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International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

**PHILOSOPHY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 1**

Tuesday 1 November 2011 (afternoon)

2 hours 30 minutes

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer one question.
- Section B: answer two questions, each chosen from a different Optional Theme.

*In your answers you are expected to:*

- *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 your response*
- *identify counter-arguments to your response, and address them if possible*
- *provide relevant supporting material, illustrations and/or examples where appropriate*
- *develop a critical evaluation of ideas and arguments*
- *conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.*

### SECTION A

*Answer **one** question from this section. Each question in this section is worth [30 marks].*

#### **Core Theme: What is a human being?**

1. Read the following passage and develop your response as indicated below.

In his recent bestseller *The Tipping Point*, the journalist Malcolm Gladwell applies [an] idea to recent social trends ... In each case the conventional wisdom attributed the trend to external social forces such as advertising, government programmes, or role models. And in each case the trend was really driven by an internal dynamic of personal choices and influences and their feedback. The naming of babies, and of things in general, is another example in which a large-scale social phenomenon – the composition of a language – emerges unpredictably out of many individual choices that influence one another.

[Source: Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature*, Allen Lane, 2007.]

*Write a response (of approximately 800 words) in which you:*

- identify a central philosophical concept or philosophical issue in this passage that addresses the question, “what is a human being?”
- investigate **two** different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified
- explain and evaluate the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified.

2. Look at the following picture and develop your response as indicated below.



[Source: supplied by an IB examiner]

*Write a response (of approximately 800 words) in which you:*

- identify a central philosophical concept or philosophical issue in this picture that addresses the question, “what is a human being?”
- investigate **two** different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified
- explain and evaluate the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified.

## SECTION B

*Answer two questions from this section, each chosen from a different Optional Theme. Each question in this section is worth [30 marks].*

### **Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology**

3. Evaluate the view that we all have knowledge of our own minds, of the content of other minds, and of the world.
4. To what extent might relating knowledge to social context produce a justifiable account of knowledge?

### **Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics**

5. Evaluate the claim that ethical judgments could be founded on self-interest alone.
6. With reference to one or more example(s) of applied ethics, evaluate the view that what makes an action right should be judged by the consequences of that action.

### **Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion**

7. To what extent are religious experiences open to non-religious interpretations?
8. “Since religious language makes assertions about things which can neither be verified nor falsified by appeal to sense experience, should religious language be considered meaningless?” Discuss and evaluate.

### **Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art**

9. To what extent is art a private matter?
10. Discuss and evaluate the view that art is an illusion.

**Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy**

11. To what extent is class a relevant concept in the understanding of political life?
12. “In order for social justice to be achieved individual contributions should not be rewarded differently.” Discuss and evaluate.

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

13. With reference to one or more example(s) of non-Western traditions and perspectives, explain and discuss how the notion of the material and spiritual aspects of the self might be expressed and integrated.
14. With reference to one or more example(s) of non-Western traditions and perspectives, explain and discuss how the meaning of life carries with it a variety of moral and ethical implications.

**Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues**

15. Evaluate the importance of philosophically analysing racial and multiracial awareness.
16. “Some have maintained that one’s occupation should be a realm of freedom, in which work is freely chosen self-expression. Others have held that the freedom of self-expression is one good among others that work can provide, such as lucrative pay, friendly social contact and the satisfaction of the self-support norm, and that none of these various work-related goods necessarily should have priority over others.” Discuss and evaluate.

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

17. To what extent are individualism and internationalism compatible ideas?
  18. Evaluate philosophically the rights of an established society to control emigration and immigration.
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