

Markscheme

May 2017

Philosophy








Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

24 pages

This markscheme is the property of the International Baccalaureate and must not be reproduced or distributed to any other person without the authorization of the IB Global Centre, Cardiff.

The following are the annotations available to use when marking responses.

Annotation	Explanation	Shortcuts
	Highlight (can be expanded)	Alt+4
	Unclear	Alt+3
	Incorrect Point	Alt+2
	Good Response/Good Point	Alt+1
	Underline tool	
	Apply to blank pages	
	On-page comment text box (for adding specific comments)	Alt+0
AE	Attempts Evaluation	Alt+6
AQ	Answers the Question	
CKS	Clear Knowledge Shown	
Des	Descriptive	
EE	Effective Evaluation	
EXP	Expression	Alt+9
GD	Good Definition	
GEXA	Good Example	
GEXP	Good Explanation	
GP	Good Point	
GUT	Good Use of Text	
IL	Inaccurate Language	
IR	Irrelevant	
LNK	Good linkage to course (P3 only)	
NAQ	Not Answered Question	

Nexa	No examples	
NMRD	Not much reasoning or discussion	
NUT	No Use of Text	
PE	Poorly Expressed	Alt+5
PEOC	Personal experience of course (P3 only)	
REF	Reference Needed	Alt+8
REP	Repetition	
TNCE	Theory is Not Clearly Explained	
U	Understanding	
VG	Vague	Alt+7

You **must** make sure you have looked at all pages. Please put the **SEEN** annotation on any blank page, to indicate that you have seen it.

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 5 for the core theme and page 8 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. Excerpt from *Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality* [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 in the text related to the question of what it is to be human. Responses may focus on: Various concepts of human nature, or lack of one; the degrees of freedom or determinism that arise from particular views of human nature; individuality and a common human nature; the repression/suppression of certain aspects of human nature and its consequences; human nature in contrast to the human condition.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Are we fated to live according to “our” nature?
- What are these wild and dangerous roots? Are they dispositions, or traits, or instincts? Are they necessary for survival or do they promote higher activities, like art?
- Possible use of Freud as an explanation of drives and role of the *id*/unconscious
- Even if the assumptions in the text are true, should we not be on constant vigil to remove these dangerous traits?
- If I can act only according to my nature, then what is the level of my responsibility for my actions?
- Existentialism and other views as a contrast which propose that there is no essential human nature
- The extent of human freedom: Can I really change if I am destined to inherit the same cultural or genetic traits?
- Repression of instincts and desires and the birth of civilisation (Freud)
- The individual commitment to a ‘Social Contract’, which might also repress instinct and desires
- Non-Western responses to the question of human nature, eg Buddhism claims that the desire is cause of human suffering
- What is the root cause of alienation from others and ourselves? Some psychoanalysts, like Lacan, claim a basic human drive and experience of life is one of a profound “lack”, a desire never fulfilled
- Are we all noble savages?
- Theistic views invoke God as the ultimate creator and so is responsible for our human nature. Why would he/she make something with “built-in” dangers?

2. Image of lady and identity masks

[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 in the picture related to the question of what it is to be human. Responses are likely to focus on what we can know of others and ourselves that persists over time, how identity is revealed to others and the self in stages; different identities in different contexts; the role of gender, religion, language, environment in the formation of identity; the assumption of a core self only known to the individual.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The public and private natures of personal identity suggest a social construction or at least social mediation of identity
- Identity and role playing: Child, sibling, spouse, employee, employer, *etc*
- The criteria for personal re-identification in contrast to the criteria of others
- What is it to be a person? What is the extent of this notion? Could animals or machines be persons? What are the defining features of being a person or human?
- The extent to which being part of a race, sex, language or religion is (and should be acknowledged as) constitutive of the individuals' and communities' identity
- If it is the case that my identity is made meaningful by others, then what are my responsibilities toward others? Toward myself? Which has priority, and when?
- Is it the case that if I find my identity via others, I must already have a concept of self in order to recognise the otherness of others? Is it more correct to say that others complete my identity?
- What is it about myself that I learn from others? Is it something essentially universal, or is it all a matter of identity being culturally defined? Would I be the same person in another culture?
- What are the factors that shape gender identity? Is the feminine constructed by patriarchal language, and so trapped by the constructions of others? Is there space for identity outside of language?
- From where does my sense of individuality stem? Is it different to my self-awareness? How important is social conformity to identity?
- Is the self a set of masks that we use in different situations? Are we really ciphers, or *tabulae rasae* that can be constantly overwritten?
- Gender as performance. Femininity (and masculinity) as social construction(s). The masks of gender, and the compulsions to “be happy”, wear a happy face, please others, be pleasant. Femininity as performance.

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. Evaluate Dewey’s claim that art is the “beauty parlour (salon) of civilization” – the space where civilization portrays itself. [25]

This question invites an analysis of the function of art as a means to an end or as an end in itself. The quotation, from John Dewey’s *Art as Experience* (1934), implies a specific view of art as strictly connected to society, politics and, in wider terms, civilization. Dewey considers art as a part of the societal whole, with an active role, particularly in the political and moral fields. Art is not autonomous or independent from any kind of judgment, since it embodies political and moral values or can produce political and moral effects. Analogously, the assumption of such a connection between art and society puts the former in the conditions of being a possible tool for politics or economics: Art can be used for the sake of political or economic interests or, generally, for the sake of specific powers. Responses might evaluate whether art is connected to society or not and offer historical cases of censorship or propaganda (eg in totalitarian regimes), religious uses of art (painting, music, sculpture, and so on), or civic uses of art (eg industrial or urban architecture), according to a conception of an everyday “art as experience”, in contrast with “a museum conception of art”. In Dewey’s view, it is possible to gauge the quality of life or the level of development of a society by its art: The beauty or ugliness of its buildings, the use of landscapes, the exploitation of land, the people’s possibilities of expressing creativity and imagination, and so on. Of course, responses might well criticise the view of art having a social function: The autonomy of the artist, the role of inspiration, creativity, and imagination, the possibility/impossibility of any kind of judgment, the role of the observer and the importance of perception might all be possible patterns. Candidates might also focus on the possibility for the artist to be a reflector and repeater of existing values (as a conformer or a means for conformism) or an agent of change, even a revolutionary. Or, even further, responses might consider a critical view, such as the one that has been well expressed in Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences* (1750), by underlining the inauspicious connection between art and human progress.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Whether art has a social function
- Historical examples of political uses of art
- Art serving propaganda
- Art being affected by censorship
- Autonomy of the artist/the artistic process
- Role of creativity and imagination
- Whether art can be a means for the human progress
- Views of art as connected to social life and civilization, by continental philosophers, eg Hegel, Croce, Collingwood, the Frankfurt School, Adorno, Marcuse, Freud and others.

4. Evaluate the claim that “taste is the capacity for judging something to be beautiful on the basis of an entirely ‘disinterested’ delight”. [25]

This question focuses on an issue, which is central to the argument of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790): The disinterestedness of the pleasure in the beautiful. In Kant’s view, disinterestedness is the condition for the judgment, 1) to satisfy the requirement of universality that aesthetic judgments have to have and, 2) to avoid being grounded solely on subjectivity. The Kantian argument offers the chance widely to investigate the nature of aesthetic judgment and its possibilities, the relationship between subjectivity and universality, the issues related to individual tastes and shared and agreed judgments. Reference to Hume (*On the Standard of Taste* (1757)) might be appropriate with regard to discussions of taste and/or as a possible criticism of Kant’s view. Nietzsche’s critique of the Kantian argument of pleasure and disinterestedness might be analysed (particularly *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and concerning the importance of passions and desires that Nietzsche maintains are necessary in connection to pleasure). The question also invites a discussion of the role played by the observer or audience/spectator and the related argument of perception, by which art might be judged or appreciated. Another possible path might take into account the meaning of pleasure, desire, delight, passion, and the role they play in relation with beauty, ugliness, or the sublime. Responses might consider and mention the possibilities of communicating the aesthetic experience, also depending on whether it is an individual and subjective understanding or a shareable one. Candidates might also choose to discuss whether any sort of judgment is possible or not, regardless of the issues of subjectivity and universality, trying to answer the question whether it is possible to judge a work of art or not.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Kant’s aesthetic judgment and possible criticisms, eg Hume, Nietzsche, Deleuze
- The meaning and role of disinterestedness of pleasure in the beautiful
- Critical questioning of “disinterestedness” in art by feminists and others
- Subjectivity and universality of any possible judgment
- Discussions of taste, eg Hume
- The role played by the spectator/audience
- The importance of perception and interpretation in judging a work of art
- The nature of aesthetic experience and its possible communication
- The meaning of pleasure, desire, delight, beauty, ugliness, sublime
- Is it possible to judge a work of art?
- The importance of sharing and agreement in shaping judgments.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Evaluate the claim that out of the common three theories of truth (coherence, correspondence and pragmatism) the coherence theory is the most justifiable. [25]

This question offers candidates an opportunity to reflect upon the central notion of truth by means of a discussion and evaluation of the three classical theories of truth. The question simultaneously opens the possibility of considering the notion of justification and related issues such as sources of knowledge, rationalism and empiricism, *a priori* and *a posteriori* and scepticism.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Two or more beliefs are said to cohere if they fit together or agree with one another; typically a coherence theory of truth claims that the beliefs of a given individual are true to the extent that the set of all their beliefs is coherent
- For a coherence theorist truth comes in degrees: A given judgment is true in the degree to which its content could maintain itself in the light of a completed system of knowledge, false in the degree to which its appearance there would require transformation
- Is truth a matter of the beliefs of an individual, or the beliefs of a greater collective, community, society, or a specialized group considered to have expertise on the question?
- A common objection to coherence theories is that the conditions they place on truth are too weak: On a coherence theory a well-written novel would be true
- The two oldest theories of truth in Western philosophy, those of Plato and Aristotle, are both correspondence theories. Such theories are often summed up with the slogans “truth is correspondence with the facts” or “truth is agreement with reality”
- Correspondence theories play important roles in philosophical semantics and in the physicalist programme, which is the task of reducing all non-physical concepts to the concepts of logic, mathematics, and physics
- Usual positions in the pragmatic theory of truth: a) A true proposition is one which would be endorsed unanimously by all persons who had had sufficient relevant experiences to judge it, and b) a proposition counts as true if and only if behaviour based on a belief in the proposition leads to beneficial results for the believers
- Discussion of a meta-reality, which can appear almost necessarily linked to an analysis of truth
- Theories of justification, for example, foundationalism and coherentism
- The dominance of paradigms: How ideas cohere with the dominant framework in play at a given time
- Contrast with other ways of understanding truth, eg the Chinese one: Truth as a way of life and self-realisation, different from the Western understanding of truth as a relationship between language and reality.

6. To what extent does the right to access knowledge benefit people? [25]

The question opens a discussion and evaluation of the relations between knowledge, rights and benefits. The *UN Declaration of Human Rights* Article 27 reads: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author”. The discussion of possible rights related to knowledge might serve as a platform to deal with a series of issues related to knowledge, technology and power. The discussion might also involve discussion of the extent to which knowledge should be ruled by ethical principles. Discussion might involve the way knowledge can be exercised for power and controlled by individuals or the state. Censorship might be raised as an issue about the dissemination of knowledge. Discussion also might involve the implications of scientific or technological developments for people.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Approaches to knowledge and science
- How important is the continuous development of knowledge for the advancement of humanity?
- The links between technology and knowledge
- The relationship between knowledge, control and power
- Universal access to knowledge and technology
- Who should control knowledge and how should it be made public?
- Knowledge and power, for example, Plato or Freire
- Access to knowledge and censorship
- Technology as a means of disseminating knowledge
- The “digital divide” – access to information and the economics controlling access to knowledge
- Knowledge as cultural capital and resource
- Differential access to knowledge due to social stratification and inequality. The problems and implications of this issue in addressing the question and the notion of “right”
- Foucault’s claim: Knowledge is power.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. Evaluate the claim that the aim of all ethical principles is to cultivate our sympathy. [25]

This question invites the candidate to evaluate the claim that sympathy is the most important element for living an ethical life. A wider discussion of non-cognitive moral theories that involve sympathy is also relevant. Classical theories of moral sentimentalism, those of Hume and Smith, used sympathy and empathy to explain how our moral sense – a developed, not innate, capacity – works. Moral approval is caused by pleasure of a special kind, to feel a particular type of satisfaction. For Hume, sympathy is a kind of analogical association where the effects of a passion pass from the observance of the effects to their causes, and forms an idea so strong that it is converted into the passion itself. For Smith, sympathy worked more as a kind of simulation, an act of the imagination to place oneself into another's position. Both views require a departure from one's personal point of view, as resentment or approval are proper when every indifferent spectator agrees with the sentiments. Other more contemporary views are Emotivism (Ayer), Prescriptivism (Hare), Expressionism (Blackburn), and Error Theory (Mackie following Nietzsche).

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Empathy is often thought of as the experience or the ability to imagine oneself in another's position, while sympathy is an understanding and caring for another's position
- If, as Hume suggests, rightness and wrongness are a product of our sentiments, then are not right and wrong not dependent on my sentiments? If my sentiments change, do my concepts of right and wrong also change? If my sentiments vanish, does my moral life also disappear?
- If moral judgments really are projections of emotions or attitudes, then how can this projection be anything but a subjective response?
- The difference between feeling someone else's pain or pleasure, and the concern for another's pain or pleasure
- The connection, if any, between innate character and the capacity to feel sympathy or empathy
- The contrasts between moral sentimentalism and consequentialism, duty ethics, and virtue ethics as principals for ethics
- The insignificance of sentiments and character when applying normative rules like the greatest good for the greatest number, or protecting and supporting the rights of oneself and others
- What are we in sympathy with: The agent's motives, the agent's action, the agent's pleasure or pain?
- Is reducing moral approval to a feeling legitimate?
- Does moral sentimentalism necessarily assume an innate moral sense?
- Do moral thoughts involve our attitudes towards desires and preferences?

8. Evaluate the claim that a good person is a person of good character. [25]

This question invites candidates to analyse and evaluate virtue ethics, or more broadly, the role of character in an ethical life. The characteristics of an ethical system based on virtue are: Defining a set of character traits that are worthy of acquiring and developing; observing human life to develop knowledge of human action and folly; learning how to observe from a mentor; that the context is all important in knowing how and when to practise a particular virtue; the aim of virtue ethics is for a good life, or a flourishing life. Aristotle called this *eudaimonia*. It is not just the individual that flourishes, but the emphasis is often that families, friends and communities should also benefit from the actions and presence of a virtuous person. What is usually lacking in virtue ethics are a universal set of rational principles for action and the lack of emphasis in following rules, though a number of classical virtue systems like Confucianism value ritual as a way of developing virtue. In the normative systems of consequentialism and duty ethics strictly interpreted and applied, the character of the individual is usually irrelevant if a rule that maximizes utility or pleasure is being followed, or that a duty has to be recognized.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The criticism that when asked to answer the question of what counts as virtue, virtue ethics can only say “acts that are virtuous” – the issue of the lack of content
- Economic and class considerations: It is easier to flourish given a good education or a wealthy background
- The criticism that normative principles are necessary for settling disputes over moral judgments. The argument that it is preferable to apply moral principles to discover what is right rather than simply be left with a vague concept of flourishing
- The view that a virtue is a deeply rooted character trait that is a disposition to perform an action that goes well beyond a habit; as such it is connected to emotions, choices, values, desires, attitudes, and sensibilities
- There is an attitude or fundamental disposition that accompanies being virtuous; there is a range of consideration given for action
- *Phronesis*: Moral or practical wisdom. Lacking this quality is often the reason given for the necessity of a mentor
- The ability to evaluate each situation – the link with Situation Ethics
- Is there an assumption in consequentialism and deontology that morality needs a code consisting of universal rules and principles?
- If following rules is necessary for the good in consequentialism and deontology, then is it possible that the agent is ignorant of why the rule, and hence action, generates goodness?
- The circular nature of reasoning about virtue: What is good? That which is virtuous; what is virtuous? That which is good.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

9. **With reference to one or more examples of the groups of people that can be marginalized in society, explain and discuss the philosophical issues that can arise from addressing inequality.** [25]

This question involves considering philosophically a discussion of the basis for possible inequality in contemporary society. Some issues of inequality are historical and seemingly universal to cultures across time and across the globe. Other issues may arise from contemporary experience of society, including current political, economic or belief-system experiences. This question invites a treatment of the possible marginalisation of groups, which might offer an analysis of overall issue of power in society (eg Marx or Foucault) or the general structures that apply to social organisation (eg Weber, Durkheim, Lévi-Strauss). In selecting one or more examples of the basis and its treatment by past and contemporary thinkers, the answer can look philosophically at what is being addressed – and how.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Marginalisation by gender, sexual orientation, race, language, belief, ethnicity
- The issue of minorities representation, especially in democratic systems of government
- The similarities or differences that arise in the marginalization of different groups
- The philosophical treatment of issues about social structure as opposed to the sociological approach drawing on data from social science
- Philosophical issues that arise when considering social groupings, ie how straightforward is it to classify membership of racial or gender groups?
- Issues of equality *versus* freedom
- Judging individuals and judging individuals as members of groups
- Tolerance and the issues that arise from different groups with different belief systems living alongside each other
- The application of a single rule of law to societies that comprise different groups
- Existentialist approaches to understanding social experience, eg treatment of gender, race etc
- Scientific approaches to understanding social groupings and variations like gender, race etc
- The issue of inequality, eg Rawls, Sen, Nozick.

10. Evaluate the claim that “[the idea of] natural rights is simple nonsense”. [25]

This question explores the notion of natural, or human, rights. Such rights can be compared with – or include – legal rights and how they are proscribed and enforced. As a utilitarian, Bentham claimed that all that counted for motivation of human behaviour was the guiding principle of avoiding pain and promoting pleasure, but this view is challenged by thinkers who believe in inherent rights possessed by human beings by virtue of being humans. Libertarian philosophers question claims about rights, drawing attention to the notion that rights can only be articulated when their delivery is understood, asking who takes the responsibility to deliver the right. Examples might be pursued like the use of violence for political ends, or the use, by the state, of the threat of force to protect the rights of some (or all).

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- What constitutes a right?
- What is the relationship between rights and responsibilities?
- Is there a metaphysical defence of the existence of rights, or are they to be explained by reference to biological or social necessity?
- The difference between political and legal rights
- The work of philosophers on rights (eg Locke, Bentham, Mill, Rawls, Nozick, Sen, Nussbaum)
- Examples in the history of rights include *The Magna Carta*, *The Bill of Rights*, *The United States Declaration of Independence*, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- Positive and negative rights, reflecting the senses of “freedom from” and “freedom to”
- Rights of non-humans, including animal rights and environmental/ecological rights
- Universal political institutions like the United Nations which guarantee rights for children and cultural values (UNESCO) or individual health (WHO). Do they have precedence over autonomous political states?

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of religion

11. Explain and discuss the conceptual issues that arise from attributing omnipotence to a Supreme Being. [25]

In most philosophical discussions about the nature of the divine, Supreme Being, the issue of God's omnipotence, as a core attribute, is central. The reality of this attribute is encouraged in most scriptural traditions and subsequent philosophical traditions have grappled with its implications. From the Hebrew scriptures to Averroes and Aquinas, and into modern times, there have been attempts to provide an understanding of what omnipotence might mean, given the problems associated with the notion of the concept and how it fits with life in the world. Some responses may pay regard to modern attempts to assert God's existence without his or her omnipotence being a necessary attribute, as outlined in Process Theology and its response to the issue of suffering in the world. Other responses may select one or two implications for attributing God's omnipotence and the conceptual issues that arise, like whether God could break the laws of logic, or whether God could know the world as it changes as humans do, yet maintain immutability and thus omnipotence.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Could God break the laws of logic? (No, says Aquinas, being omnipotent does not mean being able to do anything, but being able to do anything that is logically possible; JL Mackie agrees)
- Could God make a stone too big for her or him to move? The paradox of the stone, from Averroes, and modern attempts to solve the paradox
- Omnipotence and omni-benevolence: Is God's omnipotence limited by God being unable to sin or cause evil/suffering? Why does an omnipotent God allow suffering if s/he could wipe it out? See Process Theology
- Omnipotence and omniscience: If God knows what is to happen, does God's knowledge change, thus limiting immutability, and thus, omnipotence?
- God's omnipotence and moral reality – the Euthyphro dilemma: If God decides what is moral, is it capricious or subject to change? If what is moral can be worked out without reference to God, then is there an alternative power, possibly greater, in the universe?
- If God is omnipotent, do humans have free will?
- God's omnipotence and his/her relation to time (transcendence *versus* immanence; everlasting *versus* eternal).

12. Explain and discuss the problems that arise from verifying claims made using religious language. [25]

This question enables a discussion of what constitutes religious language and how it applies to statements that involve propositional knowledge claims. There has been a long history of debate about religious language, from the medieval *via negativa*, to more recent interest in how philosophy can clarify the meaning of words through the work of philosophers like Hume, Kant, Russell, Ayer, Popper, and Wittgenstein. The ontological argument for the existence of God relies on the definitions of words and how those words relate to concepts and reality in the world. Other traditions, like Sufism, Kabbalah, many forms of Eastern mysticism, fideism in Western monotheism – and others – emphasize the desirability of direct knowledge of God gained through personal experience rather than through assent to propositions that are subject to rational discussion or evaluation. This question can allow for an exploration of different avenues for discussion of verification and the claims made in religious language.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- What is religious language? The attempts to describe the divine in human conceptual language, and possible difficulties associated with such attempts (*ie via negativa*)
- Is it possible to argue that religious language works in other ways, such as metaphor, symbolism, image and poetry?
- Descartes’s notion of “clear and distinct” ideas giving direct knowledge of God
- What is verification? The tradition of empiricism and its impact on philosophical treatment of language and meaning, eg Hume and his investigation of human knowledge and the dialogue concerning religion
- Reactions to verification, eg Logical Positivism and the Vienna Circle; Popper and falsification; Kuhn and paradigms
- Wittgenstein’s language games
- Direct knowledge of God – mystic traditions and the concept of meaning in different religious and faith traditions
- The Ontological Argument and its use of language definitions, and the relationship of concepts to reality
- Cognitivism and non-cognitivism
- Eschatological verification (Hick).

Optional theme 6: Philosophy of science

13. Explain and discuss the role of induction in the development of scientific knowledge. [25]

This question invites an investigation into the role and associated problems of the use of induction in science. It relates to the problem of moving from a number of examples to conclusions that cover all cases or cases that have not yet been observed. The role of assumption might be developed in the area of circumstances remaining the same and therefore there is consistency of consequences: The issue of past experience confirms a future belief. Whether nature behaves in a uniform way could be questioned as this is crucial to the use of inductive reasoning. Questions about the universality of what are in fact assumptions might be raised. Hume's questioning of the inductive process might be raised. Popper's claim that science does not use induction processes, but rather follows the "hypothetico-deductive method" might also be raised. Attempts to falsify assertions are a way of strengthening scientific claims. The problem of "projections" that is linked to the inductive process might also be raised (eg Kuhn's theory of paradigms as underlying assumptions). Alternatives to induction such as the "entrenched" stance confirming accepted positions and the open-minded peer appraisal might be brought into challenge induction as a method in science.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The relationship between hypothesis and induction
- Hume's view on induction
- Are Popper's challenges justified particularly in the light of Feyerabend's critique of his approach?
- Is induction really a logical process?
- The problems of social/peer expectations that affect interpretation and assumptions
- The fundamental role of induction in all scientific process and how everyday experiences confirm or try to confirm scientific truth; whether inductive truth has a high status
- The role of scientific laws might be raised and how they can be superseded.

14. Evaluate the claim that scientific progress is limited by the imagination of the scientist. [25]

This question gives an opportunity to both discuss what scientific progress is and what drives it. Progress in science can be seen as ever increasing knowledge and understanding of nature and the universe, and also in a more “meta” sense of breaking out of fixed paradigms. The claim implies that one of the main driving forces is the creative element within the scientist and the scientific method to challenge given positions and also to investigate in greater depth. Consequently it might be seen that breaking paradigms and fashions are what produces progress. Alternatively the claim can be challenged by asserting that political and social pressures drive progress far more than the thinking of the scientist. Similarly financial constraints or incentives could affect progress. Such factors might generate more progress in less abstract aspects of science. Equally, the claim could be investigated by pursuing how scientists investigate accidental happenings or simply use their intuition. A less positive interpretation of “limiting” might result in discussion of how the *status quo* and fixed accepted positions block progress. Similarly accepted social norms and mores limit scientific activity.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The nature of creativity in science
- Positive and negative applications of scientific knowledge might challenge what progress actual implies. Should scientific knowledge only focus on the amelioration of the human condition or just explain and understand it?
- The role of politics, market forces and power in relationship to scientific progress
- Ethical factors and their relationship to scientific progress
- The role of fear or superstition in blocking scientific progress
- Imagination as enabling scientific understanding and progress (eg Galileo, Arthur C Clarke, Asimov, Philip K Dick)
- Problems of the status of the observer in the data being evaluated (eg Planck)
- How perception can be changed so things are seen differently or new connections appreciated, eg Newton’s and Leibniz’s differing views on gravitation, Galileo and the relationship of the moon and tides
- Kuhn’s investigation of paradigm shifts.

Optional theme 7: Political philosophy

- 15. Evaluate the view that justice gives everyone the best chance of achieving their own good that they can reasonably expect, in a setting where others are simultaneously trying to achieve their own different good. [25]**

The question asks for an evaluation of the idea of justice as mutual advantage, and when doing so it gives the opportunity to discuss other central conceptions of justice. Versions of justice as serving mutual advantage can be found in Thrasymachus's "might is right" argument in Plato's *Republic* and in the fraudulent social contract identified by Rousseau as having been perpetrated by the rich on the poor. The *locus classicus* of this theory is *Leviathan* by Hobbes.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The common division between corrective and distributive justice
- In the history of thought about justice, the common justification of any given set of laws, conventions or practices has been to appeal to an external, including divine authority
- The natural law tradition: The positive law must itself be in accordance with a natural law which is knowable through the faculty of human reason (Stoics, Cicero, Aquinas)
- The utilitarian assumption that the good of different individuals can be in some sense lumped together, and the pursuit of aggregate utility proposed as the objective of everyone
- In the absence of an external lawgiver, how can an individual (not naturally benevolent) be encouraged to adopt the maximization of total utility as a binding demand?
- Justice as mutual advantage results in rules that constrain the pursuit of self-interest, but the content of those rules will correspond to those of ordinary ideas of justice only if a rough equality of power holds between all the parties
- Game theory and prisoner's dilemma accounts of mutual benefit and self-interest
- Is there an objective standard for justice?
- The teleological approach states that an account of the good for human beings can be given and that justice is the ordering principle through which a society (or humanity) pursues that good
- The conventionalist view that what is due to each person is given by the laws, customs and shared understandings of the community of which the person is a member
- Justice as fairness: Justice is a thin concept which provides a fair framework within which each person is enabled to pursue their own good, eg Rawls
- Contractarianism, eg Locke, Rousseau, Kant
- The description of social justice as "an empty phrase without determinable content".

16. Explain and discuss the idea that human rights are inalienable and universal. [25]

The question asks for an explanation and discussion of the idea of human rights following two central features: its universality and inalienable character. Since World War II, human rights have increasingly occupied a central position within the theory and practice of international law and politics and have received more attention within moral and political philosophy. The natural rights tradition of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries prefigures the modern human rights movement. However, it focused on a few relatively abstract moral rights that all persons were claimed to have in a state of nature prior to or apart from any institutional context. The idea at the heart of the modern human rights movement initiated by the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is one of numerous and specific rights clearly oriented toward the institutional realities of the Twentieth Century.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Whatever else they are or purport to be, human rights are rights, *ie* they show a deontic nature and intention
- The question of justification or philosophical ground for them beyond the claims that their recognition serves the cause of international peace and security and expresses and answers to the dignity and worth of human persons
- As moral rights they are proper objects of international concern and action apart from their current status within positive law, domestic or international
- They are universal in the sense that they are possessed by all human persons prior to and apart from any voluntary undertaking by the states to which they belong
- It is often said that human rights are the rights that all, and only, humans possess simply because they are human. However, some rights typically identified as human rights are rights that only human persons could plausibly be said to hold
- The proposal that human rights are a conventional rational social means to promoting the basic, general interest shared by all persons in developing and exercising the capacity for normative agency
- This capacity for normative agency is exercised and expressed when persons consider, evaluate, choose and revise their own course in life; this capacity is formed by: The capacity to make choices (autonomy), to act on choices (liberty), and to succeed in acting on choices (material welfare)
- The extent to which human rights include some material entitlements (*eg* the intention and consequences of mass migration)
- What rights do refugees who are stateless have? Who guarantees those rights? Are they enforceable? What are the implications of answers to these questions?
- Why are so many states erecting and reinforcing borders that directly deny some persons those inalienable rights to life and protection? Some say that they are doing so to protect the rights of their citizens. Account philosophically (being aware of different perspectives) for the conflicts underlying the issue of rights and who has them in these situations
- The broadening of the sphere of human rights to include the protection of the practices, needs and demands of social sub-groups; the additional related duty of the state to assist in promoting the diverse cultural features of a society
- The relation between human rights, cosmopolitanism, the ideals of global economic or distributive justice, the subordination of nation-states to a complex network of transnational and international institutions, or to some form of globally structured system of governance.