



TRANSITION WORK

PHILOSOPHY

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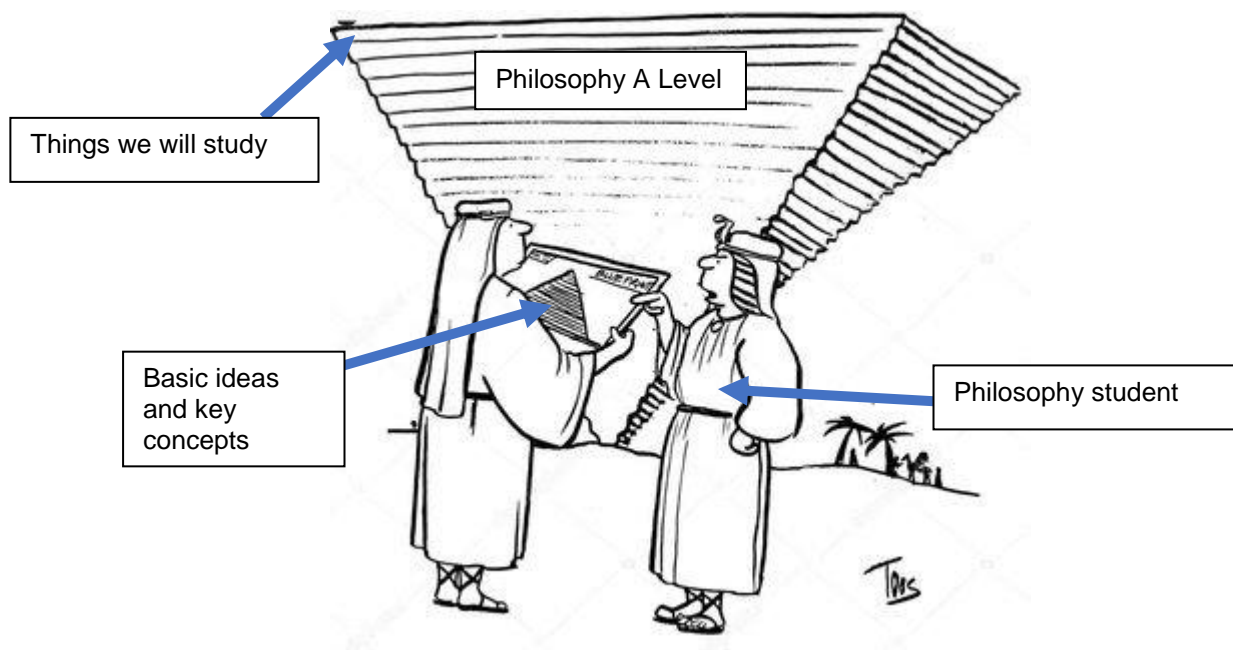
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"Awareness of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom." Socrates

The first thing to know about Philosophy is that you cannot just come in and be a philosopher straight away. Just like a sportsperson has to practice the basic skills before they can put them all together and to be an elite athlete, so Philosophy requires you to develop basic skills before applying them to different branches of the subject. As Aristotle says, you need to develop the skills through practice and hard work.

Philosophy is very difficult to define. Since Descartes, we can broadly define the type of philosophical approach that we will be using in this A Level as, "The use of [reason](#) in [understanding](#) such things as the [nature](#) of the [real world](#) and [existence](#), the use and [limits](#) of [knowledge](#), and the [principles](#) of [moral judgment](#)" (*Cambridge Dictionary*).

In order to even attempt to get into being able to study these areas, you first need to work on the 'use of reason,' part. This means that the first few lessons will be dedicated to understanding what an argument is, how to do it in an academic sense and some crucial concepts. Essentially, you need to learn how to use the basic tools before trying to build anything. Once you have these basic foundations in place, we can embark on our study of four different branches of Philosophy.



What we will study (AQA):-

Year 1

Moral Philosophy – what does it mean to behave morally? How do we apply ethics to everyday life? What do good/bad, right/wrong even mean? *Mr. Cooper*
Epistemology (Philosophy of Knowledge) – Miss Welton

Year 2

Philosophy of Mind
Metaphysics of God

Preparing for the course:-

There are several things that you can do to prepare you for the A Level. Some of them will be activities in this transition booklet. There will also be suggestions on additional things you can do. Finally, there will be a reading list including core course textbooks and useful websites. Reading independently is a key skill. Work your way through the tasks in order and remember, this is not just about 'getting it done', it is about understanding what you're writing. If all you are doing is copying blindly from Wikipedia, it will not help you one bit!

Section 1 – Building blocks – How to do Philosophy

Task 1a - Key definitions and examples for each one:-

Argument:

Definition

Example

Premise:

Definition

Example

Proposition:

Definition

Example

Assertion:

Definition

Example

A priori/a posteriori knowledge:

Definitions

Example 1

Example 2

Deductive and inductive arguments:

Definitions

Example 1

Example 2

Fallacy:

Definition

Examples

True/false:

Definitions

Example 1

Example 2

Paradox:

Definition

Example

Objective/subjective:

Definitions

Example 1

Example 2

Analytic/synthetic:
Definitions

Example 1

Example 2

Task 1b – Complete the ‘Inductive or Deductive’ sheet
Deductive or Inductive Arguments?

Identify whether the arguments below are deductive or inductive – one has been done for you.

Every time you have entered the classroom there are tables. Today there were tables in the classroom. Therefore, tomorrow there will be tables in the classroom.

A triangle has three sides. The shape in front of me has three sides. It is therefore a triangle.

DEDUCTIVE

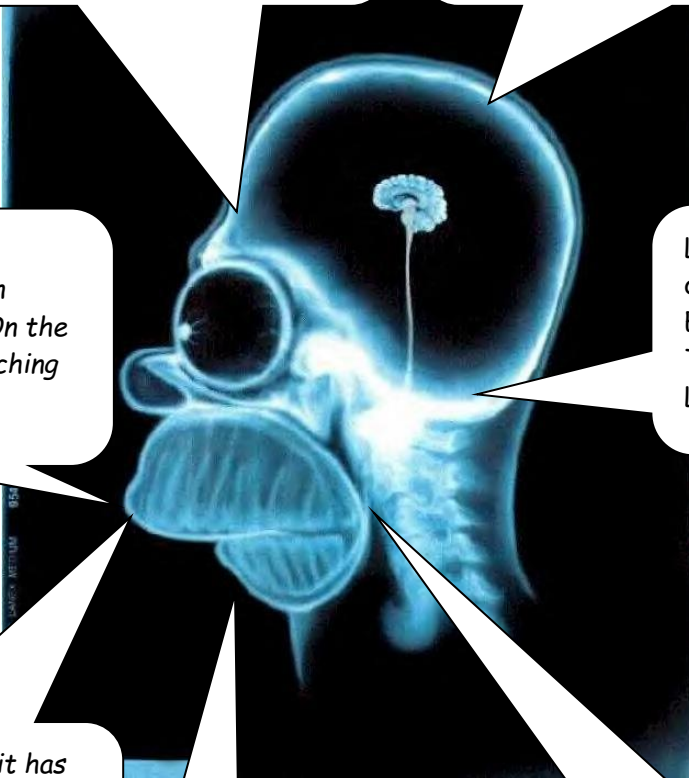
I am a teacher at Swindon Academy. I teach at Swindon Academy every school day. On the next school day I will be teaching at Swindon Academy

London is the capital city of England. I am in England's capital city. Therefore, I am in London.

Every time I have a sandwich it has cheese in it. Today, my sandwich had cheese in it. Next Tuesday my sandwich will have cheese in it.

2 plus 2 equals four. I have two pounds in my pocket and two pounds in my piggybank. I therefore have four pounds.

Every time I have a philosophy lesson my head hurts. My head is hurting in this lesson. In tomorrow's lesson my head will hurt.



Immanuel
Kant
(Deontology)

When? Who? Where?

Basic ethical idea. How do we behave morally? Basic principles

Aristotle
(Virtue Ethics)

When? Who? Where?

Basic ethical idea. How do we behave morally? Basic principles

Plato (Knowledge)	When? Who? Where? Basic views on knowledge. How did he define it?
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Task 2b – Applied Ethics

Find out what the following mean and some key moral dilemmas within each one e.g. *in what situations should eating animals be moral (if at all)*;

1. Eating animals
2. Stealing
3. Telling lies
4. Simulated Killing

Section 3 – Epistemology

Task 1

Define the term knowledge:

Task 2

Experimenting with ideas

Consider the following uses of the word *knowledge*, or *know*, in sentences A-I, then answer the questions that follow.

- A. Bees know how to make honey.
- B. I know kung-fu
- C. Do you know the way to San Jose?
- D. Ravi knows the smell of petrol
- E. I know the difference between right and wrong.
- F. Jane knows the capital of Peru.
- G. A baby knows how to suckle.
- H. I know that it rained yesterday.
- I. I know that $2+2=4$

1. Do you think the word is being used in the same way each time?
2. Which examples describe an ability of some kind?
3. Which examples describe a familiarity with a person or sensation?
4. Which examples describe a fact or facts about the world that a person has learnt?

Task 3

Research and summarise the 3 main types of knowledge

Ability Knowledge:

Acquaintance Knowledge:

Propositional Knowledge:

Task 4

Plato was very influential in the study of epistemology. Read through the extract from his dialogue Meno and summarise the argument being made by Socrates.

Extract from Plato's Meno:

Socrates

But our assertion that it is impossible to give right guidance unless one has knowledge looks very like a mistake.

Meno

What do you mean by that?

Socrates

I will tell you. If a man knew the way to Larisa, or any other place you please, and walked there and led others, would he not give right and good guidance?

Meno

Certainly. [97b]

Socrates

Well, and a person who had a right opinion as to which was the way, but had never been there and did not really know, might give right guidance, might he not?

Meno

Certainly.

Socrates

And so long, I presume, as he has right opinion about that which the other man really knows, he will be just as good a guide—if he thinks the truth instead of knowing it—as the man who has the knowledge.

Meno

Just as good.

Socrates

Hence true opinion is as good a guide to rightness of action as knowledge; and this is a point we omitted just now in our consideration of the nature of virtue, [97c] when we stated that knowledge is the only guide of right action; whereas we find there is also true opinion.

Meno

So it seems.

Socrates

Then right opinion is just as useful as knowledge.

Meno

With this difference, Socrates, that he who has knowledge will always hit on the right way, whereas he who has right opinion will sometimes do so, but sometimes not.

Socrates

How do you mean? Will not he who always has right opinion be always right, so long as he opines rightly?

Meno

It appears to me that he must; and therefore I wonder, Socrates, [97d] this being the case, that knowledge should ever be more prized than right opinion, and why they should be two distinct and separate things.

Socrates

Well, do you know why it is that you wonder, or shall I tell you?

Meno

Please tell me.

Socrates

It is because you have not observed with attention the images of Daedalus.¹ But perhaps there are none in your country.

Meno

What is the point of your remark?

Socrates

That if they are not fastened up they play truant and run away; but, if fastened, they stay where they are. [97e]

Meno

Well, what of that?

Socrates

To possess one of his works which is let loose does not count for much in value; it will not stay with you any more than a runaway slave: but when fastened up it is worth a great deal, for his productions are very fine things And to what am I referring in all this? To true opinion. For these, so long as they stay with us, are a fine possession,

Section 4 – Evaluating arguments

Read the following arguments. For each one can you evaluate whether this argument is a strong or a weak argument. Use key terms from section 1, give your opinion, give a balance of opinion from other philosophers.

A - Donald Trump is an 76. This makes Donald Trump an old man. Usually men over 70 forget things more quickly. This means that Donald Trump probably forgets information people have told him. If someone tells him something important he might not remember it. Therefore Donald Trump is a bad person to be president.



B – Eating animals

“If you would not eat your pets then you should not eat other animals (at least higher primates, perhaps) because there is no meaningful difference between such animals and things that you would not eat.”

Further reading:-

Summer reading – Julian Baggini – ‘The pig that wants to be eaten’

Primary Textbooks and Resources

Lacewing, M. – AQA Philosophy (Year 1) – Routledge

Descartes - ‘Meditations’

Hayward – AQA Philosophy (Year 1) – Hodder Education

Simon Blackburn – ‘Think’

Dimmock, M. and Fisher, A. – Ethics for A-Level (free ebook)

<https://books.openedition.org/obp/4401?lang=en>

Extra Websites

The Guardian – Philosophy (philosophy in the news)

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (introductory)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (advanced)

Podcasts

‘Philosophy Bitesize’ Nigel Warburton

‘In Our Time – Philosophy’ BBC Radio 4

Secondary Books

General:-

- Warburton, N. *Philosophy: the Basics* (5th ed.), Routledge 2012: the most popular and enduring introduction of them all
- Baggini, J. & Fosl, P., *The Philosopher’s Toolkit*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010: a very good compendium of clear explanations of concepts and arguments
- Baggini, J. *Philosophy: Key Themes*, Palgrave MacMillan 2002: written for the A Level
- Vardy, P ‘The Puzzle of Ethics’ and ‘The Puzzle of God’

Epistemology:-

- Audi, R. *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to Theory of Knowledge*, Routledge 1998: a very accessible, clear, introductory text
- Ayer, A. J. *The Problem of Knowledge*, various editions: a classic of 20th-century philosophical writing about many of the central problems of epistemology, written in a clear, engaging style
- Carruthers, P. *Human Knowledge and Human Nature*, OUP 1992: on the origin of concepts and nature of knowledge
- Cole, P. *The Theory of Knowledge*, Hodder & Stoughton 2002: very accessible, but a little thin
- Dancy, J. & Sosa, E. *A Companion to Epistemology*, Blackwell 1997: an excellent encyclopaedic reference work with an astonishing amount of useful material about different aspects of the subject in one volume

Moral Philosophy:-

- Singer, P. (ed.) *A Companion to Ethics*, Blackwell 1991: an irreplaceable resource. Each essay, written for the beginner, is an excellent survey of a single topic.