

Markscheme

May 2026

Philosophy

Higher level

Paper 3

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this product may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without the prior written permission from the IB. Additionally, the license tied with this product prohibits use of any selected files or extracts from this product. Use by third parties, including but not limited to publishers, private teachers, tutoring or study services, preparatory schools, vendors operating curriculum mapping services or teacher resource digital platforms and app developers, whether fee-covered or not, is prohibited and is a criminal offense.

More information on how to request written permission in the form of a license can be obtained from <https://ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/ib-publishing/licensing/applying-for-a-license/>.

© Organisation du Baccalauréat International 2026

Tous droits réservés. Aucune partie de ce produit ne peut être reproduite sous quelque forme ni par quelque moyen que ce soit, électronique ou mécanique, y compris des systèmes de stockage et de récupération d'informations, sans l'autorisation écrite préalable de l'IB. De plus, la licence associée à ce produit interdit toute utilisation de tout fichier ou extrait sélectionné dans ce produit. L'utilisation par des tiers, y compris, sans toutefois s'y limiter, des éditeurs, des professeurs particuliers, des services de tutorat ou d'aide aux études, des établissements de préparation à l'enseignement supérieur, des fournisseurs de services de planification des programmes d'études, des gestionnaires de plateformes pédagogiques en ligne, et des développeurs d'applications, moyennant paiement ou non, est interdite et constitue une infraction pénale.

Pour plus d'informations sur la procédure à suivre pour obtenir une autorisation écrite sous la forme d'une licence, rendez-vous à l'adresse <https://ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/ib-publishing/licensing/applying-for-a-license/>.

© Organización del Bachillerato Internacional, 2026

Todos los derechos reservados. No se podrá reproducir ninguna parte de este producto de ninguna forma ni por ningún medio electrónico o mecánico, incluidos los sistemas de almacenamiento y recuperación de información, sin la previa autorización por escrito del IB. Además, la licencia vinculada a este producto prohíbe el uso de todo archivo o fragmento seleccionado de este producto. El uso por parte de terceros —lo que incluye, a título enunciativo, editoriales, profesores particulares, servicios de apoyo académico o ayuda para el estudio, colegios preparatorios, desarrolladores de aplicaciones y entidades que presten servicios de planificación curricular u ofrezcan recursos para docentes mediante plataformas digitales—, ya sea incluido en tasas o no, está prohibido y constituye un delito.

En este enlace encontrará más información sobre cómo solicitar una autorización por escrito en forma de licencia: <https://ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/ib-publishing/licensing/applying-for-a-license/>.

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 students 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 4.

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 students *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 students. 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.
- Students 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 students will use material effectively that is *not* mentioned in the markscheme
- Examiners should be aware of the command terms for Philosophy as published in the Philosophy subject guide when assessing responses
- In markschemes for Paper 3, there are suggested pertinent points found in the text extract relating to philosophical activity. The markschemes include suggested questions that might stimulate analysis of those points. It is not intended that all possible points raised by the text are to be covered by the students. The markbands direct examiners to rewarding the responses accordingly
- The markscheme bullet points cannot and are not intended to predict how a student will relate his or her personal experience of the DP HL Philosophy course to the text extract, so the examiner must be aware that much of the response of the student will *not* be covered by material in the markscheme; but the student's response must relate to the text extract
- Responses for part A and part B should be assessed using the distinct assessment markbands.

Paper 3 part A markbands

This task requires students to answer a two-part question based on an unseen text. The text will be of a philosophical nature and in each examination session it will focus on either philosophy and technology or philosophy and the environment. Students must answer both part A and part B of the question. Part A requires students to explain a specified concept, issue or argument from the unseen text. It is expected that students will include explicit references to the text to support their explanation.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	• Little understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately. • The explanation is minimal. Points made are superficial and frequently unclear. There are few, if any, references to the unseen text.
3–4	• A basic understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, but often inappropriately. • The explanation is basic and underdeveloped. Points are often imprecise or vague, and it is often unclear what the response is trying to convey. There are occasional references to the unseen text.
5–6	• Some understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • There is a satisfactory explanation, although this explanation lacks clarity and development in places. Relevant points are made but lack accuracy and detail. Specific references to the unseen text are made, although these are sometimes ineffective.
7–8	• Good understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, mostly appropriately. • The explanation is clear, although may be in need of further development. Points made are relevant and accurate but lack detail. There are specific references to the unseen text.
9–10	• Very good understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. There is accurate and precise use of philosophical vocabulary. • The explanation is clear and well developed. Points are relevant, accurate and detailed. There are specific and effective references to the unseen text.

Paper 3 part B markbands

Part B picks out a feature of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy highlighted by the unseen text, and asks students to engage in a critical discussion of how this feature impacts the usefulness of philosophy in helping us to engage with pressing issues. Students are required to respond to this question making reference to the text and also to their own experience of doing philosophy in the philosophy course.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	- Little understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There is limited reference to the student's personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are few, if any, references to the unseen text. - The response is descriptive. Any analysis present is superficial or incoherent. Examples are not included or are irrelevant. There is little or no discussion of different points of view. Where a conclusion is included, this is very superficial or is not consistent with the rest of the response.
4–6	- Basic understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There is some reference to the student's personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. References are made to the unseen text, but these are more implicit than explicit and/or lack relevance to the question. - The response contains limited analysis and overall is more descriptive than analytical. Examples are included but are ineffective. There is limited discussion of different points of view. A simplistic conclusion is included.
7–9	- Some understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are specific references to the student's personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. Specific references to the unseen text are made, although these sometimes lack relevance to the question or are more implicit than explicit. - The response contains analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Examples are included. There is some discussion of different points of view. A conclusion is included.
10–12	- Good understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are explicit references to the student's personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are specific references to the unseen text. - The response contains critical analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Examples are used to support the discussion. There is some discussion of different points of view. The response argues to a conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.
13–15	- Very good understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are explicit references to the student's personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are specific and explicit references to the unseen text. - The response contains well-developed critical analysis. Relevant examples are used effectively to support the discussion. Different points of view are identified and evaluated. The response argues to a reasoned and clearly stated conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.

Unseen text – philosophy and contemporary issues

- (a) **With reference to the text and your own knowledge, explain the advantages and disadvantages of creating Artificial Moral Agents (AMAs).** [10]

This unseen text focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of creating artificial moral agents and the impact of technologies on individuals and societies. This is one of the pieces of prescribed content within the Technology topic. It should be noted that in this 10-mark part a question, students are only required to **explain the advantages and disadvantages of creating Artificial Moral Agents (AMAs)**. They are not required to engage in critical discussion and evaluation. This is signalled by the use of the “explain” command term.

Responses should include specific and explicit references to the text. For example, students could make reference to:

- Types and uses of machines that might have been given moral decision-making capabilities
- The positive and negative effects of such machines
- How might machines that can make moral decisions impact humans?
- Whether AMAs are deserving of rights and protection
- The control of AMAs by humans when they are seen as tied to humans’, or seen as ‘slaves’
- Definitions of harm and who defines harm
- Factors that result in moral decision making
- How machines might be held accountable for their actions
- The relationship of machine algorithms to the human mind
- The relationship of a human’s emotion and moral decision making

Responses should also include explicit reference to students’ own wider knowledge of ethics and technology. For example, students might include reference to:

- The use of use or abuse of AI technologies
- Improvement for humans and society that might come with AMAs and AI in general
- Scenarios where AMAs may get out of control and impact humans in a negative way
- Privacy issues and the control of social media by AMAs moderating or generating content
- Can machines comprehend human emotion or mirror human emotions (speculation might be seen in Ian McEwan’s ‘Machines like me’)
- Issues surrounding artificial intelligence having the nuisances of human intelligence
- The presence of moral decision making in ‘Gaming’ experiences; Are artificial games divorced from reality, or a mirror of it? Do they give insight into other aspects of human nature?
- Whether AMAs might be better at ethical reasoning than humans.

- (b) **With reference to the text and your own experience of doing philosophy, discuss the claim that philosophy raises issues and can investigate the unique problems and consequences of creating machines that can make moral decisions (AMAs).** [15]

This question invites discussion of the claim that doing philosophy can raise issues about AMAs and investigate what AMAs reveal the relationship between technology, society and ethics. Students are required to explicitly make reference to both the unseen text and also to their own experience of doing philosophy in the DP philosophy course. It should be noted that in this 15-mark part B question, students are required to engage in critical discussion and evaluation, signalled by the use of the “discuss” command term.

Students might explore:

- The relationship between morals and punishment. Can machines be punished – would machines feel guilt, reference might be made to Nietzsche’s ‘Genealogy of Morals’
- How you deal with morally ‘bad’ machines (reference could be made to ‘Machine like me’ by Ian McEwan, where the robot defends certain principles and seemingly acts in a more moral way, a better way)
- Use of robots in warfare. do rules of war apply to machines
- Issue of responsibility for actions – the human owner of the machine or the machines itself
- What values should AMAs be endowed with? Who decides? Could AMAs evolve and modify imparted values?
- The consequences of self-defence mechanism within machines
- Can AMAs develop consciousness?
- Free will and AMAs
- Issues of harm and the application Mill’s Harm principle
- Pickering’s views on cybernetics and human relationships
- Frankfurt school perspectives on technology and human nature

Responses should include specific and explicit references to the text. For example, students could make reference to:

- Whether robots should be granted rights
- Can AMAs understand notions of goodness or rightness
- Could there be a hierarchy of machines
- Lack of total predictability within programming and the application of algorithms
- If machines are as unpredictable as humans what are the consequences
- Whether AMAs might be better at ethical reasoning than humans
- The implications of Asimov’s rules outlined initially in imagined this approach in a 1942 story, “Runaround,” in which robots follow three laws: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. A robot must protect its own existence if such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law. The implications of the additional “Zeroth Law,”- “A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm.”
- Medical ethics issues: prolonging or curtailing life; AI in medical investigation and decision making

Responses should also include explicit references to students’ own experience of doing philosophy. For example, students might reflect on:

- Varying philosophical approaches to how humans make moral decisions
- How concerns about the societal impact of AI raises philosophical issues concerning rights, freedom, accountability
- Ways in which developments of AMAs might raise issues of how humans treat inanimate objects in general and human made objects in particular. Are AMAs endowed with more status than other objects?
- Are AMAs objects at all. Should / Could AMAs been seen as the Other

- Commercial exploitation of machines are there limits to exploitation. In the text reference is made to AMAs being seen as ‘slaves’
 - The degree to which Asimov and others changed the subject matter of philosophy to include AMAs
 - Do AMAs generate the need to redefine ideas concerning ethics
 - Theories of ethics; emotivism, consequentialism, utilitarianism
 - If machines could be objective in moral decision making, is this an advantage over human moral decision making which can be prone to objectivity and/or subjectivity
 - Student’s personal experience of philosophical questioning of future problems for humanity, such as AMAs
 - Use of AMAs and AI and issues of work and leisure; less work more leisure and the relationship of work and identity and meaning, connecting to the core theme
 - Similarities and differences between philosophy’s approach to increased automation compared to other subjects they have studied such as mathematics and the sciences
 - Whether people both in the political and commercial environment should consider wider philosophical implications before implementing technological changes: mention might be made of the development of nuclear weapons, chemical applications to increase crop yields, or the application of the wider use of AI, as well AMAs.
-