

# Philosophy guide

First assessment 2016





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# Diploma Programme

## Philosophy guide

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## IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



# IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

## INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

## KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

## RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

## REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



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## Purpose of this document

This publication is intended to guide the planning, teaching and assessment of the subject in schools. Subject teachers are the primary audience, although it is expected that teachers will use the guide to inform students and parents about the subject.

This guide can be found on the subject page of the online curriculum centre (OCC) at <http://occ.ibo.org>, a password-protected IB website designed to support IB teachers. It can also be purchased from the IB store at <http://store.ibo.org>.

## Additional resources

Additional publications such as teacher support materials, subject reports, internal assessment guidance and grade descriptors can also be found on the OCC. Past examination papers as well as markschemes can be purchased from the IB store.

Teachers are encouraged to check the OCC for additional resources created or used by other teachers. Teachers can provide details of useful resources, for example: websites, books, videos, journals or teaching ideas.

## Acknowledgment

The IB wishes to thank the educators and associated schools for generously contributing time and resources to the production of this guide.

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# The Diploma Programme

The Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

## The Diploma Programme model

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core (see figure 1). It encourages the concurrent study of a broad range of academic areas. Students study: two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.



**Figure 1**  
*Diploma Programme model*

## Choosing the right combination

**Students are required to choose one subject from each of the six academic areas, although they can choose a second subject from groups 1 to 5 instead of a group 6 subject.** Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL.

At both levels, many skills are developed, especially those of critical thinking and analysis. At the end of the course, students' abilities are measured by means of external assessment. Many subjects contain some element of coursework assessed by teachers.

## The core of the Diploma Programme model

All Diploma Programme students participate in the three course elements that make up the core of the model. Reflection on all these activities is a principle that lies at the heart of the thinking behind the Diploma Programme.

Theory of knowledge (TOK) is a course that is fundamentally about critical thinking and inquiry into the process of knowing rather than about learning a specific body of knowledge. The TOK course examines the nature of knowledge and how we know what we claim to know. It does this by encouraging students to analyse knowledge claims and explore questions about the construction of knowledge. The task of TOK is to emphasize connections between areas of shared knowledge and link them to personal knowledge in such a way that an individual becomes more aware of his/her own perspectives and how they might differ from others.

Creativity, action, service (CAS) is at the heart of the Diploma Programme. The emphasis in CAS is on helping students to develop their own identities, in accordance with the ethical principles embodied in the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. It involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Programme. The three strands of CAS are creativity (arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking), action (physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle) and service (an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student). Possibly, more than any other component in the Diploma Programme, CAS contributes to the IB's mission to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

The extended essay, including the world studies extended essay, offers the opportunity for IB students to investigate a topic of special interest in the form of a 4,000-word piece of independent research. The area of research undertaken is chosen from one of the students' six Diploma Programme subjects or, in the case of the interdisciplinary world studies essay, two subjects, and acquaints them with the independent research and writing skills expected at university. This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing, in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, appropriate to the subject or subjects chosen. It is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. An authentic learning experience, it provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research on a topic of their choice, under the guidance of a supervisor.

## Approaches to teaching and approaches to learning

Approaches to teaching and learning across the Diploma Programme refers to deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the teaching and learning environment. These approaches and tools, intrinsically linked with the learner profile attributes, enhance student learning and assist student preparation for the

Diploma Programme assessment and beyond. The aims of approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme are to:

- empower teachers as teachers of learners as well as teachers of content
- empower teachers to create clearer strategies for facilitating learning experiences in which students are more meaningfully engaged in structured inquiry and greater critical and creative thinking
- promote both the aims of individual subjects (making them more than course aspirations) and linking previously isolated knowledge (concurrency of learning)
- encourage students to develop an explicit variety of skills that will equip them to continue to be actively engaged in learning after they leave school, and to help them not only obtain university admission through better grades but also prepare for success during tertiary education and beyond
- enhance further the coherence and relevance of the students' DP experience
- allow schools to identify the distinctive nature of an IB Diploma Programme education, with its blend of idealism and practicality.

The five approaches to learning (developing thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, self-management skills and research skills) along with the six approaches to teaching (teaching that is inquiry-based, conceptually focused, contextualized, collaborative, differentiated and informed by assessment) encompass the key values and principles that underpin IB pedagogy.

## The IB mission statement and the IB learner profile

The Diploma Programme aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to fulfill the aims of the IB, as expressed in the organization's mission statement and the learner profile. Teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme represent the reality in daily practice of the organization's educational philosophy.

## Academic honesty

Academic honesty in the Diploma Programme is a set of values and behaviours informed by the attributes of the learner profile. In teaching, learning and assessment, academic honesty serves to promote personal integrity, engender respect for the integrity of others and their work, and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies.

All coursework—including work submitted for assessment—is to be authentic, based on the student's individual and original ideas with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Assessment tasks that require teachers to provide guidance to students or that require students to work collaboratively must be completed in full compliance with the detailed guidelines provided by the IB for the relevant subjects.

For further information on academic honesty in the IB and the Diploma Programme, please consult the IB publications *Academic honesty*, *The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and *General regulations: Diploma Programme*. Specific information regarding academic honesty as it pertains to external and internal assessment components of this Diploma Programme subject can be found in this guide.

## Acknowledging the ideas or work of another person

Coordinators and teachers are reminded that candidates must acknowledge all sources used in work submitted for assessment. The following is intended as a clarification of this requirement.

Diploma Programme candidates submit work for assessment in a variety of media that may include audio/visual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or electronic sources. If a candidate uses the work or ideas of another person, the candidate must acknowledge the source using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner. A candidate's failure to acknowledge a source will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

The IB does not prescribe which style(s) of referencing or in-text citation should be used by candidates; this is left to the discretion of appropriate faculty/staff in the candidate's school. The wide range of subjects, three response languages and the diversity of referencing styles make it impractical and restrictive to insist on particular styles. In practice, certain styles may prove most commonly used, but schools are free to choose a style that is appropriate for the subject concerned and the language in which candidates' work is written. Regardless of the reference style adopted by the school for a given subject, it is expected that the minimum information given includes: name of author, date of publication, title of source, and page numbers as applicable.

Candidates are expected to use a standard style and use it consistently so that credit is given to all sources used, including sources that have been paraphrased or summarized. When writing text, a candidate must clearly distinguish between their words and those of others by the use of quotation marks (or other method such as indentation) followed by an appropriate citation that denotes an entry in the bibliography. If an electronic source is cited, the date of access must be indicated. Candidates are not expected to show faultless expertise in referencing, but are expected to demonstrate that all sources have been acknowledged. Candidates must be advised that audio/visual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or in electronic sources that is not their own must also attribute the source. Again, an appropriate style of referencing/citation must be used.

## Learning diversity and learning support requirements

Schools must ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to candidates with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents *Candidates with assessment access requirements* and *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*.

## Nature of the subject

Philosophy is a systematic critical inquiry into profound, fascinating and challenging questions, such as the following.

- What is it to be human?
- Do we have free will?
- What do we mean when we say something is right or wrong?

These abstract questions arise out of our everyday experiences, and philosophical tools such as critical and systematic thinking, careful analysis, and construction of arguments provide the means of addressing such questions. The practice of philosophy deepens and clarifies our understanding of these questions, as well as our ability to formulate possible responses.

Studying philosophy provides an opportunity for students to engage with some of the world's most interesting and influential thinkers. It also develops highly transferable skills such as the ability to formulate arguments clearly, to make reasoned judgments and to evaluate highly complex and multifaceted issues. The emphasis of the Diploma Programme philosophy course is on "doing philosophy", that is, on actively engaging students in philosophical activity. The course is focused on stimulating students' intellectual curiosity and encouraging them to examine both their own perspectives and those of others.

Students are challenged to develop their own philosophical voice and to grow into independent thinkers. They develop their skills through the study of philosophical themes and the close reading of a philosophical text. They also learn to apply their philosophical knowledge and skills to real-life situations and to explore how non-philosophical material can be treated in a philosophical way. HL students also engage in a deeper exploration of the nature of philosophy itself.

## Philosophy and international-mindedness

... an education for international-mindedness; an education designed to break down the barriers of race, religion and class; an education that extolled the benefits of cultural diversity; above all else, an education for peace.

(George Walker 2011: 19)

The DP philosophy course develops international-mindedness in students by encouraging them to engage with multiple perspectives and to carefully consider alternative points of view. The course encourages dialogue and debate, nurturing students' capacity to interpret competing and contestable claims. In addition to encouraging students to explore and draw upon a wide range of traditions and perspectives, the course also provides an opportunity to engage in an examination of concepts and debates of global significance. The flexibility of the DP philosophy course means that teachers have the opportunity to select relevant examples themselves to explore with their students, ensuring that the course appropriately meets their students' needs and interests, whatever their location or cultural context.

## Distinction between SL and HL

All SL and HL students follow a common core syllabus that encourages the development of certain skills, attributes and attitudes as described in the “Assessment objectives” section of this guide. The common core syllabus involves the study of the core theme, one optional theme and one prescribed text, as well as the completion of the internal assessment exercise. In addition, students at HL must study one further optional theme and the HL extension topic “Exploring philosophical activity”.

The difference in recommended teaching times at SL and HL signals a clear distinction between the demands made on students. Students at HL are required to demonstrate their understanding of philosophy as an activity by reflecting upon and evaluating the nature, function, methodology and purpose of philosophy. This activity is assessed specifically in paper 3 taken only by HL students.

## Philosophy and the Diploma Programme core

### Philosophy and the extended essay

Undertaking an extended essay in philosophy provides students with an opportunity to undertake a detailed philosophical investigation into a topic of special interest. The student is encouraged to engage in serious, personal thought, to develop and explore in a disciplined and imaginative way a specific philosophical question appropriate to the subject, and to arrive at a clear conclusion. The topic chosen for a philosophy extended essay may be stimulated, for example, by work done in class, by current events, by issues of contemporary debate, by discussion, by private reading and/or reflection, or by conceptual features of belief systems not previously encountered by the student.

The treatment of the research question must focus on philosophical exploration and the construction of an argument, which presupposes a careful, critical analysis of themes and/or texts. This approach, which allows many different ways of philosophical reflection, is based on the emphasis of the Diploma Programme philosophy course on doing philosophy. Within this context, the aim of a philosophical investigation is to encourage students to develop the ability to reason and argue, and to learn to take an independent position on philosophical issues. Philosophy provides rich scope for a wide variety of interesting extended essay titles. Examples of suitable extended essays in philosophy include the following.

- “An analysis of John Rawls’ procedure of justifying principles of social justice”
- “The roots of wisdom according to the *Tao Te Ching*”
- “An examination of the role played by reason in Anselm’s investigation of the concepts of predestination and free will”

Detailed guidance on undertaking extended essays in philosophy can be found in the *Extended essay guide*.

## Philosophy and creativity, action, service (CAS)

Studying philosophy provides excellent opportunities for students to make links to their CAS activities. One of the aims of the DP philosophy course is to encourage students to examine critically their own experiences and their ideological and cultural perspectives, and this includes their experiences in CAS. Ideas for effective links that could be made between philosophy and CAS include the following.

- Discussions of concepts such as moral responsibility, social justice, multiculturalism and tolerance could link particularly well to students' reflections on service activities undertaken as part of CAS.
- Discussions of philosophical texts such as Peter Singer's *The Life You Can Save* or Martha Nussbaum's *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* could provoke interesting discussions about service activities undertaken as part of CAS.
- Discussions about the nature of creativity as part of the aesthetics optional theme could link well to activities undertaken for the creativity element of CAS.

## Philosophy and theory of knowledge (TOK)

The TOK course (first exams 2015) engages students in reflection on the nature of knowledge and on how we know what we claim to know. The course identifies eight ways of knowing: reason, emotion, language, sense perception, intuition, imagination, faith and memory. Students explore these means of producing knowledge within the context of various areas of knowledge: the natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts, ethics, history, mathematics, religious knowledge systems and indigenous knowledge systems. The course also requires students to make comparisons between the different areas of knowledge, reflecting on how knowledge is arrived at in the various disciplines, what the disciplines have in common, and the differences between them.

Philosophy allows us to explore and reflect on the nature and meaning of being human. By presenting an opportunity to engage in these activities, the DP philosophy course shares many common concerns with TOK. Like TOK, philosophy places a premium on the development of critical thinking skills, on encouraging students to reflect on their own perspectives, and engaging with a diverse range of perspectives and interpretations. However, TOK is not intended to be a course in philosophy, and care should be taken not to turn the TOK course into an overly technical philosophical investigation into the nature of knowledge. While there might be a degree of overlap in the terms used, the questions asked, or the tools applied to answer these questions, the approach is quite different. The emphasis of the TOK course should be on applying concepts to real-life situations that students encounter in their DP subjects and the real world. Throughout this guide suggestions are made as to how effective links can be made between the philosophy and TOK courses.

## Prior learning

The philosophy course at both SL and HL requires no previous formal experience in philosophy, nor is any particular background in terms of specific subjects studied for national or international qualifications expected or required. The specific skills required to succeed in this course are developed within the teaching of the course itself.

## Links to the Middle Years Programme

Philosophy is sometimes offered explicitly as one of the disciplines within the individuals and societies subject group of the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP). Regardless of which of the particular disciplines from the subject group are offered, the fundamental concepts of MYP individuals and societies provide a very useful foundation for students who go on to study the Diploma Programme philosophy course.

MYP individual and societies is a concept-driven curriculum aimed at helping the learner construct meaning through improved critical thinking and the transfer of knowledge. At the top level are key concepts that are broad, organizing, powerful ideas that have relevance within the DP philosophy course but also transcend it, having relevance in other subject groups. These key concepts facilitate both disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning as well as making connections with other subjects. Across the MYP there are 16 key concepts, with the four in bold below being the focus for MYP individuals and societies.

The key concepts across the MYP subjects			
Aesthetics	Form	<b>Systems</b>	Communities
Connections	Creativity and innovation	Culture	Development
<b>Change</b>	Relationships	Identity	<b>Time, place and space</b>
Perspective	<b>Global interactions</b>	Communication	Logic

# Aims

## Group 3 aims

The aims of all subjects in **group 3, individuals and societies**, are to:

1. encourage the systematic and critical study of: human experience and behaviour; physical, economic and social environments; the history and development of social and cultural institutions
2. develop in the student the capacity to identify, to analyse critically, and to evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
3. enable the student to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society, to test hypotheses and interpret complex data and source material
4. promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant to both the culture in which the student lives and the culture of other societies
5. develop an awareness in the student that human attitudes and opinions are widely diverse and that a study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
6. enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.

## Philosophy aims

The aim of the **philosophy** course at HL and SL is to engage students in philosophical activity, enabling them to:

1. develop an inquiring and intellectually curious way of thinking
2. formulate arguments in a sound and purposeful way
3. examine critically their own experiences and their ideological and cultural perspectives
4. appreciate the diversity of approaches within philosophical thinking
5. apply their philosophical knowledge and skills to the world around them.

# Assessment objectives

There are four assessment objectives for the DP philosophy course. Having followed the course at SL or HL, students will be expected to do the following.

## **Assessment objective 1: Knowledge and understanding**

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of philosophical concepts, issues and arguments.
- Identify the philosophical issues present in both philosophical and non-philosophical stimuli.
- At HL only, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophical activity.

## **Assessment objective 2: Application and analysis**

- Analyse philosophical concepts, issues and arguments.
- Analyse the philosophical issues present in both philosophical and non-philosophical stimuli.
- Explain and analyse different approaches to philosophical issues, making use of relevant supporting evidence/examples.
- At HL only, analyse the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophical activity.

## **Assessment objective 3: Synthesis and evaluation**

- Evaluate philosophical concepts, issues and arguments.
- Construct and develop relevant, balanced and focused arguments.
- Discuss and evaluate different interpretations or points of view.
- At HL only, evaluate the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophical activity.
- At HL only, compare and contrast their personal experience of philosophical activity with the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in an unseen text.

## **Assessment objective 4: Selection, use and application of appropriate skills and techniques**

- Demonstrate the ability to produce clear and well-structured written responses.
- Demonstrate appropriate and precise use of philosophical vocabulary.
- In the internal assessment task, demonstrate evidence of research skills, organization and referencing.

# Approaches to the teaching and learning of philosophy

## Thinking skills

Being “thinkers” is explicitly identified as one of the learner profile attributes that all IB courses aim to develop, and no course lends itself to developing students who are thinkers more than philosophy. In addition to thinking skills such as problem-solving and lateral thinking, the DP philosophy course also aims to encourage thinking dispositions and behaviours, such as intellectual curiosity. One central aim of the DP philosophy course is for students to develop an inquiring and intellectually curious way of thinking, which reflects the importance placed by many experts in thinking skills on related behaviours such as “curiosity, flexibility, posing problems, decision making, being reasonable, creativity, risk taking, and other behaviours that support critical and creative thought” (Costa, Kallick 2000).

An important aspect of teaching philosophy is creating an environment that encourages students’ critical and creative thinking. One way to do this is through collaborative activities, as these can be a catalyst to higher-order thinking. “Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking” (Gokhale 1995). Generating creative ideas, argumentation and problem-solving are examples of tasks where collaboration can stimulate students’ thinking. Johnson and Johnson (1983) “found that when students work cooperatively in groups, increased reasoning strategies and greater critical thinking competencies result than in competitive or individualistic settings” (in Costa, Lowery 1989).

## “Doing philosophy”

Socrates did not teach philosophy, he taught to philosophize.

(Daniel and Auriac 2011: 416)

The emphasis of the Diploma Programme philosophy course is on “doing philosophy”, that is, on engaging students in philosophical activity and encouraging them to develop into independent thinkers. Clearly the philosophy course is an opportunity to introduce students to some of the world’s most influential thinkers, hence the inclusion of the study of a philosophical text as one component of the course. However, it is also an opportunity for students to engage in philosophical activity themselves.

Leonard Nelson, the German philosopher, emphasized the importance of students engaging with philosophy as an activity, commenting that effective philosophy teaching is “the art of teaching not philosophy but philosophizing, the art not of teaching about philosophers but of making philosophers of the students” (Nelson 1949). Each area of the course provides students with an opportunity to explore different philosophical concepts and issues, and having a single underlying focus on “doing philosophy” helps to give the course unity and coherence across these different elements.

## Engaging with philosophical texts

The DP philosophy course emphasizes the importance of students engaging with a primary philosophical text through the study of one work from the list provided in this guide. Teachers should select only **one** text from this list to study with their students, who will be expected to demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of its content in the examination. Extracts from other texts, both primary and secondary, can also be an extremely useful teaching resource. Using short extracts from texts in class is a particularly effective way to expose students to philosophical writing prior to the introduction of the study of an entire text. More guidance on using extracts from philosophical texts in lessons can be found in the *Philosophy teacher support material* (March 2014).

## Engaging with diverse perspectives

Engaging students with a variety of philosophical perspectives is an essential aspect of enabling them to appreciate the diversity of approaches within philosophical thinking. This engagement with diverse perspectives could be achieved in a variety of ways, for example, by using examples from more than one historical period or more than one philosophical tradition, or by using examples from a variety of cultural or geographic contexts. Suggested ways to engage students with a diverse range of perspectives can be found in the introductory sections of each part of the syllabus content in this guide, as well as in the suggested examples and discussion questions. More detailed support and guidance can also be found in the *Philosophy teacher support material*.

## Engaging with sensitive and controversial topics

Studying philosophy provides the opportunity for students to engage with exciting, stimulating and personally relevant issues. However, it should be noted that often such topics can also be personally challenging for students; for example, discussions of concepts such as life after death or ethical issues such as abortion can be sensitive or invoke strong personal feelings in students. Teachers should provide guidance to students on how to approach and engage with such topics in a sensitive and responsible manner.

## Syllabus outline

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
<p><b>Core theme</b></p> <p>The core theme “Being human” is compulsory for all students.</p>	50	50
<p><b>Optional themes</b></p> <p>SL students are required to study <b>one</b> theme from the following list. HL students are required to study <b>two</b> themes from the following list.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aesthetics</li> <li>2. Epistemology</li> <li>3. Ethics</li> <li>4. Philosophy and contemporary society</li> <li>5. Philosophy of religion</li> <li>6. Philosophy of science</li> <li>7. Political philosophy</li> </ol>	40	80
<p><b>Prescribed text</b></p> <p>Students are required to study <b>one</b> text from the “IB list of prescribed philosophical texts”. (This list is provided later in this subject guide.)</p>	40	40
<p><b>HL extension: Exploring philosophical activity</b></p> <p>HL students are required to explore the nature of philosophical activity.</p>		50
<p><b>Internal assessment</b></p> <p>SL and HL students are required to produce a philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus.</p>	20	20
<b>Total teaching hours</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>240</b>

The recommended teaching time is 240 hours to complete higher level courses and 150 hours to complete standard level courses as stated in the document *General regulations: Diploma Programme* (page 3 article 7.1).

## Syllabus content

### Core theme: Being human

This compulsory theme explores the fundamental question of what it is to be human. This exploration takes place through a discussion of key concepts such as identity, freedom, and human nature, and through a consideration of questions such as what sets humans apart from other species, where the boundaries of being human lie, and whether animals or machines could be considered persons.

One of the reasons we study philosophy is to search for a better understanding of ourselves, both as individuals and as members of our communities, and this search is at the heart of this element of the course. The core theme also provides an opportunity for students to engage with interpretations of the human condition from diverse world perspectives. For example, discussions of the concept of the self could include a wide range of examples from the Buddhist notion of *anattā* or “not-self” to Simone de Beauvoir’s rejection of the concept of a solipsistic isolated self (De Beauvoir 1965).

The core theme is focused around six key concepts, represented in the diagram below.

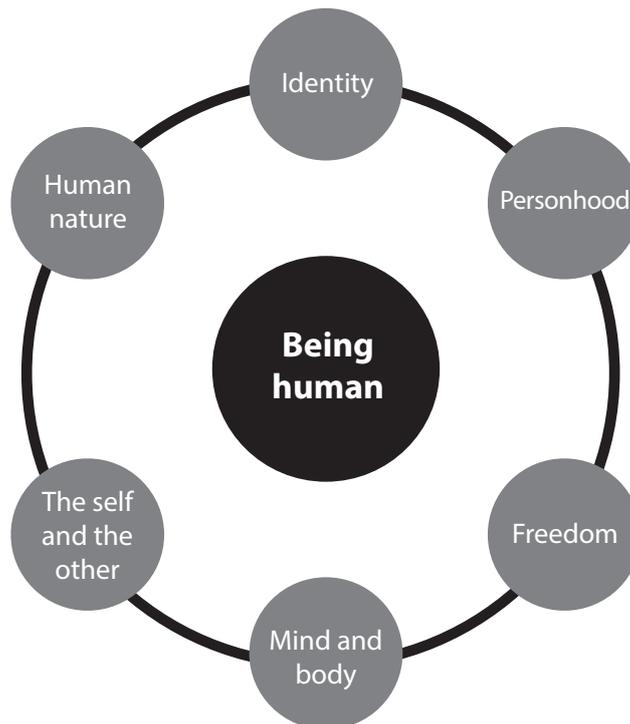


Figure 2

Each of these concepts creates a number of potential discussion questions, such as the following.

- What does it mean to be human?
- Is there such a thing as the self?
- Can we really ever know the other?
- Is how we interact with others what makes us human?
- Has what it means to be human been changed/shaped by technologies such as the internet?
- What can discoveries in neuroscience tell us about what it is to be human?

The core theme allows flexibility for teachers to explore topics of particular interest, such as the relationship between gender and identity, or topical news stories on advances in robotics. There is opportunity for teachers to explore a wide range of topics and to bring in stimulating examples. The table below provides suggestions on how to analyse each of the key concepts. Please note that these are suggestions only and should not be taken as prescriptive. The examples can be used or substituted for others according to specific interests and needs of the teacher and students.

Key concept	Ideas for topics of study	Ideas for discussion questions
Human nature	Individuality and universality The nature versus nurture debate Scientific perspectives such as behaviourism Emotion and reason	Do humans have common characteristics that are independent of the influence of culture? If so, what are these characteristics and what causes them? How fixed/malleable is human nature?
Freedom	Freedom and determinism Social conditioning Existential angst	Is there such a thing as free will? Are freedom and determinism incompatible? Why did the existentialists see freedom as the source of existential angst?
The self and the other	Self/non-self Solipsism and intersubjectivity Authenticity	Is there such a thing as the self? Is it possible to know oneself? How is how we define “the other” part of how we define “the self”?
Mind and body	The mind–body problem The problem of other minds Consciousness	What, if any, are the relationships between mind and body? Why do we believe that other people have minds like ours? What do recent advances in neuroscience tell us about how the human mind works?
Identity	Personal identity Identity over time Social and cultural identity	Who am I? What makes me the same person I was 10 years ago? To what extent does culture shape identity?
Personhood	Self-consciousness Agency Responsibility and authenticity	What is it to be a person? Could animals or machines be considered persons? Is being morally responsible the defining feature of being human?

## Optional themes

The purpose of the optional themes is to provide students with an opportunity to explore specific areas of philosophy in depth. The optional themes are as follows.

1. Aesthetics
2. Epistemology
3. Ethics
4. Philosophy and contemporary society
5. Philosophy of religion
6. Philosophy of science
7. Political philosophy

Students at HL must study **two** optional themes from this list, and students at SL must study **one** optional theme from this list.

This section of the guide provides an introduction to each optional theme, along with suggestions for:

- engaging with diverse perspectives in each theme
- making links to the core theme
- making links to theory of knowledge (TOK).

For each optional theme there is a table outlining the topics for study and the prescribed content. The tables also include suggested examples, which are suggestions only and should not be taken as prescriptive. Teachers are encouraged to exercise flexibility, creativity and innovation in their design and delivery of the philosophy course.

## Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

Aesthetics is an area of philosophy that focuses on the nature of art, on the relations between art and society, and on concepts such as beauty and taste. It allows students to explore philosophical questions such as the following.

- What is art?
- What is an artist?
- Are we all born artists?
- Do all works of art arise from the same artistic impulse?
- Can we identify works of art outside what a given society calls art?
- Should art have any religious, moral or political message?
- How do we define what is beautiful and what is ugly?
- Why should we be concerned with works of art when they might not seem to have utility?

This theme covers art in all its different forms, for example, music, painting, sculpture, literature, photography, film and drama. It provides an opportunity for reflection on everything from the very nature of a work of art to the relations between art and society. The first topic explores the nature of art and the relationship between art and creativity. Wollheim described the nature of art as “one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture” (1980). The second topic focuses on the artist and the artistic process, while the third topic explores aesthetic experience and judgment. These topics provide the opportunity to discuss positions such as Kant’s claim that an aesthetic experience of beauty is something that all people should agree on if the object is indeed beautiful (Kant [1790] 2008).

This theme also incorporates a variety of diverse perspectives. For example, the concern in much ancient Greek philosophy with beauty, harmony and unity could be contrasted with the emphasis in some Indian traditions on the concepts of *rasa* (the emotional theme of a work of art) and *sahrdaya* (the sensitive spectator). Exploring the relationship between art and society also presents an excellent opportunity to look at non-representational art in Islamic cultures.

### Links to the core theme

This optional theme provides a great deal of scope for making connections to the core theme. For example, discussions could focus on the extent to which art is a reflection of the human condition or whether art is something that differentiates humans from non-human animals. This theme also allows for discussion of how the arts can contribute to our view of self and to our identity, or whether art is always the product of human activity.

### Links to TOK

This theme also links well with TOK, and in particular with discussions of the arts as an area of knowledge. Discussions could explore TOK questions such as how the subjective viewpoint of an individual can contribute to knowledge in the arts, or whether the arts have a social function as a medium for social criticism.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
The nature of art	The nature of art Art and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is art?</li> <li>• Art as a means to an end versus art as an end in itself</li> <li>• Art as imitation, transformation or creation</li> <li>• Art as a means of expression, communication, education, propaganda, indoctrination</li> <li>• Is art always the product of human activity?</li> <li>• Creativity, for example, Plato's view of the artist as imitator rather than creator (2000), the idea of the muse, etc</li> </ul>
The artist and the artistic process	The artist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The artist</li> <li>• Accountability and creative licence</li> </ul> The artistic process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of technology</li> <li>• The artistic process around the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the notion of "the artist" a construct of Western civilization?</li> <li>• Are we all born artists?</li> <li>• Do the same aesthetic considerations arise for crafts as for art?</li> <li>• The beholder as an artist</li> <li>• Creative licence: conformity, censorship, sponsorship</li> <li>• Accountability: to oneself, to a cause, to moral, political or social ends</li> <li>• The artist as a reflector of existing values or as an agent of change</li> <li>• Can we identify works of art outside what a given society calls art?</li> <li>• The impact of various technologies on the production and concept of art, for example, digital art, film as art, etc</li> <li>• The artistic process around the world: function, form and content</li> </ul>
Aesthetic experience and judgment	Aesthetic experience Aesthetic judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic experience: pleasure, beauty, ugliness, perfection, the sublime, spontaneity, provocation</li> <li>• The role of the audience/spectator; can something be art if no one ever sees it?</li> <li>• How do we define what is beautiful and what is ugly?</li> <li>• Discussions of taste, for example, Hume's <i>Of the Standard of Taste</i> ([1757] 2013)</li> <li>• "Great works of art", artifacts, crafts, pop art, reproductions</li> <li>• Is it valid to classify forms of art? Does the diversity of forms of art imply there is no universal message?</li> <li>• Can we make a judgment about a work of art?</li> <li>• Art as a consumer good</li> </ul>

## Optional theme 2: Epistemology

Epistemology is the area of philosophy concerned with the study of the nature, origin, scope and limits of human knowledge. This theme allows students to explore such questions as the following.

- Can I know anything at all?
- What role does experience and reason play in the acquisition of knowledge?
- What is the relationship between knowledge and certainty?
- Is certainty possible or is all knowledge relative?
- Is knowledge culturally dependent?
- How important is the continuous development of knowledge for the advancement of humanity?
- What are the sources of knowledge?
- What are the limits of knowledge?

The first topic of this theme explores the nature and sources of knowledge while the second focuses on the limits and problems of knowledge. In addition to an introduction to classical debates in epistemology, these topics provide an opportunity to study more recent approaches in epistemology such as reliabilism and contextualism. The third topic examines the application of knowledge in society, bringing up questions about access to knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge, control and power. It also explores the connection between knowledge and technology.

While this theme draws generally on an approach where rationalism and empiricism have played a leading role, there is also an opportunity to explore a variety of different perspectives. For example, discussions over access to knowledge could provide an opportunity to explore feminist epistemology, or discussions of justification could explore the focus on the source of beliefs in much Indian Grammarian philosophy. Alternatively, discussions of the concept of truth could contrast the Chinese understanding of truth as a way of life and self-realization with the Western understanding of truth as a relationship between language and reality.

### Links to the core theme

Links between this optional theme and the core theme could be made, for example, through discussions of the idea of self-knowledge and whether the way we gain knowledge of our own beliefs and desires is different to the way we gain knowledge of the external world. These discussions of whether the self has privileged access to its own thoughts could link extremely well to discussions of the concept of the self in the core theme.

### Links to TOK

This theme has obvious links to TOK, although care should be taken to ensure that the TOK course does not turn into an epistemology course where the primary focus is a technical investigation of the nature of knowledge. Useful links to TOK could focus on questions of how we gain knowledge of the external world, how we can know if our senses are reliable, or whether we need prior concepts before perception can take place.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Nature of knowledge	Nature of knowledge Sources of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we experience the world around us?</li> <li>• What is knowledge and how is it acquired?</li> <li>• Rationalism and empiricism; a priori and a posteriori</li> <li>• Opinion, belief, knowledge</li> <li>• Language and meaning</li> <li>• Truth, coherence, correspondence and pragmatism</li> <li>• Grammarian philosophies: a classical Indian approach</li> <li>• Inductive and deductive reasoning</li> <li>• Self-knowledge</li> </ul>
Problems of knowledge	Scepticism Theories of justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realism, scepticism and arguments from illusion</li> <li>• Issues with knowledge as justified true belief, for example, the Gettier problem, the regress problem</li> <li>• Subjectivism and objectivism</li> <li>• Causal theory, idealism, phenomenism, perspectivism</li> <li>• Justification: what do we mean when we use the word "justification"?</li> <li>• Theories of justification, for example, foundationalism and coherentism</li> </ul>
Application of knowledge	Knowledge and power Access to knowledge Knowledge and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship between knowledge, control and power</li> <li>• Who should control knowledge and how should it be disseminated?</li> <li>• Knowledge and power, for example, Plato ([360 BC] 2000) or Freire (1985)</li> <li>• Access to knowledge and censorship</li> <li>• Article 27 of the <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i></li> <li>• Linking of technology with knowledge</li> <li>• Technology as a means of disseminating knowledge</li> </ul>

### Optional theme 3: Ethics

Ethics is an area of philosophy that explores the possible grounds for making moral decisions and examines concepts such as freedom, values, responsibility and virtue. This theme allows students to explore questions such as the following.

- Are there fundamental moral principles that apply in every situation?
- How do we decide if a particular action is right or wrong?
- How should we treat people?
- Are moral decisions culturally influenced?
- What do we mean when we say something is right or wrong?

The first topic for study focuses on normative ethics, exploring moral theories and how we make ethical decisions. It also reflects on moral principles themselves, and debates such as whether moral principles are universal or relative. The second topic for study focuses on meta-ethics, on the origins and nature of moral values and foundations for moral judgment. It also explores debates surrounding ethical language, including the significance of calling something right or wrong. The third topic for study focuses on applied ethics, exploring approaches to a variety of important issues, many of which are of international concern.

This theme deals with ethical questions from a variety of perspectives. For example, discussions of the concept of duty could contrast the Kantian approach to duty with the Buddhist concept of dharma. Discussions of virtue could compare ancient Greek virtue theorists such as Aristotle with the emphasis on virtue and character found in Buddhist texts such as the *Digha Nikaya* (Rhys Davids 2007).

#### Links to the core theme

Links between this optional theme and the core theme can be made by exploring questions such as whether moral behaviour is found only in human beings, or whether human beings are inherently selfish or altruistic. Applied ethical issues such as abortion and cloning also raise interesting questions over when human life begins and over definitions of personhood.

#### Links to TOK

This theme links very clearly to explorations of ethics as an area of knowledge in TOK. There is potential for discussions of the role of emotion, intuition and reason in ethical decision-making. There is also potential for interesting discussions of language in ethics and, in particular, the nature of non-literal language such as ethical language.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Normative ethics	<p>Moral principles</p> <p>Virtue-/character-based theories</p> <p>Deontological versus teleological theories</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is ethics more about self-interest or about the interests of others (ethical egoism)?</li> <li>• Are some virtues more important than others?</li> <li>• Doing the “right thing” and doing the “best thing”</li> <li>• Virtue-based theories, for example, Aristotle (2009), MacIntyre (1985), Anscombe (1958)</li> <li>• Deontological theories, for example, Kantian ethics, divine command theory, modern deontologists, for example, Kamm (1996)</li> <li>• Teleological theories, for example, Rule Utilitarianism, Act Utilitarianism, Mohist/state consequentialism</li> <li>• The greatest good for the greatest number</li> <li>• Duty, dharma</li> </ul>
Meta-ethics	<p>The origins and nature of moral values</p> <p>Foundations for moral judgments</p> <p>Ethical language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do moral principles exist? Are they universal or relative to a particular situation or culture?</li> <li>• Is moral sense natural or cultural? Relative or universal? Subjective or objective?</li> <li>• What is the significance of calling something “right” or “wrong”?</li> <li>• Is moral behaviour found only in human beings?</li> <li>• Foundations for moral judgments: belief in a higher being, rationality, emotion, natural law, gender, environment</li> <li>• Cognitivism and non-cognitivism, naturalism and non-naturalism, intuitionism and emotivism</li> <li>• The debate about the meaning of the word “good” in moral statements</li> </ul>
Applied ethics	<p><b>Two</b> of the following three areas of applied ethics must be studied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomedical ethics</li> <li>• Environmental ethics</li> <li>• Distribution of wealth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomedical ethics, for example, cloning, genetic engineering, stem cell research, euthanasia, abortion</li> <li>• Environmental ethics, for example, rights and interests of future generations, deep ecology, Gaia hypothesis, anthropocentrism, pollution, species extinction</li> <li>• Distribution of wealth—ethical responsibilities to humanity, for example, poverty, inequality, taxation, charity</li> </ul>

## Optional theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

This theme provides an opportunity for students to explore some of the most pressing issues facing society in the 21st century. It invites philosophical discussion of questions such as the following.

- Why is culture so hard to define?
- Are cultures distinct or are they always overlapping and interacting?
- Is censorship of information justifiable?
- What is the impact of technology on society?
- Is technology a tool used by society, or does technology shape society?

It is important to note that the questions raised by this theme should be explored in an explicitly philosophical, rather than sociological or anthropological, way.

The first topic for study is multiculturalism. This topic provides a space for discussions of cultural and religious diversity in contemporary society, as well as questions about whether tolerance of different groups in society is the same as seeing everyone as equal citizens. The second topic is liberty and rights, allowing for the exploration of issues such as censorship. The third topic is technology and media, which explores the role that technology plays in contemporary society, focusing particularly on the extent to which technology is a tool used by society, or something that shapes society. It also explores the impact of the media on contemporary life.

This theme lends itself to a wide variety of perspectives. For example, the treatment of marginalized groups in society can raise questions about the significance of gender in contemporary society, or controversies about affirmative action. Discussions of the treatment of marginalized groups in society could also lead particularly well into more general discussions about the dominance of particular paradigms or cultures and the marginalization of particular perspectives.

### Links to the core theme

This theme provides scope for interesting links to the core theme, particularly in relation to culture and identity. For example, discussions of the treatment of minority or marginalized groups in society would provide an excellent opportunity for discussions of cultural identity. Links could also, for example, be made between the concept of liberty and the concept of freedom in the core theme, or through discussions of the impact of technologies such as social networking on identity, for example, Dreyfus' claim that the internet "frees people to develop new and exciting selves" (2004).

### Links to TOK

This theme also links to TOK, particularly in terms of culture and shared knowledge. There is scope to explore whether it is possible to have knowledge of a culture or a society in which we have not been raised, and whether there exists a neutral position from which we can make judgments about competing claims from groups with different traditions and different interests.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Multiculturalism	<p>The concept of culture</p> <p>Treatment of minority or marginalized groups in contemporary society</p> <p>Tolerance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is culture so hard to define?</li> <li>• Are there distinct societies and cultures in the 21st century, or do all cultures overlap?</li> <li>• Treatment of ethnic and religious minorities, minority nations, indigenous peoples</li> <li>• Groups marginalized on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, language or ethnicity</li> <li>• Is tolerance enough or does it fall short of treating minority groups as equal citizens?</li> </ul>
Liberty and rights	<p>Positive and negative liberty</p> <p>Legal and human rights</p> <p>Censorship and freedom of information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinction between positive and negative liberty, for example, Berlin (1958)</li> <li>• Authority and liberty, for example, Mill ([1859] 2008)</li> <li>• Legal and human rights: duties and responsibilities</li> <li>• Liberty and equality: needs, merit, entitlement and social justice</li> <li>• Degrees of censorship and freedom of information</li> <li>• Terrorism and the use of violence for political ends</li> </ul>
Technology and media	<p>Role of technology in contemporary society</p> <p>Impact of technology on contemporary society</p> <p>The media in contemporary society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology as a tool used by society</li> <li>• Social constructivist approach (technology and society co-construct each other)</li> <li>• Marx—technology as a factor determining the economic and social structure of society</li> <li>• Technology as a cultural phenomenon that influences our perception of the world</li> <li>• Information and communication technology—how it changes human endeavour and human existence</li> <li>• Impact on society of new media technologies for social networking</li> </ul>

## Optional theme 5: Philosophy of religion

Philosophy of religion focuses on some of the central concepts in religious traditions, raising fundamental questions about the nature of our existence. This optional theme explores philosophical questions about the nature and existence of God, the nature of religious language, and different aspects of religious experience and behaviour. It explores questions such as the following.

- Can God be defined?
- Can we prove the existence of a higher being through reasoning or experience?
- What is the nature and scope of religious language?
- Is spirituality possible without religion or belief in a higher being?
- Could religion be seen as a purely social phenomenon?

The first topic focuses on exploring the nature and existence of God, allowing for discussion of different beliefs about God, and different versions of theism such as monotheism and polytheism. It also looks at some of the attributes ascribed to God in different traditions, such as the traditional Judeo-Christian concept of God as omniscient and omnipotent. This topic also focuses on the question of whether we have reason to think that God does or does not exist, exploring some of the main arguments for and against the existence of God.

The second topic examines religious language and whether it is possible to talk about the infinite and divine in language used to talk about the finite and the human. The third topic explores different types of religious experience and behaviour such as meditation, prayer and near-death experiences. It also examines controversies over claims to have experienced the divine, providing the potential for interesting links to psychology and neuroscience.

This theme encourages engagement with a wide variety of different philosophical perspectives. For example, discussions on the nature of religious language could explore the way that religious language is used symbolically and metaphorically in the Sikh text the *Guru Granth Sahib*, or the suggestion that God can only be talked about in terms of what he is not by exploring Maimonides' writing on the Via Negativa in his *Guide for the Perplexed* (1995).

### Links to the core theme

This optional theme provides opportunities for links to the core theme by exploring questions such as whether religion can give meaning to human life or provide insight into what it is to be human. It also allows for discussions of the contribution of religion to an understanding of the self and the role of community in being human, for example, through discussion of the centrality of the concept of Ummah in Islam.

### Links to TOK

There are also links to TOK regarding faith as a way of knowing, including questions such as the relationship between faith and reason, and whether faith is essentially irrational. This theme also raises TOK questions about whether it is possible to know God, whether it is possible to use human language to describe the divine and how we decide between the competing claims of different systems of religious knowledge.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Nature and existence of God	<p>Nature of God</p> <p>Arguments for the existence of God</p> <p>Arguments against the existence of God</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of God: types of theism, for example, monotheistic views, polytheistic views, pantheistic views</li> <li>Characteristics and attributes of God, for example, omniscience, omnipotence, timelessness, benevolence</li> <li>Arguments for the existence of God: for example, ontological argument, cosmological argument/ kalam cosmological argument, teleological argument, karma as proof of God in Nyaya Hindu thought</li> <li>Arguments against the existence of God: for example, argument for the existence of evil, omnipotence paradox, argument about inconsistent revelations</li> </ul>
Religious language	<p>Views of religious language</p> <p>The problem of religious language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views of religious language: symbolic, metaphorical, mythological, religious language as analogous, for example, Aquinas</li> <li>Religious statements as verifiable after death, for example, Hick</li> <li>Problem of religious language: use of ordinary human language to talk about the divine, for example, William Alston (2005)</li> <li>Religious statements as meaningless if they cannot be verified, for example, Ayer and Verificationism ([1936] 2002)</li> <li>Religion as a legitimate language game, for example, Wittgenstein ([1953] 2009)</li> </ul>
Religious experience and behaviour	<p>Definitions/ characteristics of religious experience</p> <p>The value of religious experience</p> <p>Religion in a multicultural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of religious experience: mysticism, for example, Sufism, near-death experiences, prayer</li> <li>Characteristics of religious experience, for example, ineffability, transcendence, personal, etc</li> <li>Faith and motivation for belief</li> <li>Social conformity versus personal commitment</li> <li>The pragmatic view of faith: indoctrination, illusion, projection</li> <li>Links to psychology, neuroscience</li> <li>Religion and multiculturalism—religious pluralism, for example, John Hick and “the real” ([1989] 2004)</li> </ul>

## Optional theme 6: Philosophy of science

Philosophy of science focuses on exploring the assumptions, methods and implications of science. This theme provides an opportunity to explore questions such as the following.

- What differentiates science from pseudoscience or non-science?
- Does science aim at truth?
- What is the central feature of science?
- Are all elements of the universe, including human action, ultimately determined?
- Should scientists be held morally responsible for the uses of their inventions?

The first topic focuses on exploring the nature and methodologies of science. It includes a study of the differences between science and non-science, something Popper identified as the central question for philosophy of science (Popper [1934] 2002). The second topic focuses on science and the self, allowing opportunity for exploration of the more metaphysical elements of the philosophy of science as well as opportunity to make connections to the core theme. The third topic focuses on the relationship between science and society, discussing issues such as the moral responsibilities of scientists.

This theme provides numerous opportunities to explore topics from a variety of perspectives, for example, discussions of the relationship between science and society could explore questions about the effect that male dominance of the scientific profession has had on scientific knowledge and practice. This optional theme also provides an excellent opportunity to study influential Islamic philosophers of science such as Ibn Al-Haytham or the biologist Al-Jahiz. (See, for example, Jim Al-Khalili's 2010 text *Pathfinders: The Golden Age of Arabic Science*.)

### Links to the core theme

Links between this optional theme and the core theme could be made, for example, in discussions of the view of ourselves as being purely material entities who behave entirely according to natural laws. The topic "cognitive science and the concept of the self" also presents particularly rich opportunities for links to be made to the exploration of the concept of self in the core theme.

### Links to TOK

Links between this optional theme and TOK could be made, for example, through discussion of the role of imagination and intuition in the natural sciences. Students could discuss, for example, Feyerabend's claim that no description of the scientific method could be broad enough to encompass all the approaches and methods used by scientists, and that imposing prescriptive scientific method would stifle creativity ([1975] 2010). Discussion of the role of observation in the sciences could also link to TOK discussions of whether observation involves both perception and cognition, or debates about the objectivity of observations.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Nature and methodologies of science	<p>The nature of science (aims, assumptions and foundations)</p> <p>Demarcation (science, pseudoscience and non-science)</p> <p>Methodologies of science</p> <p>The development of science</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of science: the aims, assumptions and foundations of science</li> <li>Does science aim at truth? (Scientific realism and anti-realism)</li> <li>What is the central feature of science?</li> <li>Positivist and post-positivist philosophers, for example, Feyerabend ([1975] 2010) etc</li> <li>The role of observation, experiment and measurement in science</li> <li>How does science develop? Progress of science, for example, Kuhn ([1962] 1996)</li> <li>Methodology, theory formation and inductive and deductive reasoning</li> <li>Nature of theories and hypotheses, explanation, deductive-nomological method of explanation</li> <li>Are there some questions science will never be able to answer?</li> </ul>
Science and the self	<p>Metaphysics and the nature of reality: space, time and causation</p> <p>Cognitive science and the concept of the self</p> <p>Biological and biochemical explanations of the self; teleological and reductive explanations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophy and modern physics: matter and energy and their interactions</li> <li>Space, time, causality, determinism, nature of physical laws</li> <li>Relationship between philosophy of mind and cognitive science</li> <li>Neuroscience and the brain</li> <li>Consciousness</li> <li>Artificial intelligence</li> <li>Biosemiotics/biocommunicative approach</li> <li>Is it possible to reduce all life processes to biochemical reactions?</li> </ul>
Science and society	<p>Accountability and responsibility of the scientist</p> <p>Implications of science: the impact of science on society</p> <p>The effects of society and social values on science</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social accountability; responsibility and ethical conduct in research</li> <li>Funding for scientific research</li> <li>Scientific openness</li> <li>Military research</li> <li>Ownership of genetic information</li> <li>How independent is science from its social context?</li> <li>Social constructivism</li> <li>Post-second world war "Big Science", for example, human genome project, large hadron collider, etc</li> </ul>

## Optional theme 7: Political philosophy

Political philosophy is an area of philosophy that focuses on the study of people in societies, the claims people have on each other in the form of rights and obligations, and their demands for justice, equality and liberty. Political philosophy is also concerned with an analysis of the state and its institutions. This theme provides an opportunity for students to explore questions such as the following.

- Under which conditions can political obligation arise and what is its extent?
- Are freedom and equality compatible?
- Can justice be an ideal as well as a process?
- How are laws justified and are there aspects of human life that laws should not attempt to regulate?
- Are human rights inalienable and universal?

The first topic for study deals with civil society, the state and government. It focuses on concepts such as sovereignty, authority and power, as well as different forms of government. The second topic focuses on justice, including the relationship between justice and fairness, and the distinction between retributive and distributive justice. The third topic focuses on rights, including the distinction between human rights and legal rights, and the relationship between rights, duties and responsibilities.

This optional theme provides an opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives by exploring questions such as whether the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* has a Western bias. Students could discuss examples or short extracts of text from a diverse array of political philosophers from different traditions, for example, ranging from Confucius in the 5th century BC, to Ibn Khaldun in the 14th century, to 20th century classics such as John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (1971).

### Links to the core theme

This theme provides excellent opportunities to make links to the core theme, in particular to the concept of freedom and questions such as whether there are aspects of human life that laws should not attempt to regulate. The topic on rights also raises interesting issues over the potential similarities and differences in the rights accorded to humans and to non-human animals.

### Links to TOK

There are many opportunities to make interesting links between this optional theme and TOK, for example, discussions of whether there is an objective standard for justice could link well to wider TOK discussions about subjectivity and objectivity. Similarly, discussions of fairness could explore students' intuitions about what is fair and the wider role of intuition as a way of knowing.

Topics for study	Required content	Suggested examples/discussion questions (This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive)
Civil society, the state and government	Civil society The state (and its origins) Forms of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctions between state, nation, government and civil society</li> <li>• Social-contract theories of state of nature, civil society and forms of government</li> <li>• Revolution; anarchism</li> <li>• Authority, sovereignty, power and corruption</li> <li>• Forms of government: one-party democracy, multiparty democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, authoritarian and totalitarian rule, tribalism, theocracy</li> <li>• Ideologies of government: liberalism, conservatism, Marxism and socialism</li> <li>• Civil duties</li> <li>• Analogy of state as family/clan</li> </ul>
Justice	Distributive and retributive justice Social justice Justice and freedom Justice and equality Interrelationships between justice, freedom and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distinction between distributive and retributive justice: the right or will of the strong; substantive versus procedural justice; truth; the moral and positive law</li> <li>• Gender politics</li> <li>• Relations to fairness (for example, Rawls)</li> <li>• Is there an objective standard for justice?</li> <li>• Why did Hayek describe social justice as “an empty phrase without determinable content?” (1976)</li> <li>• What is the precise relationship between justice, freedom and equality?</li> <li>• What role does/should equality play in theories of justice?</li> <li>• Is strict equality impossible?</li> </ul>
Rights	Human and non-human rights Natural rights and legal rights Rights, duties and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are human rights inalienable and universal?</li> <li>• Do non-human animals have rights? Do non-living things have rights (for example, Arne Naess 1990)?</li> <li>• Legal rights: What is the relationship between legal rights and other rights such as moral rights? What rights should legal systems recognize?</li> <li>• Conflicts of rights; denials of rights</li> <li>• <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> (1948) and <i>Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities</i> (1998)</li> </ul>

## Prescribed texts

This element of the course provides an opportunity for students to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a primary philosophical text. This is a challenging but rewarding part of the course, providing an opportunity for the student as a philosopher to engage in dialogue with another philosopher.

Students at both HL and SL are required to study one text from the list of prescribed philosophical texts, found below. The study of the text should focus on the text itself, not on a commentary on the text. It is strongly advised that the study take place in class with the support and direction of the teacher. The texts should be studied in their entirety, except in the case of Plato and De Beauvoir where the lengths of the texts concerned has meant that particular sections of the texts have been specified for study.

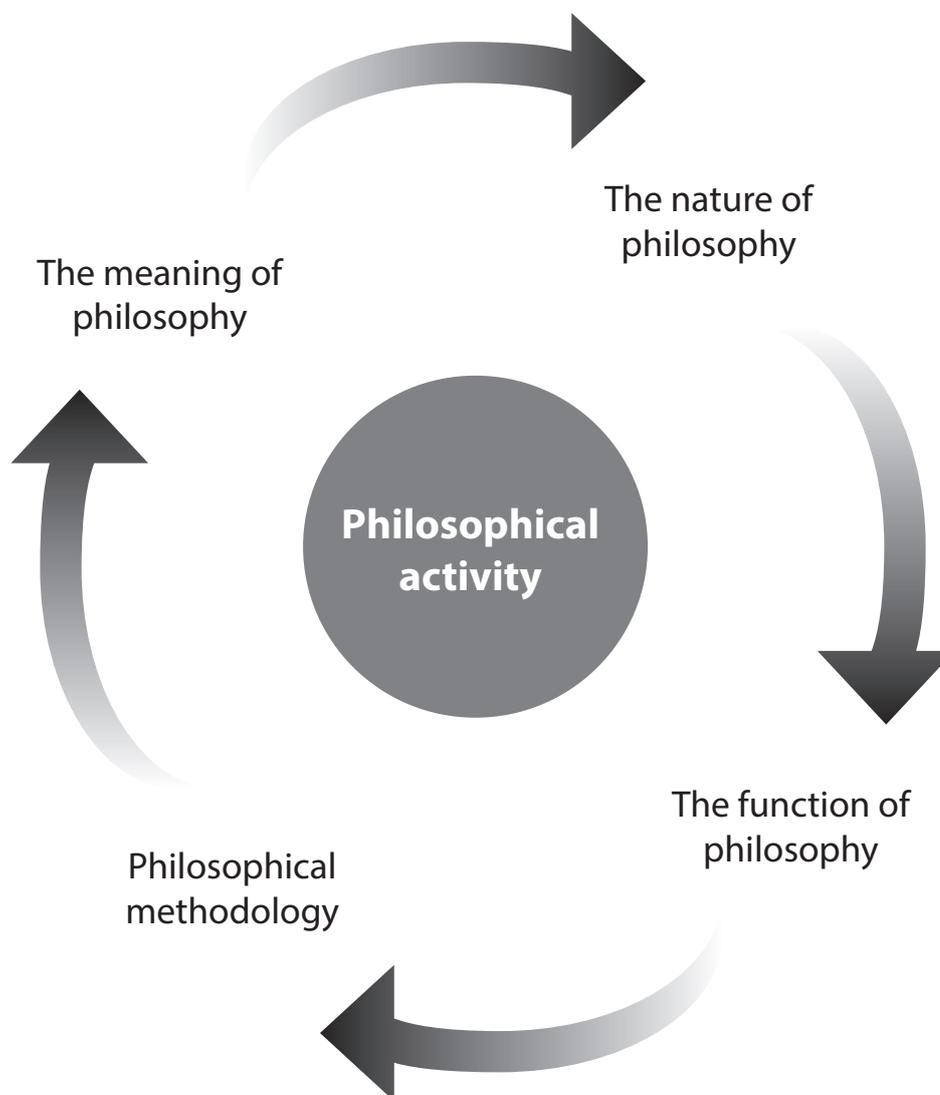
Teachers should select only one text from the list below to study in full with their class. However, teachers are also encouraged to use extracts from other philosophical texts to support their teaching of the other elements of the course. More guidance on the effective use of philosophical texts can be found in the *Philosophy teacher support material*.

### IB Diploma Programme list of prescribed philosophical texts

Author	Title
Simone de Beauvoir	<i>The Second Sex</i> , Vol. 1 part 1, Vol. 2 part 1 and Vol. 2 part 4
René Descartes	<i>Meditations</i>
David Hume	<i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i>
John Stuart Mill	<i>On Liberty</i>
Friedrich Nietzsche	<i>The Genealogy of Morals</i>
Martha Nussbaum	<i>Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach</i>
Ortega y Gasset	<i>The Origin of Philosophy</i>
Plato	<i>The Republic</i> , Books IV–IX
Peter Singer	<i>The Life You Can Save</i>
Charles Taylor	<i>The Ethics of Authenticity</i>
Lao Tzu	<i>Tao Te Ching</i>
Zhuangzi (Please note alternative spellings also include Chuang Tzu.)	<i>Zhuangzi</i> , Inner Chapters

## HL extension: Exploring philosophical activity

This element of the course is an opportunity for HL students to engage in a deeper exploration of the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy. This allows them to deepen their understanding of philosophy as an activity by providing a space in the course for critical examination of philosophy itself, and its methods. It is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their own experience of “doing philosophy”.



**Figure 3**

This aspect of the course focuses on the fundamental question of what philosophy is and how we do it. Discussions of the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy can be introduced by asking students to reflect on their own experiences of philosophical activity in other areas of the course. For example:

- when studying the core theme, a student could contrast the contribution of philosophical activity to the debate about the human condition with that of science or religion
- when studying a prescribed text, the student could consider how a philosopher formulates, poses and writes about philosophical problems, or responds to the work of other philosophers
- when discussing an extract from a philosophical text, the student might explore why certain philosophers choose to write in dialogue form, prose, fiction, monologue, poetry, aphorism and so on.

The HL extension is an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of philosophy as an activity. This can be done in a number of ways, but examples of good discussion questions/topics include the following.

Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why might some people define philosophy as a discipline that is centred on dealing with questions?</li> <li>• Is philosophy more a skill than a body of information?</li> <li>• Why is it that philosophy once included areas of knowledge that are now distinct (for example, natural philosophy is now physics)?</li> <li>• Why are there so many diverse views on the meaning and methods of philosophy?</li> </ul>
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should the goal of philosophy be?</li> <li>• Does philosophical activity involve more than abstract thinking? Why might so much Indian philosophy emphasize the association of philosophy with practice (Sadhana)?</li> <li>• What sort of knowledge can philosophy yield?</li> <li>• Should philosophy be regarded as a discipline in its own right, or does philosophy simply try to analyse the foundations and assumptions of other disciplines? Do you think that philosophy constitutes the total system of human knowledge?</li> <li>• Is the main purpose of philosophy to enable us to evaluate critically our own beliefs and attitudes?</li> </ul>
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can philosophical activity inform our understanding of who we are and our place in the world?</li> <li>• Is philosophy an exchange of ideas?</li> <li>• Why did Camus claim that the only real philosophical problem is suicide? (Camus 1995)</li> <li>• Does philosophy have a primarily social function?</li> <li>• Does philosophy bring order and/or beauty to our thoughts?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between philosophy and religion? Why do some thinkers maintain that philosophy is ultimately concerned with the cognition of God?</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is conceptual analysis the primary methodology of philosophy?</li> <li>• Why is the production of rational and cogent arguments so central to philosophy?</li> <li>• Can philosophy be done in isolation?</li> <li>• How important is awareness of past and current responses when exploring philosophical questions?</li> <li>• How relevant are the findings of other disciplines to philosophical discussions?</li> </ul>

This element of the course provides excellent opportunities for making links to TOK, particularly to the methodology element of the knowledge framework used to compare areas of knowledge in the TOK course. Reflecting on the scope and methods of philosophy should provide opportunities to compare and contrast with the scope and methods of other disciplines, helping students to gain a deeper understanding of the different scope and methods of different areas of knowledge.

The assessment of the HL extension element presents students with a previously unseen philosophical text. Students are asked to write a response to this text in which they compare and contrast the view of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text with their own experiences of philosophical activity. More guidance on preparing students for this component (including assessment samples, sample lesson plans, suggestions of appropriate texts, and guidance on how to write a paper 3 essay) can be found in the *Philosophy teacher support material*.

# Assessment in the Diploma Programme

## General

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. The most important aims of assessment in the Diploma Programme are that it should support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. Both external and internal assessments are used in the Diploma Programme. IB examiners mark work produced for external assessment, while work produced for internal assessment is marked by teachers and externally moderated by the IB.

There are two types of assessment identified by the IB.

- Formative assessment informs both teaching and learning. It is concerned with providing accurate and helpful feedback to students and teachers on the kind of learning taking place and the nature of students' strengths and weaknesses in order to help develop students' understanding and capabilities. Formative assessment can also help to improve teaching quality, as it can provide information to monitor progress towards meeting the course aims and objectives.
- Summative assessment gives an overview of previous learning and is concerned with measuring student achievement.

The Diploma Programme primarily focuses on summative assessment designed to record student achievement at, or towards the end of, the course of study. However, many of the assessment instruments can also be used formatively during the course of teaching and learning, and teachers are encouraged to do this. A comprehensive assessment plan is viewed as being integral with teaching, learning and course organization. For further information, see the IB *Programme standards and practices* document.

The approach to assessment used by the IB is criterion-related, not norm-referenced. This approach to assessment judges students' work by their performance in relation to identified levels of attainment, and not in relation to the work of other students. For further information on assessment within the Diploma Programme, please refer to the publication *Diploma Programme assessment: Principles and practice*.

To support teachers in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Diploma Programme courses, a variety of resources can be found on the OCC or purchased from the IB store (<http://store.ibo.org>). Additional publications such as specimen papers and markschemes, teacher support materials, subject reports and grade descriptors can also be found on the OCC. Past examination papers as well as markschemes can be purchased from the IB store.

## Methods of assessment

The IB uses several methods to assess work produced by students.

### Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are used when the assessment task is open-ended. Each criterion concentrates on a particular skill that students are expected to demonstrate. An assessment objective describes what students should be able to do, and assessment criteria describe how well they should be able to do it. Using assessment criteria allows discrimination between different answers and encourages a variety of responses.

Each criterion comprises a set of hierarchically ordered level descriptors. Each level descriptor is worth one or more marks. Each criterion is applied independently using a best-fit model. The maximum marks for each criterion may differ according to the criterion's importance. The marks awarded for each criterion are added together to give the total mark for the piece of work.

## Markbands

Markbands are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate student performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor.

## Markschemes

This generic term is used to describe markschemes that are prepared for specific examination papers. Analytic markschemes are prepared for those examination questions that expect a particular kind of response and/or a given final answer from the students. They give detailed instructions to examiners on how to break down the total mark for each question for different parts of the response. A markscheme may include the content expected in the responses to questions or may be a series of marking notes giving guidance on how to apply criteria.

## Inclusive assessment arrangements

Inclusive assessment arrangements are provided for candidates with assessment access requirements. These arrangements enable candidates with diverse needs to access the examinations and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the constructs being assessed.

The IB document *Candidates with assessment access requirements* provides details on all the inclusive assessment arrangements available to candidates with learning support requirements. The IB document *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes* outlines the position of the IB with regard to candidates with diverse learning needs in the IB programmes. For candidates affected by adverse circumstances, the IB documents *General regulations: Diploma Programme* and the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme* provide details on access consideration.

## Responsibilities of the school

The school is required to ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to candidates with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents *Candidates with assessment access requirements* and *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*.

## Assessment outline—SL

## First assessment 2016

Assessment component	Weighting
<p><b>External assessment (2 hours 45 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Paper 1 (1 hour 45 minutes)</b></p> <p>This paper contains two compulsory sections: section A and section B.</p> <p>Section A consists of two stimulus-based questions on the core theme. Students are required to answer one question.</p> <p>Section B consists of two essay questions for each of the optional themes. Students are required to answer one question.</p>	<p><b>75%</b></p> <p><b>50%</b></p>
<p><b>Paper 2 (1 hour)</b></p> <p>This paper consists of two questions for each of the prescribed philosophical texts. Each question is split into two parts: part A and part B. Students are required to answer one question, and to answer both part A and part B of that question.</p>	<p><b>25%</b></p>
<p><b>Internal assessment (20 hours)</b></p> <p>Students are required to complete a philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus. This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p>	<p><b>25%</b></p>

## Assessment outline—HL

## First assessment 2016

Assessment component	Weighting
<p><b>External assessment (4 hours 45 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Paper 1 (2 hours 30 minutes)</b></p> <p>This paper contains two compulsory sections: section A and section B.</p> <p>Section A consists of two stimulus-based questions on the core theme. Students are required to answer one question.</p> <p>Section B consists of two essay questions for each of the optional themes. Students are required to answer two questions, each from a different optional theme.</p>	<p><b>80%</b></p> <p><b>40%</b></p>
<p><b>Paper 2 (1 hour)</b></p> <p>This paper consists of two questions for each of the prescribed philosophical texts. Each question is split into two parts: part A and part B. Students are required to answer one question, and to answer both part A and part B of that question.</p>	<p><b>20%</b></p>
<p><b>Paper 3 (1 hour 15 minutes)</b></p> <p>This paper consists of one unseen text. Students are required to write a response to this text, comparing and contrasting their experience of philosophical activity with the view(s) of philosophical activity found in the text.</p>	<p><b>20%</b></p>
<p><b>Internal assessment (20 hours)</b></p> <p>Students are required to complete a philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus. This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p>	<p><b>20%</b></p>

# External assessment

Two different methods are used to assess students.

- Detailed markschemes specific to each examination paper
- Markbands

For paper 1, paper 2 and paper 3 there are markbands and markschemes. The markbands are published in this guide, and are related to the assessment objectives established for the philosophy course and the group 3 grade descriptors. The markschemes are specific to each examination.

## External assessment details—SL

### Paper 1

**Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Weighting: 50%**

This paper contains two compulsory sections: section A and section B.

Section A consists of two stimulus-based questions based on the core theme “Being human”. Students are required to answer one question.

Section B consists of two essay questions for each of the optional themes. Students are required to answer one question.

Each question is worth 25 marks.

### Paper 2

**Duration: 1 hour**

**Weighting: 25%**

This paper consists of two questions for each of the prescribed philosophical texts. Each question is split into two parts: part A and part B. Part A requires students to explain a key concept, idea or argument from the text they have studied, and part B requires students to engage in critical discussion of that text. Students are required to answer one question, and to answer both part A and part B of that question. Part A is worth 10 marks, and part B is worth 15 marks.

## External assessment markbands—SL

### Paper 1: Section A, SL and HL (Core theme)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable essay structure there is minimal focus on the task.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>There is little relevant knowledge demonstrated, and the explanation is superficial. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> <li>The essay is descriptive and lacking in analysis.</li> </ul>
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is some attempt to follow a structured approach, although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Knowledge is demonstrated but lacks accuracy and relevance, and there is a basic explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear attempt to structure the response, although there may be some repetition or a lack of clarity in places.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Knowledge is mostly accurate and relevant, and there is a satisfactory explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>

Marks	Level descriptor
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is structured and generally organized, and can be easily followed.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge. There is a good explanation of the issue. Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

## Paper 1: Section B, SL and HL (Optional themes)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>The student demonstrates little relevant knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> <li>The essay is mostly descriptive. There is no discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view. Few of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is some attempt to follow a structured approach, although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear attempt to structure the response, although there may be some repetition or a lack of clarity in places.</li> <li>Knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme is mostly accurate and relevant. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response is structured and generally organized, and can be easily followed.</li> <li>The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge of philosophical issues arising from the optional theme. Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>

## Paper 2: Part A, SL and HL (Prescribed text)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little relevant knowledge of the specified idea/argument/concept from the text.</li> <li>• The explanation is minimal.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> </ul>
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some knowledge of the specified idea/argument/concept from the text is demonstrated but this lacks accuracy, relevance and detail.</li> <li>• The explanation is basic and in need of development.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> </ul>
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the specified idea/argument/concept from the text is mostly accurate and relevant, but lacking in detail.</li> <li>• There is a satisfactory explanation.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> </ul>
7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge of the specified idea/argument/concept from the text.</li> <li>• The explanation is clear, although may be in need of further development.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately.</li> </ul>
9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response contains relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge of the specified idea/argument/concept from the text.</li> <li>• The explanation is clear and well developed.</li> <li>• There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.</li> </ul>

## Paper 2: Part B, SL and HL (Prescribed text)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little relevant knowledge of the text.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> <li>• The response is mostly descriptive with very little analysis.</li> <li>• There is no discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view.</li> </ul>
4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some knowledge of the text is demonstrated but this lacks accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>• There is some limited analysis, but the response is more descriptive than analytical.</li> <li>• There is little discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view.</li> <li>• Some of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the text is mostly accurate and relevant.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>• The response contains analysis, but this analysis lacks development.</li> <li>• There is some discussion of alternative interpretations or points of view.</li> <li>• Many of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response contains accurate and relevant knowledge of the text.</li> <li>• Philosophical vocabulary is mostly used appropriately.</li> <li>• The response contains clear critical analysis.</li> <li>• There is discussion and some assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view.</li> <li>• Most of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response contains relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge of the text.</li> <li>• There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.</li> <li>• The response contains clear and well-developed critical analysis.</li> <li>• There is discussion and assessment of alternative interpretations or points of view.</li> <li>• All, or nearly all, of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>

# External assessment details—HL

## Paper 1

**Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes**

**Weighting: 40%**

This paper contains two compulsory sections: section A and section B.

Section A consists of two stimulus-based questions on the core theme. Students are required to answer one question.

Section B consists of two essay questions for each of the optional themes. Students are required to answer two questions, each from a different optional theme.

Each question is worth 25 marks.

## Paper 2

**Duration: 1 hour**

**Weighting: 20%**

Paper 2 is identical for SL and HL students. The paper consists of two questions for each of the prescribed philosophical texts. Each question is split into two parts: part A and part B. Students are required to answer one question, and to answer both part A and part B of that question. **Part A is worth 10 marks, and part B is worth 15 marks.**

## Paper 3

**Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Weighting: 20%**

This paper consists of one unseen text. Students are required to write a response to this text, comparing and contrasting their experience of philosophical activity with the view(s) of philosophical activity found in the text.

The question is worth 25 marks.

## External assessment markbands—HL

The markbands for paper 1 and paper 2 are identical for SL and HL, and these markbands can be found in the section “External assessment markbands—SL” of this subject guide.

### Paper 3: HL extension

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable structure there is minimal focus on the task. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.</li> <li>There is a very basic understanding of the view of philosophical activity raised by the unseen text. Few, if any, references are made to the text.</li> <li>There is limited reference to the student’s personal experience of philosophical activity but no comparison or contrast of this experience with the view(s) raised by the text.</li> <li>The essay is descriptive and lacking in analysis. Few of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is some attempt to follow a structured approach, although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey.</li> <li>There is a limited understanding of the view(s) of philosophical activity raised by the text. Few, if any, references are made to the text.</li> <li>There is some evidence that the student has drawn on their personal experience of philosophical activity.</li> <li>The response identifies similarities and differences between the student’s personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text, although the analysis of these similarities and differences is superficial.</li> <li>The response contains some analysis but is more descriptive than analytical. Some of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear attempt to structure the response, although there may be some repetition or a lack of clarity in places. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.</li> <li>There is a satisfactory understanding of the view(s) of philosophical activity raised by the text. Some references are made to the text.</li> <li>There is some evidence that the student has drawn on their personal experience of philosophical activity, with examples or illustrations used to support their points.</li> <li>There is some analysis of the similarities and differences between the student’s personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text, although this analysis needs further development.</li> <li>The response contains critical analysis rather than just description. Many of the main points are justified.</li> </ul>

Marks	Level descriptor
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well organized and can be easily followed. Philosophical vocabulary is used, mostly appropriately.</li> <li>• There is clear identification of the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text. Some references are made to the text.</li> <li>• The student draws on their personal experience of philosophical activity, using examples or illustrations to support their points.</li> <li>• There is clear analysis of both similarities and differences between the student’s personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text, although this analysis needs further development.</li> <li>• The response contains critical analysis rather than just description. Most of the main points are justified. The response argues to a reasoned conclusion.</li> </ul>
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.</li> <li>• There is clear identification of the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text. Effective references are made to the text.</li> <li>• The student draws explicitly on their personal experience of philosophical activity, using well-chosen examples or illustrations to support their points.</li> <li>• There is clear analysis of both similarities and differences between the student’s personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented.</li> <li>• The response contains well-developed critical analysis. All, or nearly all, of the main points are justified. The response argues to a reasoned conclusion.</li> </ul>

# Internal assessment

## Purpose of internal assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both SL and HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints associated with written examinations. The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same.

## Requirements and recommendations

The internal assessment exercise for students at both SL and HL requires them to produce a philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus. The exercise is worth 25 marks and the word limit is 2,000 words, excluding bibliography or references. The word limit also does not include the copy/description of the stimulus, which must be included with the response.

## Guidance and authenticity

The philosophical analysis submitted for internal assessment must be the student's own work. However, it is not the intention that students should decide upon a title or topic and be left to work on the internal assessment component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

- the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed
- the assessment criteria; students must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and students must discuss the internally assessed work. Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. As part of the learning process, teachers can read and give advice to students on one draft of the work. The teacher should provide oral or written advice on how the work could be improved, but must not write comments on the draft work or edit it. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must explain clearly to students that the internally assessed work must be entirely their own. Where collaboration

between students is permitted, it must be clear to all students what the difference is between collaboration and collusion.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher, and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice. Each student must confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work to the teacher it cannot be retracted. The requirement to confirm the authenticity of the work applies to all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to the IB for the purpose of moderation. For further details refer to the IB publications *Academic honesty, The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and the relevant articles in *General regulations: Diploma Programme*.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work, and scrutiny of one or more of the following.

- The student's initial proposal
- The first draft of the written work
- The references cited
- The style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student
- The analysis of the work by a web-based plagiarism detection service such as [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)

The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the internal assessment and the extended essay.

## Group work

Group work may not be undertaken by students.

## Time allocation

Internal assessment is an integral part of the philosophy course, contributing 25% to the final assessment in the SL course and 20% to the final assessment in the HL course. This weighting should be reflected in the time that is allocated to teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding required to undertake the work, as well as the total time allocated to carry out the work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately 20 hours (SL and HL) should be allocated to the work. This should include:

- time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the internal assessment
- class time for students to work on the internal assessment component
- time for consultation between the teacher and each student
- time to review and monitor progress, and to check authenticity.

## Using assessment criteria for internal assessment

For internal assessment, a number of assessment criteria have been identified. Each assessment criterion has level descriptors describing specific achievement levels, together with an appropriate range of marks. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although for the lower levels failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work at SL and at HL against the criteria using the level descriptors.

- The same assessment criteria are provided for SL and HL.
- The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.
- When assessing a student's work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work should be chosen.
- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level above. Teachers should award the lower marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level below.
- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks (fractions and decimals) are not acceptable.
- Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.
- A student who attains a high achievement level with one criterion will not necessarily attain high achievement levels in the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any particular distribution of marks.
- It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

## Internal assessment details—SL and HL

### Philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus

**Duration:** 20 hours

**Weighting:** SL 25%, HL 20%

Students at both SL and HL must produce a philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus. Students should identify a philosophical issue raised by the stimulus and analyse it in a philosophical way.

Suitable stimuli for analysis include, but are not limited to:

- novels, plays, or poems
- song lyrics
- cartoons, paintings, photographs or other visual images
- films, television and radio programmes
- advertisements
- newspaper articles/letters
- pamphlets.

Students should select a non-philosophical stimulus. Short stimuli such as newspaper articles can be analysed in their entirety, but where novels or plays are used, no more than two pages should be selected for analysis. In the case of television or radio programmes, no more than two scenes should be selected for analysis.

When the source material is an image or contains 200 words or fewer, students must include a copy of this material with their response. When the source material contains more than 200 words or is, for example, a scene from a film, students must include a description of the stimulus with their response. Descriptions of stimuli must be no more than 200 words. All stimulus material must be accurately referenced.

## Internal assessment criteria—SL and HL

### Philosophical analysis of a non-philosophical stimulus

#### Criterion A: Identification of issue and justification (3 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus is implied but not explicitly identified. There is no justification of the connection between the stimulus and the philosophical issue identified.
2	The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus is clearly identified. There is some justification of the connection between the stimulus and the philosophical issue identified.
3	The philosophical issue raised by the stimulus is clearly and explicitly identified. There is a clear justification of the connection between the stimulus and the philosophical issue identified.

#### Criterion B: Clarity (4 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable structure there is minimal focus on the task.
2	There is some attempt to follow a structured approach, although it is not always clear what the answer is trying to convey.
3	The response is structured and generally organized, and can be easily followed.
4	The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized. The response is clear and coherent.

#### Criterion C: Knowledge and understanding (4 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is little relevant knowledge. The explanation of the philosophical issue is minimal. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately.
2	Some knowledge is demonstrated but this lacks accuracy and relevance. There is a basic explanation of the philosophical issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.
3	Knowledge is mostly accurate and relevant. There is a satisfactory explanation of the philosophical issue. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately.
4	The response contains relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge. There is a well-developed explanation of the philosophical issue. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.

**Criterion D: Analysis (8 marks)**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response is mostly descriptive. There is little analysis, and few or no examples are given.
3–4	There is limited analysis, but the response is more descriptive than analytical. Some appropriate examples are used.
5–6	The response contains analysis, but this analysis lacks development. Appropriate examples are used in support of the argument. Counter-arguments are identified.
7–8	The response contains well-developed critical analysis. The examples used are well chosen and lend support to the argument. Counter-arguments are identified and analysed in a convincing way.

**Criterion E: Evaluation (6 marks)**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	There is little evaluation of alternative interpretations or points of view. Some of the main points are justified. There is no conclusion, or the conclusion is not relevant.
3–4	There is some evaluation of alternative interpretations or points of view. Many of the main points are justified. The conclusion is stated but may not be entirely consistent with the argument.
5–6	There is clear evaluation 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. The conclusion is clearly stated and consistent with the argument.

## Glossary of command terms

### Command terms for philosophy

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

Command term	Assessment objective	Definition
<b>Analyse</b>	AO2	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
<b>Compare</b>	AO3	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Describe</b>	AO1	Give a detailed account.
<b>Discuss</b>	AO3	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
<b>Evaluate</b>	AO3	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
<b>Examine</b>	AO3	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
<b>Explain</b>	AO2	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.

Command term	Assessment objective	Definition
<b>Explore</b>	AO3	Undertake a systematic process of discovery.
<b>Identify</b>	AO1	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
<b>Justify</b>	AO3	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
<b>Outline</b>	AO1	Give a brief account or summary.
<b>To what extent</b>	AO3	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.

# Bibliography

This bibliography lists the texts referred to directly in this guide. It is not a list of all of the texts used in the curriculum review and does not include all the literature available. This bibliography is not a list of recommended textbooks.

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