, authenticity, material success
- What role does happiness have as part of the human condition?
- Does suffering make one a better person, or just miserable?
- How might suffering and toil enhance one’s life? Is it the case that when they cease, life can be appreciated?
- Should we actively pursue difficulties and burdens to enhance the quality of our lives?
- Modern life and the attempt to avoid physical and psychological pain
- Social media and the “sharing” of pain and success and markers of identity and a fulfilled life
- The role of suffering in non-western traditions: *eg* as a consequence of desire (Buddhism); *Karma* (Hinduism).

2. Slide of discussion points from conference on human identity

With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, discuss a philosophical issue related to the question of what it means to be human. [25]

The following paragraphs provide only a framework to help examiners in their assessment of responses to this question. Examiners should be responsive to a variety of philosophical perspectives and approaches. Examiners should be aware that candidates might respond to this passage in a variety of ways including ones not mentioned in the summary below.

This question requires candidates to identify and discuss philosophical issues and/or concepts of human identity, or the self. The slide could lead to the inference that our identity is defined by material considerations either exclusively, or above all other considerations such as language, religion, nationality, gender, historical context, sexuality, *etc.*

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Is the concept of personal identity the same as the concept of the self?
- What accounts of the mind are possible under a purely materialist concept of personal identity?
- Dualism, monism, idealism, phenomenological explanations of mind and identity
- What concepts of identity are possible under a non-materialist view of the mind?
- How do theories of human experience and behaviour, *eg* behaviourism, or functionalism, support or contradict materialist views of personal identity?
- What makes a human person unique if our biology is practically the same?
- How does my biology define my personal identity? Which biological fact is the most important: my racial DNA profile, my blood type?
- If our biology is our identity, then is our future “determined” like any other biological system? If so, is our sense of personal freedom merely an illusion?
- Non-western accounts of the person and the concept of personal identity and authenticity
- The roles of gender, language, religion, function *etc* in defining personal identity in comparison to the biological
- Can the material definition of identity be equally applied to non-human identities? If so, does this entitle them to equal moral consideration?
- The view that gender, sexuality, culture, language, *etc* can be fluid and a human construction, so identity is also fluid
- Is the concept of identity a concept not available to empirical investigation?
- What are the foundations for our moral values and actions if my identity is biologically determined: should it be based on the laws of nature, and ultimately, a matter of self-interest and survival?

Paper 1 Section B markbands

Mark	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable essay structure there is minimal focus on the task. The response lacks coherence and is often unclear. • The student demonstrates little relevant knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately. • The essay is mostly descriptive. There is no discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Few of the main points are justified.
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some attempt to follow a structured approach although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey. • The student demonstrates knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme, but this knowledge lacks accuracy and relevance. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • There is limited analysis but the response is more descriptive than analytical. There is little discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Some of the main points are justified.
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear attempt to structure the response although there may be some repetition or a lack of clarity in places. • Knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme is mostly accurate and relevant. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • The response contains analysis, but this analysis lacks development. There is some discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Many of the main points are justified.
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is structured and generally organised, and can be easily followed. • The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme. Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately. • The response contains critical analysis. There is discussion and some assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view. Most of the main points are justified.
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is well structured, focused and effectively organised. • The response contains relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response. • The response contains well-developed critical analysis. There is discussion and assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view. All or nearly all of the main points are justified. The response argues from a consistently held position about the issue.

Section B

Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

3. Explain and discuss the role of emotions in art.

[25] The question asks for an explanation and discussion of the role of emotions in art. It opens a broad spectrum for consideration, since it might be approached in relation to the main topics presented in the programme: the nature of art, the artist and the artistic process, aesthetic experience and judgment. Plato and Aristotle provide a source of discussion about the artistic process and emotions. Plato taught that the artists engaged our emotions, a lower part of our soul, and thereby demoted reason from its rightful place, weakening its capacity for knowledge and virtue. Aristotle then came to the defence of artists, arguing, for example, that poets know what is possible, in particular, how different characters might react to certain circumstances. Poets thus show a deep knowledge of human emotions. Moreover, Aristotle claimed that poetry had a cathartic effect, which allows exercising reason in our daily lives. Art is thus something useful with a view to virtue, purifying the irrational part of the soul as well as providing us with a sharper insight into human nature. Further, one might recall Plato’s analysis via the painting example of beauty in *Republic*. Here, Plato is using visual art rather than poetry and he cuts off any emotional or perception appreciation from the true knowledge of Beauty in the painting.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- What kind or type of emotions are had in response to works of art?
- It has been suggested that in our appreciation of art works, the emotions function cognitively. This is a development of the idea of catharsis of pity and fear; nowadays it is usually thought to imply that the evocation of pity and fear is an aid to understanding, not just a fortuitous accompaniment of the tragedy
- “The paradox of fiction”: how can we intelligibly have emotions for fictional persons or situations, given that we do not believe in their existence?
- In the literary case our emotions may also help us to understand not just the works of art themselves but also something of life itself
- The role of art as a moral educator: Iris Murdoch argued that one learns about transcendence from an experience of beauty; Martha Nussbaum argues that one learns empathy/sympathy from a study of literature
- Why and how do abstract works of art, especially musical ones, generate emotions in audiences, and to where do audiences direct these emotions?
- How can we make sense of the interest appreciators have in empathetically experiencing art that is expressive of negative emotions?
- Is there a specific aesthetic emotion, raised only in the context of experiencing art?
- The insight that judgments of the beautiful are based on subjective feelings of pleasure
- Relations between an emotional response to art and the demands of aesthetic appreciation
- Approaches to art and emotion, *eg* psychoanalysis
- The notion of the “sublime”
- Emotions and the different art forms, *eg* the extent to which architecture expresses emotions
- Modernist art/music at the start of the 20th century tried to strip down emotions to pure communication *via* rejection of representation/colour and traditional harmonies.
- A distinction between the role of emotion in the production of Art and the role of emotion (or lack of emotion) in judging works of art *eg* Kant’s disinterestedness.

4. Explain and discuss what kinds of entities in the world are works of art. [25]

The question asks for an explanation and discussion on what might be identified as a work of art and the criteria that might be employed in justifying it. The issues open to discussion show historical continuity within the reflection on aesthetics but also show a line of inquiry which did emerge in aesthetics in the 20th century: the ontology of artworks. These issues might be related in different ways with various topics presented in the programme: what is art and what is the nature of art? Work on the definition of art in the past several decades has been dominated by views that either defend some sort of broadly institutional definition, or are skeptical about the definitional project. Institutional definitions of art hold that being a work of art consists in standing in the right relation to either art institutions or the history of art. They deny that anything substantive and more fundamental—say, a commitment to aesthetic or creative values—unifies the nature of the art institution or the history of art. On the other hand, definitions have, since Aristotle, been connected with explanations, which are closely related to essences, and this might involve proposing sets of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions, which identify artworks as different from other kinds of entities.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Can we define art? Is there a philosophical consensus about the definition of art? Should we define art?
- Classical and traditional approaches to the works of art: Plato and Kant
- The artwork as an idea: B Croce and R G Collingwood suggested that the artwork is in fact an idea in the mind of the artist
- Most artworks are simply a subset of the physical objects in the world; however physical objects cannot possess representational or expressive properties, whereas artworks do possess such properties
- The artwork as embodied in the physical object: artworks as physically embodied and culturally emergent entities
- The institutionalist approach: the attempt to unearth and make explicit the assumptions about ontological status built into the relevant practices and beliefs of those dealing with works of art, to systematize these, and to put them into philosophical terms
- If the artwork is identical neither to a concrete physical object nor to some abstract representational content, perhaps it is some sort of complex structure picked out by the artist. The structure might have a physical object as its part; A. Danto holds that the artwork may be thought of as a two-part structure including a physical object plus an interpretation
- The view that the artwork is to be identified not with the artist's product, but with a particular sort of event: the artist's activity in producing it
- The notion of the work of art as arising purely in the reception of it, as opposed to the specific intent of the artist
- The discussion whether art can be a natural kind; real definitions of something require that something be a natural kind
- The view of artworks as ontologically diverse: it can explain why some works in a particular art form are singular while others are multiple (such as printmaking). It accounts for the intimate relation of the artwork's characteristics to a generative act by the artist. It respects the ontological intuitions expressed in the critical practice of the art community, according to which works are thought to have varying kinds and degrees of connection to physical objects.

Optional Theme 2: Epistemology

5. To what extent do you agree with the claim that *a priori* knowledge is totally independent of experience?

[25]

This question, based on a claim made by Kant, invites an evaluation of the stringent view that *a priori* knowledge is totally independent from experience, and hence is totally analytic in nature and in its justification. It is a common view that *a priori* justifications rest on rational intuitions and insights, but what these are precisely is the cause of much dispute, hence some students might concentrate on the nature of innate ideas and their origin and its epistemological value and roles. The question may also lead to a focused discussion on the nature of what constitutes an experience as a contrast to innate ideas or intuition.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions
- The certainty of *a priori* knowledge compared with the contingent claims from experience gained *a posteriori*
- The common view that *a priori* knowledge is supported by *a priori* justifications
- A view that *a priori* justifications and knowledge are tautological, and so are not really knowledge in a constructive or progressive sense
- The progress of science (empiricism) and its influence on *a priori* knowledge and justifications; eg prior to sub-atomic physics, there was a given *a priori* belief in causality, now many physicists believe in random sub-atomic events
- The counter position of *a posteriori* knowledge and justifications: what do we mean by an experience? Is it only the data obtained strictly via the 5 senses, or do memory, introspection, and the kinetic sense of the movement and position of our own body (proprioception) also count? eg “I had a steak dinner last night”, “I feel fatigued”, “my arm is resting on the table”
- Are the examples, immediately above, examples of innate ideas? Other examples of innate knowledge: the ideas of identity, perfection, the ideas of God, and branches of Mathematics. These examples can also serve as *a priori* justifications for such knowledge. This gives *a priori* knowledge and justification a heuristic character
- If innate ideas are intuitive, then what constitutes an intuition? Is it a mental state where a proposition is true but not on the basis of an inference?
- The significance of the phrase “independent from experience”: does this have the same meaning as “apart from experience”? Is this latter meaning possible? How can an *a priori* justification be made without experience? One needs to learn from experience what a bachelor is before any *a priori* propositions about bachelors can be understood and made
- Examples of innate knowledge from Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz, etc and the varying nature and limits of what constitutes such knowledge. These views are often accompanied by a deep scepticism of knowledge based on sensory experience.

6. **Evaluate whether there is a difference between having knowledge about X compared to having a true belief about X.** [25]

This question is a paraphrasing of the Meno problem where Socrates asks why knowledge is more valuable than true belief. Commonly, the addition of a justification is the necessary requirement for knowledge, which distinguishes it from true belief. The question invites students to engage with the general topic of epistemic value and possibly to discuss the Gettier problem of the inadequacy of justified true belief as a definition for knowledge. Further, students might discuss and evaluate what exactly is the extra value that knowledge possesses over true belief, whether with a justification or not. Other possibilities might be a defence of the idea there is no extra benefit or value in knowledge over true belief.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The value of knowledge: psychological security that comes with being certain or having knowledge, the obvious pragmatic/scientific application. Are these benefits any different to possessing a true belief, justified or not?
- The extra requirement for a justification for a true belief to promote it to the category of knowledge. What does such a justification signify: understanding, application of knowledge, *etc*?
- Is the only benefit of knowledge over true belief an instrumental value?
- Where do you find a justification: external to, or independent from the terms of the true belief?
- Examples of where justified true belief is not knowledge: Gettier examples where Smith knows (told by the interviewer) Jones will get a job, and that Jones has 10 coins in his pocket; Smith concludes that a person with 10 coins in their pocket will get the job. Unknown to Smith, he also has 10 coins in his pocket. Smith gets the job
- Challenges to the Gettier problem: Smith is not justified in having his belief, or his belief is not true in the first instance, *etc*
- A more general question is why is knowledge seen as more valuable than any of its constituent parts?
- Does justified true belief fall short of knowledge, yet is no less valuable?
- Does the reliability of the process by which something is produced add value to this thing? Even if the process were the least reliable method for producing a true belief, once a true belief is formed, does the process add anything extra?
- Does the reliabilist rely on a notion that if the cause/processes of establishing a true belief is intrinsically good in itself, independent of its reliability, then is this intrinsic goodness transferred to its effect?
- Virtue epistemology: knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief, *eg* independently from the outcome of a true belief that an agent can bring about
- Is understanding, and hence confidence in knowledge, (*eg* as evident in Plato) a useful way to answer the value problem?
- What counts as a justification? And do good justifications increase the value of statement than any (potentially unfounded) justification?

Optional Theme 3: Ethics

7. **To what extent do you agree with the claim that wherever the adjective “good” (or “bad”) is linked with an object it means that this object is useful (or harmful)?** [25]

The question invites an analysis on meta-ethics and, whether moral principles exist, are universal, and on the meaning of the words “good”, “bad”, “useful”, and “harmful”, although other approaches are possible. The claim, which is from P. Rée, *The Origin of Moral Sentiments*, had deeply influenced Nietzsche’s philosophy and focuses on the link between “good” and “useful”. Candidates might explore the origin and meaning of the word “good”, with reference to past philosophies and/or non-western traditions. Responses might also compare the concepts “good” and “right” (and their opposites) and the related ethical approaches, eg legalism or casuistry. Candidates might refer to the concept of “useful” by analysing the related ethical views, eg utilitarianism and its different variations. Another possible path of analysis might include conventionalism and a discussion on the origin of ethical principles and values: whether these be grounded in social agreements, innate in human nature, or linked to one or more religious, metaphysical entities. Candidates might also refer to social ontology in exploring the conventional origin of morals, or to evolutionism in explaining how moral principles and values tend to be adjusted according to natural and cultural changes. Moreover, candidates might mention empiricism, eg Locke’s and Hume’s views on primary and secondary qualities, as a means to refer to the “pathetic fallacy” argument. Finally, candidates might also explore some views within analytical philosophy and the possibilities/impossibilities to say something about the meaning of the words “good” and “bad”, eg in Wittgenstein’s theory.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Are moral principles and values universal and/or objective?
- Are the “good” and the “bad” linked to the “useful” and the “harmful”?
- Metaphysical traditions interpreting the concept of “good”
- Philosophical views that link the “good” to the “useful”, eg utilitarianism, Nietzsche
- Do the “good” and the “right” involve the same moral principles? Views that focus on this relation, eg legalism, casuistry
- Is moral sense founded in human nature, grounded in social agreements, or linked to a religious entity?
- The argument from sentience
- Conventionalism *versus* innatism
- Evolutionary ethics
- Moral values as a human creation; the “pathetic fallacy” argument (*ie* the human tendency to attribute human qualities to external, particularly inanimate, objects), eg Locke, Hume
- Impossibility to explain the meaning of the words “good” and “bad”, as in some approaches within analytical philosophy, eg Wittgenstein, Hare.

8. Evaluate, with reference to an area of applied ethics that you have studied, the claim that responsibility is the fundamental imperative in modern civilization. [25]

This question invites an exploration of a claim that focuses on the concept of responsibility. Different areas of applied ethics can be used in addressing the question. Candidates might explore Jonas's *principle of responsibility*, or explore issues like the relation to our position in the world, how human progress affects nature and its fragile balance, and the possible consequences for future generations. Candidates might discuss other contributions in applied ethics, eg Leopold's or Passmore's theories about the environment, Rawls's *Theory of Justice*, Singer's work on animal rights and his work on global equality, the Gaia hypothesis, euthanasia and medical ethics more generally, or deep ecology approaches. Responses might include an analysis of the recent debate on the climate changes: candidates might discuss on how or whether persistent severe weather conditions, global warming, Arctic ice melting, or global water crisis, etc relate to pollution, uncontrolled land exploitation, deforestation, and the like. Candidates might also focus on the relationship between ethics and politics, with relation to the concepts of responsibility, values, and duties. Another path of analysis might refer to anthropocentrism and its several approaches: candidates might mention any possible traditional, religious, or cultural source sustaining anthropocentric views and how these affect the relationship between the human being and nature. Particularly, candidates might consider the specific role that animals play within anthropocentrism and how and whether our consideration of them has recently changed. Responses might also consider the theme of the species extinction and the modern ethical theories bearing the existence of animal rights, eg Singer's theory. Other areas that might be explored include issues like technological aspects in medicine, research in life sciences, global economic equality.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Jonas's principle of responsibility
- Deep ecology approaches
- Leopold's and Passmore's theories
- Gaia hypothesis
- Anthropocentrism and its possible cultural justifications
- Animal rights, eg Singer's view
- Economic distribution
- Medical ethics
- Euthanasia
- Relationship between climate change and pollution; ethical and political debate
- Non-western traditions on the balance between the human being and nature.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

- 9. Evaluate the claim that social media leads to cultural impoverishment (for example, a more limited cultural diversity). [25]**

Some view technology as an instrument for improving society. Critics such as Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas point to ways in which it might damage society. Some view technology as influencing culture, where technology plays a constructivist role in conjunction with culture. A related claim is that technology influences how people experience the world, and thus alters culture. Social media is a case in point because it colours people's experiences of life and their understanding of culture. This can be problematic, as in the case of "echo chambers" created by only encountering like-minded individuals. Alternatively, social media might be seen as enhancing culture by providing a richer variety of voices and a transparent platform for different cultural groups.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Whether social media is a useful instrument or tool
- Social media and constructivism, where technology and society are constructions of one another
- Technology as influencing people's experience of culture, particularly the role of social media to this effect
- Phenomenological analyses of technology such as those provided by Adorno or Habermas
- How social media changes and influences culture
- The impact of social media on society
- New phenomena which have come about as a result of social media, for example digital legacies
- Social media and its influence on reporting "news"
- Definitions of culture and whether culture can decline, or whether it just changes
- A discussion of whether social media mirrors culture or changes culture
- The role of social media as a commercial enterprise
- The extent to which social media can manipulate and mislead people.

10. Evaluate, in relation to multiculturalism, the claim that democracy encourages a “tyranny of the majority”. [25]

A democracy makes decisions collectively, so that everyone who is part of the electorate has an equal say in how the state will be run. In theory, this ought to allow members of different cultures to represent themselves and stand up for what is important to them. However, the requirement that each individual has an equal say means that minority cultures have fewer people representing them and so can be out-voted, even over issues, which are crucial to them. If democracies are to be compatible with multiculturalism, some solution must be offered to wed the aim of promoting the rights of minority groups with the aim of respecting the will of the majority. Whether multiculturalism is a realistic or desirable aim within a society is another side of the question.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Does the government have a role in protecting minority groups?
- Definitions of culture in relation to democratic societies
- The value and meaning of tolerance
- De Tocqueville’s view of “the tyranny of the majority”
- Rousseau’s concept of “the general will”
- Ortega y Gasset’s conception of “the rebellion of the masses”
- The balance between liberty and human rights
- Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty
- Candidates might go into detail about the work of Mill in *On Liberty*
- Rawls’s view that democratic rules should be reasonable and based on principles on which there is an overlapping consensus
- Locke’s view that all members of a state are part of a social contract which implies consent to majority rule
- Alternatives to democracy which might better support multiculturalism, for example anarchism
- The value and pitfalls of democracy
- Whether multiculturalism is possible or desirable
- References to other philosophers providing counter-arguments.

Optional Theme 5: Philosophy of religion

11. To what extent does suffering disprove the existence of God?

[25]

This question enables an exploration of the most widely-stated argument counting against the existence of God. In this argument there can be a logical approach, whereby the very definition of God is stated as being in contradiction with the experience of suffering in creation, or there can be a more probabilistic approach where the objection comes from the amount of observed suffering leading to a conclusion that the existence of God is less likely than likely. In defence of God's existence various responses have been articulated, including appeal to the notion of free will (which raises the issue of God's intervention or non-intervention) and the inability of humankind to see the full picture of God's existence until the establishment of the eschatological future which will show the suffering of the present world in its true, eternal light.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The responsibility for suffering – is the cause of suffering – evil – a “thing” for which God can take responsibility?
- The “inconsistent triad” and Mackie’s statement of the logical problem of evil
- The evidential problem of suffering, where on observation of the extent of suffering in the world, and its apparent meaninglessness and randomness, the existence of God seems less probable
- Defences of God’s existence – theodicies – include versions of the Free Will argument
- Augustine’s theodicy, termed “soul-deciding” where human free will created the conditions for suffering and God, as a just God, does not intervene maintaining a position of justice; human response to the consequences of disobedience offer the chance of heaven to come
- Irenaeus’s theodicy, where the experience of suffering contributes to “soul-making” so that humans can enjoy a mature relationship with God, carved from growth and development, spurred by the experience of suffering
- Hick’s restatement of Irenaeus, highlighting the need for God to preserve freedom by not intervening to stop suffering, the consequences of which would be to lessen human moral worth and independence
- Swinburne’s Free Will Defence where he maintains that humans must take freedom seriously and not expect second chances or the minimising of suffering, in order to take our moral responsibility seriously
- Discussion of the way suffering produces certain kinds of goods “second order goods”, like compassion, empathy, kindness, understanding, none of which could be developed without experience of suffering
- The eschatological defence that this is the best of all possible worlds and it will be shown in the new dispensation in heaven that the suffering was not only worthwhile, but necessary for the future to come.

12. Evaluate the claim that the content of religious experience is incommunicable. [25]

This question enables a broad approach to the question of communicating about religious experience. If religious experience is ineffable, then it may not be spoken about in language used to describe the world outside the speaker. Some empiricists believed that any description of religious experience would have to be “meaningless” in terms of language propositions. However, “meaningless” was also explored as a means of clarifying its relation to empirical factual language, while still reserving purpose for religious language. Candidates might explore the responses to verification that have left a space for religious language to reflect the values and worldview of the speaker, as opposed to a discrete empirical domain the language describes.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The history of religious language from Aquinas to the present day
- The impact of empiricism and the scientific enlightenment on the understanding of religious experience and language
- James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience*
- Mysticism in world religions, eg Sufism, Kabbalism, Orthodox mysticism
- Monasticism and the hermit tradition
- Art contributions to communicating religious experience eg art, music, literature
- Verificationism and the work of the Logical Positivists
- Falsificationism and Flew (Wisdom’s Parable of the Gardner)
- Hare’s “blik” offering an alternative view of meaningfulness and religious language
- Mitchell and the story of the partisan
- Braithwaite and religious language as moral discourse
- Tillich’s work on symbolism and religious language
- Wittgenstein’s language games.

Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of science**13. Evaluate the nature of scientific explanations.****[25]**

This question invites an evaluation of the role of explanations through the scientific method. Explanations can give reasonable rationales for observed natural phenomena. The scientific method might be seen as an over simplification of the processes that are involved in scientific investigations into natural phenomena. The distinction between a hypothesis and an explanation could be explored. The construction of a hypothesis arises out of observation and testing through experimentation, which lead to scientific theories and laws that rest on the ability to predict. Consequently, it is possible that the process of constructing a scientific explanation uses both inductive and deductive thinking to arrive at a reasonable explanation. Candidates might refer to Popper questioning whether a scientific process involves induction preferring to describe the process as hypothetical deduction. Therefore, an explanation might arise from deductive statements about other known conditions that surround the observed phenomena. It could be seen as a complex web of inactive laws and assumptions. This process might avoid reliance on inductive steps as the explanation is established through deduction from general laws. A counter position challenging and defending inductive conclusions might be put forward suggesting that explanations by the hypothetical deductive process might not be secure in the sense that examples might arise to contradict them. These examples would come about by constantly seeking falsification and/or paradigm shifts in thinking. Other developments might also arise questioning the overall nature of scientific laws and theories and the degree to which they might be true or certain.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The nature and status of a hypothesis relative to an explanation, eg Hempel
- The difference between hypotheses, theories and explanations
- The contributions of thinkers like Kuhn, Feyerabend, Nagel
- Related problems to both inductive and deductive thinking in science
- The status and nature of scientific laws and theories upon which the hypothetical deductive process rests
- The consequence of paradigm shifts on accepted scientific explanations
- The degree to which assumption about a scientific explanation can be applied to non-natural sciences, eg the social sciences
- How far confirmation bias might influence the construction of scientific explanations: thinking “within” the box.

14. To what extent is science guided by societal pressures and values?**[25]**

This question seeks an evaluation as to whether scientists can work in isolation of their social environment or whether their investigations into nature reflect the values of their time and social milieu. Candidates might present examples of how the aims and objectives of scientific work changes with time and the expectations of society. Equally, questions could be asked about the degree to which scientists work independently or whether they are directed by economic and political pressures of their time. Could scientists ignore these pressures? Discussion might take place about the nature of the scientific community and the expectations, morally and/or politically, that arise from this. Similarly, to what extent are scientists accountable to the social, economic and political forces? Or are they under obligations to pursue the needs of society and inevitably share their findings with their supposed political or economic drivers? Examples might be presented that relate to nuclear research during the Second World War, gene research to address genetically transmitted diseases or environmental science research at the beginning of the 21st century. A counter position might be developed as to the degree to which scientists can and should do research which is socially/economically valueless; science for science's sake.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The degree to which scientists are politically accountable
- The view that science is an objective discipline unaffected by societal mores
- What if any moral responsibilities do scientists have?
- Whether scientists pursuing the same problems but in differing social environments might arrive at the same outcomes; examples might come from the Cold War pursuit of supersonic flight or the space race
- Exploration of historical examples such as Louis XIV's perfect artists painting the same picture which could be applied to science in that scientists in different social settings produce the same answers, producing exactly the same picture
- How religion formulated and/or limited scientific thinking
- The issue of theory-ladenness
- The hypothetical examples of scientists from different worlds asking the same questions of their nature as earthly humans
- A tangential position might include the argument as to whether nature is constructed by humans or is independent of human thought/activity. Therefore, in the former case scientific constructs of nature are reflective of their society yet might change when social changes happen
- Climate change denial, alternative medicines
- The nature of funding and resources as drivers of scientific research, eg the pharmaceutical industry, the oil industry, the arms industry.

Optional Theme 7: Political philosophy

15. To what extent do you agree with the claim that in modern democratic states the dual aims of freedom and equality cannot be sustained? [25]

This question invites candidates to discuss and evaluate a basic tension found within democratic states. Often the view from neo-liberal economists and libertarians is that the pursuit of one precludes the environment to achieve the other, or that it compromises the more important moral value of personal autonomy. Moreover, the question of the tension between freedom and equality takes place within the specific concept of distributive justice in a political society. As such, candidates might discuss Egalitarianism, or analyse other principles of distributive justice such as Rawls's *Difference Principle*, welfare-based principles, feminist principles, libertarian/anarchist principles, etc.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Equality in the contemporary state might cover categories such as: income, access to employment and education, welfare, utility, wealth
- To whom should the distribution be made: individuals, groups, gender?
- What should be the principles of how the distribution should be made: maximization, equality, individual needs?
- Strict egalitarianism argues that each individual should have the same level of material goods, services and burdens. The basis of this claim is that all individuals are morally equal and that the best way to fulfil this moral ideal is through equality of material goods
- Similarly, Rawls's *Difference Principle* values the moral equality of individuals and each is entitled to equal basic rights and liberties, but in modern societies, inequalities are unavoidable. To mitigate against this, the social and economic inequalities are allowed to persist if they are attached to positions with opportunity open to all to attain these offices, and secondly, any measure to ameliorate the inequality must be of greatest benefit to the least advantaged, or cause the least disadvantage to the most disadvantaged
- The debate between Rawls and Nozick
- Mill's treatment of liberty as a means of achieving greater utility
- Critics of this approach above point out that inequality still persists
- Welfare-based principles (also known as consequentialist principles) are motivated by the idea that what is of primary moral importance is the level of welfare of people. Other principles for distribution such as freedom or equality, are secondary to the welfare of an individual
- Libertarian views on distributive justice range from a minimal amount to none at all. Freedom of the individual held as an absolute moral value maintains that any attempt at equality brought about by economic distribution, or affirmative action, or any other means is, in itself, necessarily unfair to individuals and violates their moral worth. For these libertarians, the smaller the government intervention into people's lives and pay packets, the better. In contrast to the principles above, Libertarians also see that transactions in free markets need no regulation or supervision if freely entered into by individuals
- Different kinds of freedom, eg positive versus negative
- Rather than viewed as a set of principles that maximize an outcome, should distributive justice be seen as a virtue?

16. To what extent should a citizen of a state be held accountable under international law? [25]

The aim of this question is to allow candidates an opportunity to analyse several political concepts: sovereignty and its limits, international law and how to apply it, the relationships between justice and law, and human rights, amongst others. Candidates could evaluate the need and difficulties of a universal moral standard of justice, eg human rights, that goes beyond the particular legal systems of each nation. They could also assess the opposition between the traditional concept of sovereignty and the contemporary need of putting this traditional notion aside in extreme cases, ie in the case of crimes against humanity. Candidates could also raise the question of who is to police such an international system, and under what set of moral and legal values?

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The traditional notion of sovereignty of a nation: it originally precludes the possibility of judging its citizens under laws other than the law of the sovereign nation. It has some important advantages, eg it impedes the interferences of one power into the internal affairs of another country, so recognizing the autonomy of the country
 - How far should international jurisdiction reach? Only to crimes against humanity, or to civil rights of minorities within sovereign nations? Cosmopolitanism and nationalism could be discussed in this context
 - Some recent experiences, eg genocides in Europe and Asia have made it necessary to recognize an international standard of justice over each nation's standards. This is especially in cases in which the legal system of a nation does not fulfil some minimum requirements of human justice, or actually legalises such actions. It makes it necessary to re-think the relationship between law and justice
 - To what extent do political notions such as social contract apply to the case of an international law?
 - The notion of human rights is a part of this international standard, and a legal expression of some minimum requirements of justice for all human beings. Those national rulers who seriously damage these human rights can be accused of crimes against humanity. But what are universal human rights: the right to shelter, or food, or protection, or work, or health care, etc?
 - However, international law is also a positive legal system, and thus this law might hypothetically differ in some cases from a proper notion of justice within a sovereign nation. International laws monitor the justice of national laws, but who monitors the justice of international law?
 - Is the international law system democratic in nature, or could it be deemed as an oligarchic or totalitarian rule like a "one world government"?
 - Who must enforce the application of international law and human rights? A super-power? A coalition of nations? The UN? Should members of the UN who are non-democratic, judge other nations regarding their actions? Being realistic, who could in fact enforce this application nowadays?
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