

Markscheme

May 2023

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 6 for the core theme and page 9 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 core theme 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 organized, 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 organized. 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

Excerpt

1. **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 stimulus raises several issues, particularly focused on the nature of a human being's worth and on the relationship with others. The excerpt highlights that the worth of a human's life does not imply a material value in terms of their work. The role and worth of human beings cannot be reduced to productive abilities, nor grounded in economic valuation. Candidates might refer to Marx's criticism of capitalism and productive relations or to the Frankfurt School, in terms of alienation and frustration stemming from mere productive activities in the consumer society. Moreover, candidates might consider the relationship between worth and quality of life, in terms of "functionings" and "capabilities" (eg: Nussbaum). The stimulus also recalls the importance of non-action, which is a key element of the *Tao* (*wu wei*).

As a contrasting view, candidates might refer to Plato's theory of the just city in order to sustain the idea that individuals can contribute to the social order and the city's harmony according to their own skills, abilities, and their work; their role in the city is strictly dependent on the work they can do. Some responses might pinpoint the meaning of consciousness and self-identity as related to work: does the individuals' job help them shape their selves? Do people's jobs define who they are? Or must there be a clear distinction between work and private life? Is it possible to be socially recognizable without any references to the work or activity done? Candidates might also consider human activity within specific religious traditions and their interpretation of work as a means to achieve or facilitate a deity's favour, as for the grace in Protestantism, eg: Weber.

The stimulus invites an exploration of the meaning of others and of their relations, which tend to be seen in terms of utility, economy, and optimization only: candidates might refer to Taylor's view on "instrumental reason" as the common way to interact with others. Candidates might also refer to the dualism of utility and non-utility, as explained by Zhuangzi: the worth of a useful thing is the cause of its destruction. The reduction of human relations to productive and useful relations is also a central element in Bauman's definition of "liquid society". Candidates might also explore Kant's view on dignity and his definition of the "kingdom of ends" in approaching the issue of the worth of humans and the differences between humans and animals, eg: Kant, Scheler, Gehlen, Plessner, Ortega y Gasset.

Candidates might explore the issue of human rights and their relationship with political or economic factors and how to interact with people who do not accept societal rules, eg: Nozick: how to grant that they have worth independently from what they do? Is employment a moral duty towards others? And if so, how can unemployed people contribute to society? Are their rights dependent on their working status? And if not, how to grant that it will not be the case? In a contrasting view, candidates might consider the utility of production and work: can jobs help people to support others, as in donation or charities (eg: Singer), or in other views (eg: Rawls's justified inequality)?

Candidates might explore the relation between action and thinking and the nature of thinking as an element of contemplation or as an element that is oriented towards action, eg: Ortega y Gasset, Dewey. Also, candidates might investigate the meaning of knowledge and whether it has to do with practical consequences, as in pragmatism or in Bacon's view (knowledge is power).

Candidates might examine whether the technological development of modern societies fosters a productive view of human worth.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Human beings as agents
- The role of non-action, *eg*: the *Tao* (*wu wei*)
- The issue of worthiness, *eg*: Kant's "kingdom of ends"
- Self-consciousness and work: does the shaping of the 'self' depend on work?
- Social relations and productive relations, *eg*: Marx, the Frankfurt School
- Social recognition and work: do people recognize others according to their job? Do the others see what we do instead of seeing who we are?
- Work as a means to contribute to society, *eg*: Plato's just city, Singer's view on donation, Rawls's principle of justified inequality
- Work as a moral duty towards society
- The role of unemployed people in a productive society; the role of people who do not accept societal rules, *eg*: Nozick's "free riders"
- The issue of human rights within a productive society
- Human relations as useful and economic relations, *eg*: Taylor's "instrumental reason"
- Worth as related to non-utility, *eg*: Zhuangzi
- Religious traditions in defining human beings' work and production as a means to relate to deity or gain salvation, *eg*: Weber
- The meaning of knowledge in terms of utility, *eg*: Bacon, Dewey
- Whether technological society fosters a productive view of human worth
- Whether the view of life as production affects the meaning of human life and its quality, *eg*: Nussbaum.

Image

2. **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.

The image raises questions about the nature of human beings in several fields: from bioengineering to AI, from genetics to education, from language to communication, from art to medical sciences. The stimulus offers the possibility to investigate the issues of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, identity, education. Candidates might explore the role that technology plays in shaping human identity, in relation to the possible consequences of eugenics, disease control, or birth control. Is technology a tool to increase human power? Or is it a tool that humans can use to control the environment, eg: energy, resources, climate? Can technology help humans in limiting the spread of diseases and viruses and their impact on social life, eg: new vaccines, smart working, e-learning? Candidates might consider how human identity changes within the perspective of healthier, longer lives, in relation with the quality of life, eg: Sen, Nussbaum. As a contrasting perspective, candidates might explore the views of a more genuine life which is better lived in the wilderness, in connection with spirituality, far from the speed that marks contemporary society, eg: Rousseau, the *Tao*.

Another possible focus might be on the role that technology plays in changing the human view of the body and the relation with it: is body a limit of human potential? Is body seen as a tool or a cage? Does technology change the relationship between mind and body? Is AI a possible combination of enhanced mind and body, as in a robot? In 1970, the Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori outlined the “uncanny valley” model to explain how the way humans see human-like robots changes: while humans look for humanoid robots in order to establish a more human relation, beyond a certain degree of similarity, humans begin to feel uncomfortable when interacting with robots that look too human: candidates might explore the issue of identity and how it is affected by AI and robots. This is particularly true when the robot is an infant or a toddler. What is the role that emotions play in shaping human identity and relations, eg: Damasio, Nussbaum?

Candidates might explore the role of technology in relation to education and whether it fosters creativity or conformity. Do digital devices enhance human creativity and critical thinking or do they help academic misconduct and malpractice? Candidates might consider the views of the Frankfurt School, eg: Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, on the role that technology plays in shaping cultural production and the consumer society. One more view might be related to the specific urban setting, where alienation and loneliness are often fostered by technology, eg: Simmel.

In more general terms, candidates might explore the role of technology in shaping our relationship with nature and whether it fosters a view of domination and exploitation of natural resources. Also, candidates might investigate the philosophical concerns that the development of technology has produced in the last century, turning into a self-productive power, eg: Heidegger, Jonas.

Another approach that candidates might consider refers to human relations: how does technology modify the way humans relate to each other? How does technology change the way humans communicate? Does technology change the way humans express themselves? Is art affected by new communication technologies and digital devices, such as smartphones and computers? Does art turn more into reproduction, eg: Benjamin, at the expense of creativity? Photographs, selfies, short videoclips on social media are the way younger humans express themselves and define who they are: how do new technological means of communication shape human identity and self-consciousness? Is human language impacted by technology? If technology tends to

homologate and promote conformity, then does it limit our understanding of others and, in general, diversity, or does it stimulate cultural and identity biases, *eg*: race, sex, religion?

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Identity: the role played by rationality and emotions, *eg*: Damasio, Nussbaum, Churchland
- Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity
- AI and robots: the issue of identity and human appearance, *eg*: Mori; transhumanism
- The mind-body problem, *eg*: Descartes; dualism vs physicalism
- Technology and the enhanced body; body as a limit or as an opportunity (tool)
- Identity and self-consciousness
- Whether technology fosters creativity or otherwise
- Technological development and cultural production, *eg*: the Frankfurt School
- Technology as an autonomous power, *eg*: Heidegger, Jonas
- How new technological devices and platforms (*eg*: social media) change the way humans shape their identity and relations
- Technology, language, communication, *eg*: Wittgenstein, Searle's Chinese room
- Technology and art as a means to express oneself
- Identity, conformity, and diversity: whether and how technology impacts the human understanding of the others
- Technology and nature: exploitation or preservation? The role of wilderness and spirituality
- Technology and medical sciences: how human perception of a healthier and longer life changes
- Technology and social life: whether technology helps limiting the spread of new diseases and viruses by impacting social life, *eg*: smart working, e-learning.

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 organized, 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 organized. 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 the claim that works of art are like flowers: we can enjoy them without knowing about soil, air, moisture, and seeds.

[25]

The claim is from Dewey's work *Art as Experience* and invites an analysis of the meaning of art and of an art experience. Dewey states that an individual can experience and enjoy an object while ignoring what is behind it, but the object cannot be totally understood. Candidates might consider the role of emotions in experiencing art and, in general, in experiencing and knowing the world around us. In doing so, candidates might mention Damasio's view on emotions. Candidates might explore the nature of knowledge in terms of rationality *versus* emotions or as a combination of those elements. Candidates might refer to Pascal's distinction between *esprit de finesse* and *esprit de géométrie*. Some responses might pinpoint the impossibility of communicating everything, particularly in the field of feeling and interiority; language has its own limits, *eg*: Wittgenstein. Another possible pathway might focus on the role of the passions, as a source of knowledge or as a distortion of it, *eg*: Descartes, Spinoza. Candidates might consider the role of rationality within Plato's view of the tripartite soul, or the role of opinion in his theory of the Divided Line. Some responses might highlight the importance of knowing the technique behind art production and in order to formulate complete aesthetic judgments, *eg*: Croce. The concept of taste and the different views on it, *eg*: Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, might be a topic that candidates might want to discuss. Reference to intuitionism, *eg*: Shaftesbury, Gehlen, might be considered by some candidates. Finally, candidates might explore whether technology has changed the fruition of art and has increased the knowledge and understanding of it or has compromised its "aura" *eg*: Benjamin.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Whether the aesthetic knowledge and understanding of the work of art are necessary in order to have an art experience
- Works of art as technique and knowledge, *eg*: Plato, Aristotle, Croce
- The role of emotions in art and/or in knowing the world, *eg*: Hume, Damasio
- Whether language can express all the content of an experience, *eg*: Dewey, Wittgenstein
- Knowledge as a combination of rationality and emotion, *eg*: Pascal, Damasio
- The role of the passions in human understanding, *eg*: Hume, Descartes, Spinoza
- The role of intuition in grasping essential elements of the understanding in diverse fields, such as logic, morals, and art, *eg*: Shaftesbury, Gehlen
- The views on taste as a personal judgment or as a reference to objective elements, *eg*: Hume, Kant, Nietzsche
- Whether technology has changed the fruition and understanding of art or has contributed to make it lose its "aura", *eg*: Benjamin.

4. Evaluate the claim that art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it.

[25]

The claim invites an exploration of the meaning of art and the nature of its end as a creative process. Candidates might discuss the creative goal of art *versus* imitation: reference to Aristotle's difference between *poiesis* and *mimesis* might be taken into account. According to Plato and Aristotle, art is basically imitation of reality and possession of technical skills; for Croce and Dewey, instead, art is not only grounded in technical knowledge but also in the creative spirit of the artist. Candidates might also consider that historically art has been used as a means of propaganda, as during Fascism, or to self-affirm the power of an authority, as in the case of a pope or a prince acting as a patron. Candidates might mention the views of art as a social means to deliver values, such as beauty, *eg*: Dewey, or present views that contrast the idea that art has to have a social function, *eg*: Croce. Responses might take into account the role of censorship and the freedom of the artist as a key value of his/her activity. The claim holds a view of art as a means to break the *status quo*: candidates might refer to the concept of conformity that modern society has fostered. Particularly, candidates might explore the ideas of the Frankfurt School on the cultural industry, *eg*: Horkheimer, Adorno. Another possible pathway is the role of images in modern society, from Debord's view of the society of the spectacle to the most recent use of images on the social media, *eg*: selfies and memes. Candidates might evaluate whether technology contributes to shape art more as a hammer or more as a mirror; replicability of the works of art seems to undermine their "aura", *eg*: Benjamin. Candidates might consider the essential function of art as that of shaking the common sense, so freeing art from any ethical judgment. Candidates might consider the potential of art in creating "new" realities, *eg*: Baudrillard's "hyper-real", or as in virtual reality, *eg*: Deleuze, Lévy. Finally, responses might discuss whether art has a function, *eg*: catharsis, or whether art is for art's sake.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Art as creation versus imitation of reality, *eg*: Aristotle's *mimesis*
- The role of art: political uses, *eg*: propaganda and censorship
- Possible social uses of art, *eg*: Dewey's view of art as a means of civilization
- Whether art's mission is to break social habits and conformity
- Whether art has an end, *eg*: catharsis, or is an end in itself
- Whether art can have a social function, *eg*: Croce
- Art production and cultural industry: conformity, *eg*: the Frankfurt School
- The role of images in modern society, *eg*: Debord
- Whether technology fosters creativity or conformity in art, *eg*: Benjamin
- Art as a means to create a new reality, *eg*: Baudrillard
- Art and virtual reality, *eg*: Deleuze, Lévy.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Explain and discuss the role of what other people tell us in knowledge development. [25]

A large body of the knowledge that we acquire is via testimony. This means that we are told it by others. As children, our parents tell us about the world, and then at school teachers continue the process. Much of what we learn is through the testimony of others, making it an important source of knowledge. This extends to the testimony of experts who inform us about specialist areas of knowledge such as the natural sciences or the economy. The prevalence of testimony raises questions about whether beliefs acquired via testimony are justified, and the conditions for them to be justified. Candidates might discuss the justification of beliefs. Coherentist theories about justification might hold that testimony is justified if it coheres with other beliefs. Foundationalists might question whether an individual has the appropriate foundations for their beliefs. Alternatively, perhaps a belief can be justified if it is founded on someone else's justification for it. It seems that we have to make judgements about the person providing the testimony, including about their character and the nature of their expertise. Since our judgments are not always fair, some have highlighted the possibility of testimonial injustice, eg: Miranda Fricker argues that women are more likely to have their testimony ignored. The epistemological issues raised by testimony include how to ascribe authority to someone. This might be related to recent issues concerning the rise of misinformation on social media platforms. Another issue is the social nature of knowledge acquisition. Since much of the knowledge that we learn comes from other people, how should we assess whether it is justified? Candidates might consider the relationship between empiricism and testimony; if knowledge is said to come from experience, then how should we view second-hand knowledge? Issues such as trust, authority, expertise and bias might also be discussed.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Empiricism and whether knowledge has to come from one's own experience
- Education and testimony
- Examples where testimony is particularly important, eg: religious experiences
- The role of experts and testimony
- The puzzles raised by much of our knowledge which is not first-hand, eg: that the earth is round. We all know this, but we do not have first-hand evidence of it ourselves, we trust the testimony of experts instead
- How we justify believing testimony
- The difference between testimony and anecdote and whether we are ever justified in believing anecdotes
- How we ascribe authority to individuals
- Ad Hominem arguments and how they relate to authority
- Issues like epistemic injustice where we unfairly ascribe or fail to ascribe authority to people based on non-epistemic criteria such as gender or race
- The difference between empirical evidence and testimonial evidence
- Whether something we have been told by an authority counts as a justified, true belief
- Whether we have any knowledge which is not in some way the result of testimony
- The social nature of knowledge
- The view that knowledge comes from human inquiry which takes place over time and relies on social institutions, eg: Peirce's The Fixation of Belief
- Whether empiricists could account for the place of testimony in knowledge acquisition, eg: Hume
- Searle's ideas about social ontology
- The relationships between social institutions and belief formation
- Whether rationalists recognize testimony. It seems that while philosopher Kings must reach knowledge themselves, their subjects are expected to accept their testimonial authority, eg: Plato.

6. To what extent is the world as it appears?**[25]**

Whether or not the world is as it appears is a classical question in epistemology. Plato's *Republic* uses the analogy of the cave to explore the idea that the world of appearances is removed from reality. In Plato's view, truth is found in the world of forms and can be reached through a careful dialectical process. Our ordinary ideas about the world are mere opinion. On the other hand, empiricism holds that our knowledge of the world is derived from experience. Logical positivists hold that sense data underlies all knowledge claims. For example, Frank Ramsay sets out a system for translating scientific theories into their primary language of statements about sense data, or experience. On the other hand, radical skepticism holds that the world may not be as it appears, and that we have no way of knowing whether it is or not. Descartes asks us to imagine that we might be dreaming, or that we might be being tricked by an evil demon. Since we have no way of knowing whether or not this is the case, Descartes questions whether the world is as it appears, and so whether we have any knowledge at all. Similarly, contemporary philosophers ask us to imagine that we might be a brain in a vat, fed experiences which are indistinguishable from reality, but where the world is very different from what we perceive.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Radical skepticism: the idea that we cannot know anything and that the world might be radically different from how it appears
- Empiricism and the idea that our knowledge comes from our experiences
- Logical positivism which attempts to reduce all knowledge claims to sense-experience data
- Rationalism which denies the primacy of experience when it comes to knowledge
- Thought experiments such as the Brain in the Vat which explore whether our experiences represent reality
- Plato's cave analogy which suggests that the world of appearances is a shadow of reality
- The extent to which theories, *eg*: scientific theories, describe the world as it truly appears or are merely tools for navigating reality
- Reference to indirect and direct realism, alongside anti-realism.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. To what extent could it be argued that what is best is what is right? [25]

This is a question that offers different options for its response. Some answers may judge it to be narrowly focused on Utilitarianism, which would provide a broad means for responding to the question, others might take a more meta-ethical approach. Objections to equating right with best include GE Moore's naturalistic fallacy, which attempts to deny the possibility of a natural quality in the world being described as morally good. Other answers might seek to explore how a term like "best" might stand up to an analysis by supporters of deontological approaches to ethics. Kant ends up using God as a means of guaranteeing the efficacy of his duty-based system, which offers a sense that "God knows best and will achieve the best outcome in the fullness of time". Supporters of Virtue Ethics approaches also look at outcomes over time, and with the assumption that the good for humans lies in *eudaimonia*, so there is a sense that adopting habits of virtue is for the best. Some responses might look at the standpoint of how to judge "right" or "best" and develop ideas about subjectivism and the limitations of ethical language. Can what is deemed right by the individual be a basis for ethics? Psychological or biological theories and economic theories could be discussed.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Teleological normative ethical theories like Utilitarianism and Virtue Ethics
- The notion of "best"
- The notion of "right"
- Duty-based normative theories which deny a role for considering effect in ethical decision-making
- Casuistry in ethics and whether focusing on technical details is worthwhile
- Legalism
- The connection of natural properties in the world (like pleasure) to "best"
- The naturalistic fallacy, eg: GE Moore
- Knowledge of what is right – is there a role for intuition?
- Divine command approaches to ethics
- Subjectivism and relativism in determining "best" or "right"
- Can science help determine what is best? Is Psychology the new basis for moral understanding?
- The challenges for a global society of determining "best" or "right", including the scope of international laws and a universal understanding of human rights.

8. Evaluate the claim that moral language has no special basis on which it can be judged to be true or not. [25]

This is a question on the origin and meaning of moral and ethical (which for this question can be assumed to refer to the same area of human knowledge) language. Is there a discrete way that moral language works, or is the attempt to use it in such a way an error, as purported, for example, by JL Mackie? For defenders of the meaningfulness of moral language there are different ways to support that meaningfulness. You can accept that moral language refers to the world outside the mind of the speaker, such that the language describes something objective. Here, its truth value is dependent on it existing separately in the world outside the speaker and be termed cognitive, in that it has the grounds by which it can be known. An example could be Utilitarianism. But the defender has to meet objections to the utilitarian claim that the experience of happiness is what moral language points to (see Mill's defence of Utilitarianism and GE Moore's naturalistic fallacy reply). Another defence might be the empirical observations of Virtue Ethics, with the concept of *eudaimonia* constituting the product of a moral life. Another defence could come from deontological approaches like Kant's, or the divine command traditions of religion. Attempts to reduce moral language to some other constituent of human experience include the work of the Logical Positivists who argue for a different understanding of moral statements in emotivism. Prescriptivism is closely related to emotivism, and later in the 20th century thinkers used scientific theories (see Dawkins and *The Selfish Gene*) and economic theories (like Game Theory) to account for moral language in a non-cognitive way. JL Mackie believed any attempt to find a separate descriptive area of human experience covered by moral language to be an error.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Objectivism and subjectivism in moral language
- Cognitivism and non-cognitivism
- Is moral language "special" or "peculiar" in how it pictures itself and its place in the world?
- The naturalistic fallacy
- Examples of normative ethical principles with a cognitive basis, eg: teleological theories, deontological theories, divine command traditions
- Primary and secondary properties
- Non-cognitivist approaches, eg: Ayer and emotivism, prescriptivism
- Scientific theories of ethics, eg: Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*
- Language approaches to questions of the basis of ethics, eg: Hume, Wittgenstein
- Economic and psychological theories of ethics, eg: Game Theory, The Prisoner's Dilemma
- The relation between moral language and natural properties, eg: GE Moore's naturalistic fallacy.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

9. Evaluate the claim that the power of national culture can be seen as a response to globalization.

[25]

The claim is present in A. Touraine's main work, *Can We Live Together? Equality and Difference*. It invites an exploration of a typical mark of contemporary society: the dualism between nationalisms and globalization. In Touraine's view, nationalisms rise because people live a contrasting push between local interests and world markets: this relation is the root of possible conflicts, since globalization tends to be a mere market event, whereas the single specific local and national communities do not deeply recognize each other, except for economic exchanges and trades. Globalization brings a lot upheaval, economic change, opportunities for some, but significant (economic, social and political) losses for others. Communities can be left behind and become disenfranchised. It is often these communities that can turn to nationalism. Candidates might consider the concept of tolerance and how it calls for a real recognition of others and their diversity, eg: Locke, Mill. Responses might also discuss relations among nations and the possible domination of the stronger one over the weaker one, eg: Kant's idea of perpetual peace. Candidates might explore the meaning and possibilities of multi-culturalism within the contrasting powers of nationalisms and globalization and the risk that minorities are progressively marginalized. Candidates might pinpoint the role of language and tradition to shape national identity, as opposed to global language, food, culture, and the importance that local factors have in shaping people's identity, eg: Nietzsche. Responses might take into account views on populism, which often support cultural nationalism, and its specificities, eg: Dewey. Also, candidates might consider the meaning and role of democracy as a means to limit contrasting powers and to allow a dialogic framework, eg: Dewey, Nussbaum. Candidates might highlight the issue of conformity, as a consequence of globalization or as an effect of democratization of societies, as in the "tyranny of majority", eg: de Tocqueville, Mill, or as in the "revolt of the masses", eg: Ortega y Gasset. Finally, candidates might consider the utility of a democratic society, as in a contractarian view or neo-contractarian frame.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Nationalism as a possible response to globalization: possible limits of globalized cultures
- The role of language in shaping identity
- Globalization as a mere market phenomenon
- Nationalism and diversity: minorities, migration, xenophobia, and other kinds of discrimination
- The importance of tolerance, eg: Locke, Mill
- Open society versus closed society, eg: Popper
- Power relations and dominations, eg: Kant
- Nationalism and local traditions in shaping identity, eg: Nietzsche
- The possibilities of multi-culturalism within a globalized world or nationalisms, eg: Touraine
- The role of populism in the rise of nationalisms, eg: Dewey
- The importance of democracy in fostering dialogue and diversity, eg: Dewey, Nussbaum
- The risks of globalization and democratization, as for the "tyranny of majority", eg: de Tocqueville, Mill, Ortega y Gasset
- Contractarian and neo-contractarian views on the utility of social agreement, including minorities, eg: Nozick.

10. Evaluate the claim that fake news is a philosophical problem, and not a technical problem.

[25]

The claim is by technologist Matt Pearson and invites an exploration of several possible issues, which stem from the topic of “fake news”. Fake news is a central issue in contemporary society, which is widely based on information. Information and communication technologies (ICT) is a crucial field for contemporary societies, since they set the possibilities of spreading information, news, warnings, advertising. Candidates are invited to evaluate whether fake news is a mere technical issue, or whether it also involves people’s beliefs. Cognitive sciences have shown that people tend to select information on the basis of what they already know and are familiar with, in order to corroborate their standpoints and reduce cognitive dissonance (Festinger’s theory) as much as possible. Candidates might consider the philosophical concept of truth, which is connected to the issue of fake news: responses might focus on the possible universalistic interpretations of truth and might make reference to Plato and his theory of the divided line. The concept of opinion might be discussed from a contrasting perspective, *eg*: Mill’s view. Also, candidates might pinpoint the concept of knowledge and its nature and possibly refer to cognitive sciences and cognitive biases in exploring the meaning of belief, as opposed to truth. Subjectivity *versus* objectivity, realism *versus* nominalism might be other possible references. Relativity of truth might invite responses to focus on an analysis of the conventional nature of truth, *eg*: as social agreement. Moreover, candidates might consider the distinction between truth as agreement, *eg*: Aristotle’s *adaequatio*, and truth as discovery, *eg*: Heidegger’s view on *aletheia*. Candidates might investigate the political consequences of the control of information and news making: it is not all about censorship and propaganda, but it often operates more subtly. As de Tocqueville well explained, news making strictly depends on the specific culture and rules of a country: the way the public opinion is driven is also a mirror of that society. Candidates might consider Chomsky’s views on the relation between media and politics, the lack of identifiable sources, and the concept of “big brother”, which somehow recalls Orwell’s *1984*. Conformity and homologation are the results of the “tyranny of majority”, as de Tocqueville, Mill, and Ortega y Gasset highlighted; but they are also the consequence of the consumer society and cultural industry, as the philosophers of the Frankfurt School explained, and others more recently, *eg*: Bauman. Therefore, candidates might evaluate whether fake news is not a technical problem, or how technology helps the creation and spread of fake news, *eg*: news on social media and how information has turned into “infotainment”, echoing what Debord foresaw in his *Society of the Spectacle*.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Truth as opposed to opinion and belief, *eg*: Plato
- The role that beliefs and biases play in shaping knowledge and in selecting information
- Truth as *adaequatio* or as *aletheia*, *eg*: Aristotle, Heidegger
- The role of opinion in society, *eg*: de Tocqueville, Mill
- The relation between media and politics, *eg*: Chomsky
- Public opinion and conformity, as in the “tyranny of majority”, *eg*: de Tocqueville, Mill, Ortega y Gasset
- Information and technology communication (ICT) and control of news making, *eg*: censorship, propaganda, monopoly
- The profitability of spreading fake news, and the roles and responsibilities of big companies such as Facebook and Twitter
- Information as a product of cultural industry, *eg*: the Frankfurt School, Bauman
- Information and new digital devices, such as smartphones and social media
- News as spectacle: “infotainment”, sensationalism, lack of decency, and deontology.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of religion

11. Evaluate the view that religious experience provides a motivation for belief. [25]

This question looks at the issues of religious experience and behaviour as explanatory reasons (or motivation) for individuals to have religious belief. Responses might draw on a variety of accounts and traditions of religious experiences, including mysticism, near-death experiences, conversion, Sufism, Kabbalism or reaction to prayer. The characteristics of religious experience, for example the noetic, ineffable, transcendent, charismatic or revelatory experience of the individual might be raised. But the question is not asking for a description of such experiences, but the role they play in motivating individual belief. In covering this, responses might investigate the verifiability or falsification of claims about religious experience, and how an individual might be motivated to belief, but not necessarily to justify it rationally, given the basis of the experience not being primarily intellectual. See Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard in their work on the relation of the subject to the experience of faith. Responses might look at other explanations for accounts of religious experience, including sympathetic ones from works like William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to more skeptical accounts of religious behaviour as seen in cults or fundamentalist groupings, often leading to radicalization. Here, the possibilities of indoctrination, illusion, projection or psychological pressure (eg: 'love bombing') might be raised. Modern psychology or neuroscience might be raised in attempts to explain religious experience, but responses might reject a reductionist approach as being irrelevant to the thing being addressed, given that personal experiences are not able to be accounted for by empirical measurement or investigation. Alternative motivations might be used as counter-examples, eg: Marx offering social and political motivations for religious behaviour and belief. Freud offered an early psychological account, as did his pupil and colleague, Jung. Responses may well treat the question in terms of an issue about religious language and how accounts of religious experience are framed from a language-problem perspective.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The characteristics of religious experience
- Can religious experience denote motivation for specific belief, or is it about spiritual awareness of a more general kind?
- The issue of answered prayer and the problem of suffering
- Philosophical approaches to motivation for belief – is language with a motivational element to be treated differently from usual propositional language?
- Wittgenstein's language games
- Verification and falsification
- Challenges to religious experience – illusion, projection, indoctrination
- Challenges to religious experience as motivation to belief, eg: Freud, Jung, Marx, Durkheim, Weber
- Modern accounts, eg: Foucault, psychology, neuroscience.

12. Evaluate the coherence of the characteristics and attributes of God(s).

[25]

This question invites exploration of the characteristics and attributes of God(s), most traditionally claims about God's omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, immutability and timelessness. God(s) as creator, both of the physical universe and the moral law, might be addressed. Responses may engage with other attributes like indivisibility, immanence, transcendence, or with pantheistic accounts. But the most common attribute is omnipotence, which raises questions about logical consistency (see the paradox of the stone) and moral consistency (see the problem of evil). Omniscience raises the issue of the immutability of God(s), given knowing all suggests God's knowledge must change over time as human knowledge does, or humans would have no freedom. The issue of God's omnibenevolence is challenged through various arguments to do with the problem of evil and suffering, and God's authorship of the moral law is challenged through the Euthyphro dilemma of Plato. In God's relation to time, God's immutability is also questioned, given the nature of time being change, so responses may look at God's eternal nature either as a form of timelessness or everlastingness. Alternative approaches like pantheism or panentheism (that God is in everything) might be covered, as might postmodern accounts, like those stemming from secular humanism (see Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Cupitt). A question that might be asked is the possible coherence of the whole system, as opposed to individual characteristics, loosening the reliance of faith on strict rational criteria or logical formalism. There is also the possibility of discussing this issue in relation to motivations for belief in the existence of God.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- God(s) as omnipotent (see the paradox of the stone)
- God(s) as omnipresent (see the issue of timelessness, everlastingness, immutability)
- God(s) as sustainer of the universe over time and the issues of immanence and transcendence, *eg*: Aquinas
- God(s) in relation to morality, *eg*: the Euthyphro dilemma, the problem of evil and suffering
- God(s) as all-knowing/omniscient and the issue of human freedom
- Modern accounts of God(s) starting with Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and post-modernism
- Secular humanist accounts, *eg*: Schweitzer, the Tübingen School, Cupitt
- God(s) as myth, *eg*: Robinson, Wiles
- The attributes of God(s) in relation to arguments for God's existence.

Optional theme 6: Philosophy of science

13. Evaluate the claim that experimentation is the central feature of science.

[25]

The aim of this question is to invite an evaluation of the role experimentation plays in science. An experiment is an intentional manipulation of the environment in order to test a theory or just to explore the phenomena. In a classical conception of physics, the experiment has been defined as the very principle of science, its definition. In this view, the experiment is the test of all knowledge. However, the variety and complexity of present scientific knowledge requires further analysis as to the extent to which experimentation might be identified as the central feature of science. During the rise of the natural sciences in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the nature and role of experiment has been a central focus of the reflection on science. In present days looking at the role of experiments within the overall practice of science it stands out that in order to perform experiments, researchers have to intervene actively in the material world. When doing so, scientists produce all kinds of new objects, substances, phenomena and processes. So, experimentation involves the material realization of the experimental system (the object of study, the apparatus, and their interaction) as well as an active intervention in the environment of this system. Since the question presents experimentation as the central feature of science answers might alternatively discuss other features of science held as central.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- The extent to which an experiment is the only judge of scientific truth
- The relation between experimentation and formulation of hypothesis
- A central feature of experimentation is the manipulation of, and the interference with, material things; implications and effects
- An experiment aims to realize a reproducible correlation between an observable feature of the apparatus and a feature of the object under investigation
- Experiments make use of a good deal of theory in their construction
- Scientific objectivity, experimentation and the reality of scientific entities
- Dewey's position, who kept experience in terms of experimentation central
- Popper's discussion of whether experiments can verify theories; he thinks that the best they can do is to falsify them
- Kuhn's view that experiments alone do not change scientific consensus, but a paradigm shift is needed
- Experimentation in different sciences from physics to biology
- The relationship between experiment and technology
- The control required of the experimental system and its environment
- Laboratory experiments in physics, chemistry, and biochemistry often allow control of the objects under investigation; in contrast, in field biology, medicine, psychology, and social science a strict experimental control is often not feasible
- The extent to which it still makes sense to speak of a "natural" nature when one merely deals with artificially produced laboratory worlds?
- The results of experimental science acquire certain endurance and autonomy: the knowledge encapsulated in material things, such as Watson and Crick's material double-helix model
- Social issues reflected in experimentation eg: the exclusion of Rosalind Franklin's contributions to the development of the double-helix model
- Thought experiments in various domains. Examples in physics including: Galileo's falling bodies, Maxwell's demon, Einstein's elevator and train, Schrodinger's cat, and Heisenberg's microscope
- The increasing use of "computer experiments"
- Modelling and experimentation
- The role of experimentation in the shaping of the scientific method, eg: Claude Bernard's and the study of experimental medicine
- Overlapping aspects under discussion: the technical details aspects of experiments, the epistemological justification of experimental knowledge, and the social legitimacy of the experimental style of doing science.

14. Evaluate the view that scientific research should be guided by ethical and social responsibility.

[25]

This question invites an evaluation of the extent to which research should be guided by ethical and social responsibility. The current developments in science and technology which have led to the concern that uncontrolled scientific progress is not always ethically or socially acceptable. During the last decades there have been growing worries regarding the development of scientific research. These concerns relate, among others, to: ethical issues raised by science, such as genetic engineering or global warming; cases of ethical misconduct in many aspects of research, including allegations of plagiarism, and violations of recombinant DNA regulations; ethical conflicts between scientific values and business or military values. In response to this, different perspectives have stressed the need to establish common values and benchmarks, as well as to promote ethical principles and standards to guide scientific progress and technological development. Reflection on the role that ethical and social responsibility should have in the progress of science and technology expresses present global concerns. These concerns appear in different forms and are carried out by individuals and institutions. For instance, UNESCO's activities in ethics of science and technology examine such progress in light of ethical considerations rooted in the cultural, legal, philosophical and religious heritage of various human communities.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Ethical issues arise as a result of science's interaction with the public because scientific research often has important social, moral, and political consequences
- The relationship between science and society; the moral responsibilities of scientists
- Social and ethical issues related to present scientific research, *eg*: ownership of genetic information, use and control of natural resources
- The extent to which in order to progress, scientific knowledge must be free of restrictions
- The view that no significant ethical issues arise in science because science is "objective." It studies facts, employs objective methods, and produces knowledge and consensus. Ethics involves the study of values, employs subjective methods, and produces opinion and disagreement
- Science might be seen as a career. Thus, some scientists may be tempted to violate ethical principles in order to advance their careers
- Data indicate that the frequency of misconduct in science is low when compared to the frequency of misconduct in other professions, such as business, medicine, or law
- Research in many sciences carries economic rewards; funding for research and the need to produce results
- Science is a cooperative activity that takes place within a larger social and political context; scientists cannot escape from the ethical problems and issues that arise in other aspects of social life
- The realization of science's practical goals which include solving problems in engineering, medicine, economics, agriculture, and other areas of applied research might be in accordance with ethical and social values or not
- The role of institutions: In 1998 UNESCO established the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) to advise on issues concerning ethics of scientific knowledge and technology
- The UNESCO recommendation that ethics and the responsibility of science should be an integral part of the education and training of all scientists and that they should be encouraged to respect and adhere to basic ethical principles and responsibilities of science
- The centrality of peer review and language agreement implying the importance of co-operation and consensus, with open testing/criticism
- The concept of democracy in relation to the role of ethical and social responsibility, *eg*: Dewey
- The impact of political pressure; the development of nuclear weapons and Niels Bohr's views
- Responsibility and scientific research in the diverse fields of investigation and practices, *eg*: Beauchamp - Childress and the principles of biomedical ethics.

Optional theme 7: Political philosophy

15. Evaluate the claim that the state has authority over its citizens in a civil society. [25]

This question asks about the nature of state authority in a society that is described as civil. This assumes – and this can be discussed in the responses – that there are certain conditions that must be met for the word “civil” to describe a society, resting on the agreement of the citizen with the rule or authority in operation. Notions of the state and its distinction from the concept of nation could be addressed, as can the theoretical or historical origins of state authority over the individual. The social contract was an early philosophical approach to understanding the relationship between individual citizens and the authority of the state, and there were different versions of this from the dystopian vision of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* to Rousseau’s more romantic notion of the noble savage in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality Among Men* (although Rousseau never uses the term identified previously by a different author). Locke provided a version that discussed the concept of property and the individual’s rights to rebel if that property was threatened by state action. Forms of government might be discussed, as routes to the legitimacy of state authority, including why democracy is argued for as the most enlightened form of government. Other forms of government include theocracy, monarchy or tribalism, where the agreement of the citizen is not expressed through participation in an election process. Is “enlightened dictatorship” a possibility? Ideologies may be mentioned, including the current battle between populism and liberalism in western countries. Answers might investigate communist systems of rule and global interactions between different systems through trade or the operations of the United Nations.

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Distinctions between state and nation
- The notion of civil society
- Social contract theory, eg: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau
- Criticism of social contract theory being based on speculation, eg: Hume
- Modern versions of the social contract, eg: Rawls, Sen
- Modern neo-liberalism, eg: Hayek, Friedman, Nozick
- How might totalitarian rule count against “civil society”?
- Anarchism and the grounds for revolution
- Forms of government including non-western models involving tribal authority or monarchy
- Political ideologies – what distinguishes a “command economy” like those in N Korea or China?

16. Evaluate the claim that promoting the rights of specific groups involves an unacceptable assault on fairness.

[25]

This question involves thinking about contemporary global debates ranging from the recent Black Lives Matter protests to the #Metoo movement, along with activism about the politics about gender fluidity, indigenous peoples' rights and the issues of immigration and asylum seekers. In addressing rights of specific groups of people, the issue of social justice is addressed. Responses might explore how rights arise and what rights should entail, as well as grant, for an individual. The foundation of minority rights is found in Mill's *On Liberty*, yet the most fundamental appeal in that work remains utilitarianism and the issue of the will of the strong remains a question. If a majority opposes specific protections or promotions of minority groups, on what grounds could those rights of minority groups be asserted? In promoting the rights of specific groups, the issues of distributive and retributive justice arise. In asserting equality as a social good, how far can any individual or institution be required to offer advantage, or even representation, to protected groups? Nussbaum treats this question in terms of the ability for women to prosper in their work *Creating Capabilities*. Other writers, like Hayek or Nozick, would not support any interference of the state in social matters. Responses might use employment practice or university selection, as examples, where the phrase 'positive discrimination' is used for recruitment. Gender and sexual politics and race or religious discrimination might be explored. The relationship between freedom, fairness and equality might be explored, asking if any form of promotion of one group, in the interests of inclusivity or diversity, is fair to another group. Responses might refer to Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. What is "fair" in this discussion? And what – and who judges what – is justice in questions such as these?

In addressing these philosophical issues candidates might explore:

- Distributive and retributive justice – what is social justice and what does it look like?
 - The rights of individuals and minority or specific groups
 - How do rights arise?
 - Equality versus freedom and fairness
 - Positive discrimination
 - The philosophical assumptions involved in promoting specific groups, eg: in employment or university recruitment
 - The majority vs the minority, eg: Mill
 - The individual and the group – how far can I judge an individual by characteristics other than universal human ones?
 - The rejection of social justice, eg: Hayek, Nozick, contemporary neo-liberalism
 - Contemporary issues, eg: race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, political representation, indigenous peoples
 - The rise of populism as a counter to communitarian liberal ideology.
-