VCE PHILOSOPHY

THIRD EDITION

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION SUPPLEMENT FOR UNITS 3 & 4

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VCE Philosophy

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CHAPTER 1

Assessing VCE Philosophy

Introduction

It is common to hear a collective groan when a philosophy class shifts its attention from an exciting tussle of ideas to a rundown of VCE assessment requirements. However, many students would agree that the rigours of assessment motivate their most effortful thinking and most satisfying philosophical insights. If doing philosophy is a workout for the mind, then VCE assessment is like the trainer who pushes you to achieve your personal best.

The aim of this book is to provide you with up-to-date guidance through the assessment journey, with tips for what to expect, how to prepare and how to succeed in VCE Philosophy – both in school-assessed tasks and in the final exam.

The latest examination specifications and 2019 Sample Examination indicate some shifts of emphasis in the kinds of skills students should practise to achieve their best. This book gives plenty of advice and new sample tasks to help teachers and students to adjust their preparations accordingly.

The assessment of VCE Philosophy is described officially in three main places on the website of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA):

- Study Design: VCE Philosophy (2019-2023)
  https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/philosophy/PhilosophySD_2019.pdf

- VCE Philosophy: Advice for Teachers (2019-2023)
  https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/introduction.aspx

- Exam specifications, exam reports and sample examination (April 2019)
  https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/philosophy/exams.aspx

These should always be the first ports of call for any teacher or student of VCE Philosophy; it is your responsibility to read them closely and consult them often. This book expands on the contents of these documents and references them continually. From 2019 onwards, past examinations of the current Study Design, together with their associated assessors' reports, will also be available on the VCAA website.

We all enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that comes from setting goals, working hard and then achieving success, and it is hoped that this book will help you to add this sense of satisfaction to what is already a fascinating and stimulating course of study.

Assessment of Key Knowledge and Key Skills

To put it most simply, VCE Philosophy Units 1-4 are assessed with reference to the **Key Knowledge** and **Key Skills** dot points listed for each Area of Study in the Study Design. Everything included in these dot points - and nothing outside of these dot points - can contribute to a student's score in both school-based assessment tasks and in the final examination following Units 3 and 4. Therefore these dot points should receive regular scrutiny by students and teachers alike.

In Units 1 and 2, assessment of VCE Philosophy is entirely school-based. Teachers assess students' demonstration of Key Knowledge and Key Skills for each unit, and report either satisfactory or unsatisfactory attainment to the VCAA. In Units 3 and 4, school-assessed coursework contributes 50% (25% for each Unit), and the final exam 50% of a student's total score for VCE Philosophy. The Study Design and VCAA's webpages for VCE Philosophy provide further details.

Key Knowledge

Key Knowledge for each Area of Study is listed as dot points in the Study Design. Key Knowledge includes:

- Understanding key concepts and relationships between them;

- Knowing a range of relevant viewpoints and arguments;

- Understanding the historical, philosophical and scientific context of these viewpoints and arguments;

- Knowing a range of objections and criticisms that can be raised in response to these viewpoints and arguments;

- Knowing similarities and differences between viewpoints and arguments;

- Knowing how viewpoints and arguments link to relevant thought experiments and contemporary debates.

In Areas of Study 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1, these categories of knowledge apply directly to the set texts. In Units 1 and 2, and Area of Study 4.2, they are applied to broad philosophical questions to which a variety of texts may be relevant.

THINK

Look at the categories of Key Knowledge listed above. What kinds of revision strategies may be most appropriate for ensuring that your knowledge of these things is secure?

Key Skills

The Key Skills put your Key Knowledge to work in a variety of ways. It isn't always enough to feel you "know" something in a passive sense. Reading over your notes and set texts is useful, but you need to be able to *do* things with that material. Here is a list of key philosophical skills you should become adept at applying to your philosophical knowledge:

- **Explaining** philosophical concepts;

- **Outlining** philosophical viewpoints and arguments;

- **Identifying** premises and conclusions of arguments, and the relationships between premises and conclusions;

- **Explaining** the influences of historical, philosophical and scientific contexts on the concepts, viewpoints and arguments;

- **Analysing** texts to discern viewpoints and arguments and their relationships;

- **Evaluating** viewpoints and arguments;

- **Comparing** viewpoints and arguments;

- **Critically comparing** viewpoints and arguments;

- **Justifying** viewpoints and arguments;

- **Providing examples** to support viewpoints and arguments;

- **Applying** all these skills to the analysis of debates, including in unfamiliar stimulus material;

- **Using clear and precise language** appropriate to Philosophy.

DO

Take each Key Skill listed above in turn. Working in a pair, explain to your partner:

- What does this skill mean, in your own words?

- What is an example of when you have demonstrated this skill in your philosophy studies?

- How confident are you (in a score out of 5) in demonstrating this skill when you have the relevant philosophical knowledge? (where 5=high confidence and 0=no confidence at all)

- How might you improve your confidence with those skills you have identified as challenging?

Everyone is different in the kinds of assessment questions they struggle with. However, there are four philosophical skills that often stand out to examiners as posing challenges to students: **evaluation, critical comparison, applying textual knowledge to contemporary debates** and **working with unfamiliar stimulus material**. These four vitally important skills will now be addressed in turn.

EVALUATING AN ARGUMENT

Evaluation is the process we use to decide whether or not we have been given sufficient grounds for accepting a particular conclusion. It involves assessing the logic of an argument (how well do the premises support the conclusion?) and the reasons used to support the conclusion (how plausible are the premises?). Evaluation **always** involves providing reasons that demonstrate to the reader why a particular conclusion should or shouldn't be accepted.

Although evaluation appears relatively straightforward, it is regularly identified in Assessors' Reports as an element of the exam that students consistently struggle with. Some of the common errors students make when evaluating arguments include:

- Further elaborating on the identified argument rather than evaluating it;

- Restating (in different words) the argument being evaluated, prefaced with the words 'I agree because...';

- Asking rhetorical questions;

- Using their own opinions to support /refute an argument ('As a hedonist I agree with Callicles' views');

- Using vague generalisations as counter-arguments /examples ('Some people believe...');

- Using another philosopher's argument as an evaluation without saying why that other philosopher's argument is of value ('Callicles' views are problematic because as Socrates says, a life of self-indulgence is a terrifying life');

- Simply saying an argument is good because 'the premises follow on from the conclusion and the premises are true.'

To avoid making these errors, and to ensure that your evaluation does all it should do, you may find the following structure for composing an evaluation useful:

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1. **Clearly identify the problem/s with the argument.** In other words, rather than simply saying the argument itself is problematic, try to identify exactly which part of it is problematic.

2. **Demonstrate why this aspect of the argument is problematic** by providing reasons and, if possible, a concrete counter-example.

3. Identify the implications of your criticism for the argument.

In addition to these three steps, you should always ensure that your evaluation is written clearly and succinctly.

THINK

Read through the following evaluation. Can you identify each of the three steps described above?

Q: Evaluate Callicles' claim that philosophy is an inappropriate study for adults.

A: Callicles claims that philosophy is an inappropriate study for adults for a number of reasons. He claims that philosophy will render an individual unable to address meetings or understand the legal system, however philosophy equips us with the skills to understand, formulate and defend arguments, all very important skills for these very contexts. He also claims that philosophy prevents a man from developing the skills necessary to achieve standing in his society, however the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius was also a Stoic philosopher, suggesting one can study philosophy and have the skills required to achieve social standing. This, together with the kinds of skills philosophy teaches, would suggest that it is possible to pursue philosophy into adulthood without the kinds of consequences Callicles suggests.

CRITICALLY COMPARING ARGUMENTS

Critical comparison shares much in common with evaluation. Like evaluation, it involves considering the merits and shortcomings of arguments and viewpoints. The difference is that whereas evaluation (as described above) focuses on a particular argument or viewpoint, critical comparison focuses on two or more arguments or viewpoints. Critically comparing arguments involves describing arguments and/or viewpoints and, where necessary, identifying similarities and differences between them. Importantly, it also involves comparative discussion of the merits and shortcomings of the arguments and viewpoints. It may also involve making judgments about which argument or viewpoint is more persuasive.

Some common errors students make when critically comparing arguments include:

- Simply describing the arguments/viewpoints;

- Pointing out the similarities and differences between the arguments /viewpoints without providing any critical discussion of them;

- Evaluating each argument/viewpoint independently;

- Telling the reader which argument is preferred, rather than showing which is more persuasive and why.

To avoid making these errors, and to ensure that your critical comparison does all it should do, you may find the following structure for composing critical comparison useful:

1. **Briefly describe the arguments, picking up on points of similarity and difference.**
   Make sure your description is succinct, otherwise you may find your answer takes too long to complete. It is important to make points of similarity and difference explicit. Don't simply describe one argument and then another and leave it up to your reader to draw connections.

2. **Provide some comparative discussion of the merits and shortcomings of the arguments/viewpoints.**
   This is most effective if you pick up on the points of similarity and difference and weigh them against one another. Be sure to provide reasons and examples to support your discussion.

3. **If possible, provide a judgment.**
   This judgment should proceed out of your discussion of merits and shortcomings of the arguments/viewpoints.

THINK

Read through the following critical comparison. Can you identify each of the steps described above?

Q: Critically compare the views of Callicles and Aristotle on the role of pleasure in the good life.

A: Callicles believes that pleasure is synonymous with a good life. By allowing our desires to expand - which he believes is in line with our natures - we can experience more pleasure and therefore greater happiness.

Aristotle would agree that pleasure comes naturally to us but he would disagree that it is synonymous with the good life because he believes that we are defined by reason. So a good life for Aristotle is where we use reason to navigate our response to pleasure, rather than allowing our actions to be driven by it.

While it can be argued that using our reason will result in a better life (by helping us to avoid pain), Aristotle's argument relies on a view of human nature that seems less plausible than Callicles' view: humans do seem instinctually attracted to pleasure. But the notion that pleasure necessarily equals happiness is flawed. Some pleasures, like heavy drinking, can result in unhappiness. Thus it would seem that Aristotle's view is more persuasive.

REFLECTING ON CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

Although analysing and evaluating arguments, either individually or comparatively, plays a significant role in assessment in Units 3 and 4 Philosophy, the capacity to reflect on contemporary debates is also very important. In Unit 3, Areas of Study 1 and 2, you need to have some knowledge of relevant contemporary debates and to be able to consider the implications of different positions on mind and body, and personal identity, for these debates. The capacity to reflect on contemporary debates is also evident in Unit 4, where a whole Area of Study is devoted to the exploration of the relationship between contemporary debates relating to technology and the good life.

The capacity to think about the interplay between contemporary debates and the arguments and viewpoints you have examined throughout the course takes on particular significance in the exam. Here, you will be required to apply your knowledge of philosophical viewpoints and arguments to stimulus materials that are expressions of these contemporary debates. For example, in Section B of the exam you may be presented with an excerpt from an article that discusses particular findings in neuroscience, and be asked to critically reflect on that discussion by drawing on the viewpoints and arguments in Unit 3, Area of Study 1. Or, in Section C of the exam you may be presented with an excerpt from an article that examines the effects of social media on perceptions of what makes for a good life, and be given a question that asks you to consider how one of the philosophers studied in Unit 4, Area of Study 1 might respond to what the article suggests about the relationship between technology and the good life, and why.

Being adequately equipped to address questions that require you to think about the viewpoints and arguments studied in Units 3 and 4 within the context of a specific contemporary debate, doesn't necessarily require you to have a comprehensive understanding of a broad range of relevant debates. Rather, you need to have a secure understanding of the *implications* of the arguments and viewpoints you have studied. In other words, rather than a complete and detailed knowledge of the current state of Artificial Intelligence, it is going to be more useful to understand that if the mind, including consciousness, is purely physical, this would entail that if the human brain can be replicated, consciousness would necessarily arise. This kind of understanding will enable you to work with a broad range of debates, including those you may not have encountered in any significant way before the exam.

To increase your confidence in working with diverse debates, you should practise applying your knowledge to a range of relevant stimuli throughout the course. This will not only help you to feel more self-assured, it will also expand the breadth of knowledge you have of relevant debates and thereby increase the likelihood of encountering something in the exam you are relatively familiar with.

DO

As a whole class, create a database of online resources that can be used to source stimulus material for use when preparing for Sections B and C of the exam and to extend knowledge of relevant contemporary debates.

Useful resources include *Aeon*, *Philosophy Now*, *New Philosopher* and *The Conversation*.

DO

Team up with a classmate to source articles that engage with contemporary debates relevant to Unit 3, Areas of Study 1 and 2, and Unit 4, Area of Study 2. Select excerpts from these articles of approximately 200 words and using the Sample Exam (available from the VCAA Philosophy webpages) to guide you, create a series of exam style questions. Share your work with the class.

WORKING WITH STIMULUS MATERIAL

Stimulus material can appear anywhere on the exam paper and may be **written** (for example, an excerpt from a newspaper article or online journal, a letter to the editor or an excerpt from a novel) or **visual** (for example, a painting, photograph or cartoon). Written stimulus may be of substantial length (between 200-300 words) and questions relating to such stimulus may require you to *identify issues* within the stimulus relevant to the concepts, viewpoints and arguments you have studied throughout the course, or to *identify the perspective* the stimulus takes on the issue it is discussing. Likewise, questions relating to visual stimulus may require you to identify an issue or a perspective on an issue. It is important to remember that visual stimulus is not intended to test your visual literacy, so there is no need to be concerned that you have exactly the same interpretation as the exam-setting panel. As with written stimulus material, your purpose will be to use the stimulus content to engage with ideas relevant to the prompt or question, and to make links with the concepts, viewpoints and arguments studied in the course.

When working with stimulus material, particularly in an exam context, your answer should focus on the *issue raised* by the stimulus and/or the *perspective the stimulus presents on that issue*, rather than focusing exclusively on the stimulus. For example, an excerpt from an article discussing the digital upload of memories, while certainly interesting in and of itself, is, for the purposes of a VCE Philosophy student, really an excerpt engaging with the question of identity, with how technology may invite us to reflect on the arguments philosophers present in relation to identity and, in turn, with how these arguments invite us to reflect on what the technology seems to imply about the nature of identity.

Developing an appropriate response to a stimulus-based question, particularly in Sections B and C of the exam, generally requires more than a cursory overview of what each philosopher might have to say on the issue and why. In another words, you need to do more than simply saying 'Nietzsche would say x because of y' or 'Callicles would say a because of b'. Rather, you need to think through the issue or perspective you have identified by drawing on relevant concepts, viewpoints and arguments to support your discussion. Because this way of engaging with stimulus is relatively sophisticated, it requires practice. It is therefore advisable to practise writing responses to stimulus well before the exam and to discuss these responses, and how they might be improved, with your teachers and peers.

For examples of answers developed in response to stimulus, please see the annotated tasks in Chapter 2 pp.24-25 and Chapter 3 pp.37-40.

DO

Drawing on the activity described in the 'DO' box above, select one or two items of stimulus material relating to each Area of Study. Project each stimulus onto a whiteboard/smartboard in turn, and as a whole class work to identify the *issue* or *perspective on the issue* expressed in the stimulus. Each member of the class should then develop a response using the question provided. Critically comment on a partner's response using the advice outlined above.

Task Types for Assessing VCE Philosophy

In school-assessed coursework, students' grasp of Key Knowledge and Key Skills can be demonstrated through any of the following task types: **essays, short-answer responses, written analyses, written reflections, oral and/or multimedia presentations,** or **written or oral dialogues**. Coursework can include any selection and combination of these that a teacher believes is most suitable for their class. The only mandate is that an essay form part of the assessment in both Units 3 and 4.

The examination will include questions in **short-answer, extended response** and **essay styles**.

Each of these task types will now be briefly discussed. Chapters 2 and 3 provide further guidance about how to tackle each of these task types in the contexts of Units 3 and 4 coursework and the exam, including sample tasks and annotated responses.

Short-Answer Responses

Short-answer responses are an efficient way of testing knowledge and skills, and are thus a popular method of school-based assessment. Practising short-answer responses is also good preparation for Section A of the exam, which allocates 30 marks for short answers across Units 3 and 4 material.

Short-answer response questions test your knowledge of a topic or text's essential concepts, viewpoints and arguments. They can also require skills of evaluation and comparison. In Section A of the examination, the short-answer response questions will often be formatted as parts of a larger question and each part will be awarded between 1 and 6 marks. Typically, short-answer response questions feature verbs such as: *define, identify, explain, outline, analyse, evaluate* and *compare*, and may ask you if a particular argument or viewpoint is plausible, or if you *agree* or *disagree* with the argument or viewpoint (see table on pp.47-48 for a more detailed review of these directives). Your responses to short-answer questions should be clear and succinct. There is no opportunity for expansive critical discussion here. Rather, you need to make your points as directly as you can.

In general, the number of marks allocated for these responses in the exam corresponds to the complexity of the question asked. Thus a question asking you to 'define' or 'identify' could be worth just one or two marks and fully answerable in a single line. On the other hand, a question worth three marks could require you to outline an argument or evaluate it.

While the principles by which marks are allocated for more complex questions can vary depending on the kind of question asked, we might consider a typical breakdown using the example of a question that requires you to evaluate. The number of marks allocated to an evaluation question should generally be no fewer than 3, so we might assume that you can be rewarded for attempting a criticism in the first place, offering reasons for a view, and then elaborating further, perhaps with an example or other evidence. Offering one point of evaluation with strong reasoning should earn you 3/3 marks. However, if more marks are allocated for an evaluation, it is reasonable to assume that greater detail is required. Evaluations worth 4-6 marks should include at least two points backed with reasoning, examples and relevant elaboration.

An annotated example of short-answer responses can be found on pp.17-19. However, as this is a sample school-assessed task, note that it must be marked according to the Performance Descriptors rather than by a mark allocation for each question.

Written Analyses (and Section B Extended Responses)

A typical activity for any philosopher is to analyse and then evaluate another thinker's argument. Going further, the argument may then be compared with other viewpoints or arguments, and then an overall critical assessment made. Perhaps there are interesting implications to consider, and links to be made to current debates. These operations require more than a few lines but not necessarily the breadth and depth of an essay response.

Questions in Section B of the exam are good examples of these kinds of tasks. In addition to skills of analysis, evaluation and critical comparison of set texts, Section B may also incorporate unseen stimulus material. The 2019 Sample Exam (see https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/philosophy/Philosophy-sample-w.pdf) sets a precedent in providing written extracts against which students are expected to evaluate, compare and/or critically compare the set texts, in response to a given question. You will find examples of similar tasks using written stimuli in this book (see Chapters 2 and 5). The section Working with Stimulus Material, above (p.8), also offers valuable advice for tackling such questions.

These tasks are best assessed by criteria or rubric descriptors (such as the Performance Descriptors to be found at: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx) as they not only draw on students' knowledge of specific points of course content, but also exercise skills of reasoning, argument and appropriate language use. Your response also needs to be coherent – that is, the ideas should flow in logical sequence. Extended responses do not necessarily require an introduction and conclusion in the way a formal essay does, but breaking your response into paragraphs may make it easier to follow for both writer and reader. For example, you may use separate paragraphs for analysis and evaluation respectively. Or you may find that the scaffolding provided in the new format for Section B questions (that is, the dot-point listing of issues to consider) gives a basis for paragraphing.

An annotated example of an extended response task can be found on pp.24-25.

Essays

The ability to write a successful essay is essential to scoring well in VCE Philosophy. Essays are mandatory components of school-based assessment in Units 3 and 4, and are allocated 20 marks in the exam. Writing a good philosophy essay involves all the skills drawn upon when producing the extended responses discussed above, but the essay format gives scope to explore a problem with greater depth and breadth. This complexity – the sense that you are keeping several balls in the air at once, or that there are many strands of a problem to tease out – means that an essay needs a clear structure. You need a sense of purpose as you direct your attention to each part of a philosophical problem in turn.

Unlike extended responses, a philosophy essay requires an introduction, conclusion and focused paragraphing throughout. The introduction to a philosophy essay tends to set out the problem being investigated, the key terms involved and the main views and philosophers/texts to be considered. In the case of the essay you will write for Section C of the examination, your introduction will be where you make explicit the connection between the stimulus and the issue you will be discussing. The view of the writer may also be presented in the introduction but this is not mandatory.

The body of a philosophy essay is essentially comprised of passages of analysis and evaluation. **Analysis** involves using philosophical concepts, arguments and viewpoints to tease out perspectives on a particular philosophical problem or interpreting what a philosopher means in a passage of text and explaining that interpretation. It includes the identification of viewpoints and arguments, including the premises and conclusions of arguments and the relationship between these, and considering how these viewpoints and arguments relate to the problem under examination. **Evaluation** is the critical assessment of viewpoints and arguments. It involves identifying strengths and weaknesses, and outlining positive and negative implications. Skills of reasoning are at the fore in this section on an essay. So too are strategies such as: offering objections and counter-examples; providing supporting arguments and supporting examples or evidence; detecting ambiguities, inconsistencies and hidden assumptions; and linking viewpoints and arguments to everyday life and contemporary debates.

The conclusion of a philosophy essay should present an overall appraisal of where the writer has come to through their exploration of the problem. It should pull together the various strands that are woven through the essay. A conclusive view may or may not have been arrived at, and a summation of key reasons for this can be provided. A good conclusion will tend to keep a spirit of inquiry alive to the end, perhaps indicating further issues for investigation.

The 2019 Sample Exam (see https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/philosophy/Philosophy-sample-w.pdf) sets a precedent in providing written stimulus material as the basis for each Section C essay question. Your school-assessed essays may or may not follow this approach. In any case, you should be sure to practise essay tasks based on stimulus material, particularly the kinds of written extracts that appear in Section C of the Sample Exam. You will find several examples of essay topics based on written extracts in this book (see Chapters 3 and 5). The section Working with Stimulus Material in this chapter (p.8), offers valuable advice for how to tackle these kinds of essay tasks, and there is an annotated example of an essay based on a written stimulus on pp.37-40.

Written Reflections

Written reflections are usually less formal than an essay and therefore more relaxed in both structure and language style. Personal pronouns are appropriate, as are examples drawn from the writer's own experience. The aim of a written reflection is to probe a topic in depth. A good strategy for doing this is to pose questions throughout the reflection, and then to use one's skills of logical reasoning to produce possible answers. Then it is appropriate to reflect critically on these possible answers. How plausible are they? What holes can be picked in the arguments you have posed?

A reflection should conclude with some summation of where the writer's thinking has got to. Note that a writer's admission to feeling a greater level of confusion than before they commenced writing is fully acceptable in philosophy; it is not expected that you will suddenly find an irrefutable solution to a problem that has challenged the world's greatest minds for centuries! What matter are the philosophical skills on display: asking questions, giving balanced consideration to different views, offering objections and counter-examples, probing ambiguities and assumptions, using examples, relating theories to personal experiences and contemporary issues, reconsidering personal views in light of conflicting ideas, shifting strategies to solve a problem, and showing persistence when a problem becomes difficult or confusing. Descartes' *Meditations* are good models for this style of philosophical writing.

Presentations (Oral and Multimedia)

The key thing to remember about presentations – whether done orally or in the form of a PowerPoint or other visual medium – is that they must display the same philosophical skills as any task completed in written prose. You must still provide *clear* and *coherent* analysis and evaluation of arguments. It is often all the more important for students to study rubrics or criteria, such as the Performance Descriptors provided in VCAA's Advice for Teachers, when preparing presentations, to avoid becoming too distracted by visual artistry. That said, many students thrive when given the opportunity to present their philosophical understanding in visual form.

Dialogues (Written or Oral)

No philosopher demonstrates better the principle that 'all philosophy begins in dialogue' than Plato, and many VCE Philosophy students are inspired by Socratic dialogues to use this form to test their own ideas. Dialogues can imagine conversations held across the centuries between the writers of the set texts. Alternatively, students can use other characters as mouthpieces for competing views. Many students find the dialogue form a satisfying and entertaining way to explore ideas, and find that writing through the voices of other characters inspires counter-arguments that might otherwise not have occurred to them. As with all other task types, keeping performance descriptors or assessment criteria close at hand is crucial to success.

An annotated example of a dialogue can be found on pp.30-34.

Please refer to **Chapter 4: The Exam** *for more detailed advice about successful responses in assessment tasks in philosophy.*

Unit 3: Minds, Bodies and Persons

Introduction

Unit 3 VCE Philosophy explores fundamental questions about what kind of thing a person is. Am I essentially my mind, conceived as immaterial consciousness, or am I simply the material substance of my brain and thereby subject to the same laws of physics as the rest of the world around me, including other animals? Furthermore, should I regard myself as a single entity persisting through time, maintained by continuities of memory and body, or is the self actually an illusion?

These questions are explored through the lenses of the set texts – six in total. Assessment in Unit 3 focuses on students' abilities to identify, closely analyse and evaluate relevant arguments in the texts and to formulate well-reasoned responses to these arguments. Philosophical responses to questions of Mind and Body and Personal Identity also have implications for many ongoing debates. Students should be equipped to discuss at least one debate for each of the Areas of Study, as well as being able to apply the viewpoints and arguments of the set texts to less familiar debates encountered in stimulus material.

Area of Study 1: Approaches to Assessment

Success in VCE Philosophy essentially depends upon a student's close knowledge of the concepts, viewpoints and arguments in the texts, the ability to compare one text's arguments with another's, and powers of critical discussion: why is one viewpoint or argument more convincing than another? Crucial to conveying all these things is the ability to use language clearly and precisely.

On the next pages are some examples of assessment tasks which draw on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills of Area of Study 1, Minds and Bodies, and apply these to the set texts by Descartes, Smart and Nagel.

Sample Tasks

EXAMPLE 1*: SHORT-ANSWER RESPONSES

Smart's 'Sensations and brain processes'
Nagel's 'What is it like to be a bat?'
Time for completion: 50 minutes
*see annotated sample response below

Question 1

a. What does Smart mean when he describes mental events as "nomological danglers"?

b. Explain the principle known as 'Ockham's Razor".

c. How do the terms you have explained in parts (a) and (b) above, together contribute to Smart's identity theory of the mind?

Question 2

Smart anticipates that someone might object to his identity theory of mind like this:

"Brain processes might be described as fast or slow. But the experience of seeing yellow feels like 'seeing yellow', rather than fast or slow. In other words, brain processes have different qualities compared with our experiences. Therefore, they can't be identical."

What argument does Smart offer to defend his theory against this objection? Use an example from Smart or your own example to illustrate this argument.

Question 3

Explain one way in which Smart's theory reflects the views of contemporary science.

Question 4

"We can imagine what it might be like to be nocturnal, to have webbing on our arms, to be able to fly, to have poor vision and perceive the world through high frequency sound signals, and to spend our time hanging upside down."

But why, for Nagel, is it not enough for us to be able to imagine these things about being a bat, and how is this important for his argument about the mind?

Question 5

Reread the objection to Smart's identity theory outlined in question 2, above. To what extent does Nagel's theory agree with this objection?

Question 6

Whose response to the objection outlined in question 2, above, is more plausible – Smart's or Nagel's? Give reasons for your response.

Question 7

Compare the implications of both Smart's and Nagel's view of the mind for the possibility that we might one day create a machine that can think.

THINK

1. Consider the revision strategies on pp.71-73. Which of these suggestions would be most effective for preparing for the above task?

2. In what ways could this task be considered useful preparation for Section A of the exam?

3. Match the following KEY SKILL descriptors to each of the questions above:

   a. Explaining

   b. Analysing

   c. Providing examples

   d. Constructing arguments

   e. Comparing

   f. Critically comparing

   g. Analysing implications for a contemporary debate

EXAMPLE 2: WRITTEN REFLECTION OR ORAL PRESENTATION

Using stimulus material to analyse the implications of set texts for a contemporary debate: Artificial Intelligence

Time for completion: Out of class preparation time plus class time (for example, 10 minutes for oral presentation or 30-45 minutes' writing time)

Find a suitable article on artificial intelligence (AI) from one of the following websites: *The Guardian, Aeon, New Philosopher* or *Philosophy Now*. Your teacher may choose to curate a selection of articles for you.

Your task:

1. Identify the key points being made about AI in the article.

2. Reflect on the links you can make between the ideas about mind, body and consciousness in the article, and the views of Descartes, Smart and Nagel.

3. Use the article and the set texts as the basis for your **critical reflections**. Present these orally to the class, or complete a written reflection in response to these questions:

   • *What are the implications for AI of the views of Descartes, Smart and Nagel?*

   • *How do the viewpoints and arguments of these philosophers link to the key ideas in this article?*

   • *What are your views on the usefulness and plausibility of the views of Descartes, Smart and Nagel, in relation to the issues surrounding AI as reported in the article?*

In what ways is this exercise a useful preparation for Section B of the exam?

EXAMPLE 3: ESSAY

Minds and Bodies
Time for completion: 100 minutes (2 classes)

Complete an essay of approximately **800-1,000 words** in response to one of the following prompts:

1. Critically compare arguments about the nature of the mind from two thinkers from this Area of Study (Descartes, Smart or Nagel), and assess their implications for a relevant contemporary debate

2. 'Modern science contradicts Descartes' arguments about the mind and makes Smart's arguments irrefutable.' Critically discuss these claims with reference to Nagel's arguments.

3. 'Descartes is right: we are essentially thinking things and the mental realm is distinct from the physical realm.' Critically discuss these claims using the arguments of Smart and/or Nagel, and assess their implications for a relevant contemporary debate.

4. How does respect for the notion of scientific certainty lead Descartes, Smart and Nagel in different directions in their arguments regarding the nature of the mind? Whose views do you consider most plausible in light of the scientific evidence familiar to you now?

5. 'It is clearly not possible for consciousness to survive the death of the body.' Outline and critically compare the views of Descartes, Smart and Nagel in response to this claim.

6. 'The views of both Smart and Nagel leave us with no plausible ontological grounds to discriminate morally against animals.' Discuss.

DO

Write a detailed plan for one of the essay questions listed above. When you have completed this task, check your plan against the *Performance Descriptors* at: *https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors. aspx*

How well would your essay perform against these descriptors? What would you need to do to the essay to improve your performance?

Annotated Sample Response: Short Answer Questions

The following annotated student response has been assessed using the Key Knowledge and Key Skills described on pp.22-23 of the Study Design for VCE Philosophy and the Performance Descriptors outlined at https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx

SHORT ANSWER TASK (FROM PAGE 14)

1. What does Smart mean when he describes mental events as "nomological danglers"?

   He means that it is weird to insist that mental events sit by themselves in a special category of the non-physical, outside of the laws which govern everything else in the universe. They would sort of dangle there in a way that is ridiculous.

   > The student has captured Smart's intention and meaning here.

2. Explain the principle known as 'Ockham's Razor".

   The simplest explanation is often the best. Don't go for an explanation that is messy or complex with lots of exceptions and other bits to it, if there is a neat explanation that accounts for everything and has fewer parts.

   > The second sentence of this answer gives the best account of Ockham's/Occam's Razor and by itself would be sufficient. The first sentence is accurate but requires further explanation.

3. How do the terms you have explained in parts (1) and (2) above, together contribute to Smart's identity theory of the mind?

   Combining the idea that there is something absurd about leaving mental events "dangling" outside the laws of physics in its own special category, and the principle that the right explanation is likely to be the neatest, Smart thinks a sensible conclusion to draw about mental events is that they are just identical with brain events.

   > The student has demonstrated knowledge of the identity theory in some form (so, to phrase it as "sensations are brain processes" would be fine too), and has traced the logical link between it and the other two terms.

4. Smart anticipates that someone might object to his identity theory of mind like this: "Brain processes might be described as fast or slow. But the experience of seeing yellow feels like 'seeing yellow', rather than fast or slow. In other words, brain processes have different qualities compared with our experiences. Therefore, they can't be identical."
   What argument does Smart offer to defend his theory against this objection? Use an example from Smart or your own example to illustrate this argument.

   Smart replies that we may have different descriptions and language for brain events compared with mental events, but this doesn't mean they are not identical. Smart's example is that in saying "someone" and "the doctor", I can be referring to the same thing.

   > This is an accurate representation of Smart's reply. The student also remembered Smart's actual example but it would not be hard to think of another – perhaps even a better one than Smart's!

5. Explain one way in which Smart's theory reflects the views of contemporary science.

    Smart's theory reflects developments in neuroscience which show that brain states directly affect mental states.

> Yes, this is fine: Other variations would be acceptable. The explanation needs to be both accurate to the science of Smart's time and to show some link to his theory.

6. *"We can imagine what it might be like to be nocturnal, to have webbing on our arms, to be able to fly, to have poor vision and perceive the world through high frequency sound signals, and to spend our time hanging upside down."* But why, for Nagel, is it not enough for us to be able to imagine these things about being a bat, and how is this important for his argument about the mind?

    Nagel says that even though we can imagine those things, we still only know what it might be like for ME to be a bat, not what it is like for a BAT to be a bat. Smart's argument is about the subjective experience of consciousness – that we can't know the subjective qualities of experience from the point of view of the one experiencing them, and these are not captured by objective physical descriptions.

> Great answer. The student explains why these imaginings are insufficient, accurately describes Smart's theory and links the two convincingly.

7. Reread the objection to Smart's identity theory outlined in question 2, above. To what extent does Nagel's theory agree with this objection?

    Nagel is concerned with the subjective, phenomenal qualities of experience – what it is like to see yellow – so he would agree with this objection that brain processes don't tell us what consciousness is like.

> This is a good explanation for the degree to which Nagel would AGREE with this objection. But there is an element with which he does not agree, and that is the conclusion that therefore mental events cannot be brain events. Nagel does not completely rule out the possibility that materialism could one day be shown to be true, but he argues that the phenomenal qualities of experience shouldn't be denied a place in an account of the mind.

8. Whose response to the objection outlined in question 2, above, is more plausible – Smart's or Nagel's? Give reasons for your response.

    Smart is right that our scientific way of explaining something is often different from the way it feels. People report feeling like there is an elephant on their chest during a heart attack, while doctors say they had a blocked artery. Nagel might object that a convincing account of the mind needs to include the excruciating feeling of a squashed chest. I see no problem with saying that the particular pattern of neural activity that creates the mental sensation of a squashed chest for an individual, is physical and unique to that person, even if what is occurring in their chest is a typical heart attack.

> A well-reasoned answer, illustrated with an original and effective example, and effectively comparing the merits of both Nagel and Smart's views.

9. Compare the implications of both Smart's and Nagel's view of the mind for the possibility that we might one day create a machine that can think.

On Smart's view, thinking is produced by physical processes of the brain. This means that if we can create the physical processes that produce thinking, we can create a machine that thinks. Nagel says we can't explain what it is like to experience consciousness, so he wouldn't think AI is possible.

> The student does well with the easier part of this question, on Smart. The more challenging Nagel part is less well explained and not necessarily accurate. The student needs to link Nagel's views more directly with the idea of "a machine that can think". The question for Nagel might be whether it is necessary to have conscious experience to be said to be "thinking", and the fact that we would have no way of telling whether there is a subjective experience of what it is like to be a thinking machine. It is important for the student to acknowledge that Nagel does not believe materialism is necessarily false. Therefore he would not necessarily deny the possibility of us creating a thinking machine, but he would question whether the physical components would entirely determine the subjective experience of the machine, and perhaps ask whether there is some way of the machine feeling what it is like to be a thinking machine that is essential to the thinking process.

> Overall, this student has a strong grasp of key knowledge. He/she understands the central ideas of both texts and is able to apply them in tasks of analysis, comparison and critical comparison. However, he/she needs to re-examine some subtleties in Nagel's position. Philosophical skills of clear explanation, coherent reasoning and precise use of language use are demonstrated to a high standard, and the student's ability to use examples to defend a point of view are displayed to excellent effect in question 6. Referring to the relevant Performance Descriptors, this student's work is at the lower end of the top mark range. (See: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx)

Area of Study 2: Approaches to Assessment

Below are some examples of assessment tasks which draw on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills of Area of Study 2, Personal Identity.

Sample Tasks

EXAMPLE 1*: EXTENDED RESPONSES / WRITTEN ANALYSIS

Response to stimulus material
Time for completion: 30 minutes
***see annotated sample response below**

Few respected philosophers and psychologists would identify as strict Cartesian dualists, in the sense of believing that mind and matter are completely separate. But the Cartesian cogito is still everywhere you look. The experimental design of memory testing, for example, tends to proceed from the assumption that it's possible to draw a sharp distinction between the self and the world. If memory simply lives inside the skull, then it's perfectly acceptable to remove a person from her everyday environment and relationships, and to test her recall using flashcards or screens in the artificial confines of a lab. A person is considered a standalone entity, irrespective of her surroundings, inscribed in the brain as a series of cognitive processes. Memory must be simply something you have, not something you do within a certain context.

Source: A.Berhane, 'Descartes was wrong: a person is a person through other persons', in *Aeon 7* April 2017 (https://aeon.co/ideas/descartes-was-wrong-a-person-is-a-person-through-other-persons)

Is the self best understood as a "standalone entity", located in the mind and its memories?

Develop a response to this question. In your response you should discuss:

- how Locke might respond to this question;

- how Michaels might respond to this question;

- your response to this question, addressing the ideas in the passage and critically comparing the theories of Locke and Michaels on the nature of personal identity.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

THINK

How could the above task be used to help you to prepare for Section B of the exam?

EXAMPLE 2: WRITTEN REFLECTION

Response to stimulus material
Time for completion: Preparation time out of class, plus 45 minutes' writing time in class

Read the following thought-provoking article about how technology is altering our ideas about where the self begins and ends: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/dec/09/tech-mind-body-boundary-facebook-google

Then critically reflect on this question:

Is your phone part of your "self"?

In your reflections, you should consider:

- What key points are made about personal identity and technology in the article?

- What links you can make between the ideas about personal identity in the article, and the viewpoints and arguments of Locke, Hume and Michaels?

- What might be the responses of Locke, Hume and Michaels to the ideas in this article and to the question above?

- What are your views on the usefulness and plausibility of the views of Locke, Hume and Michaels, in relation to the question above?

- What is your response to the question above, and why?

THINK

Examples 1 and 2 above both draw on stimulus material to provoke your critical reflections on personal identity and the set texts. What have you learned about using stimulus material as the basis for a response? Share your tips with your classmates!

EXAMPLE 3: ESSAY

Personal Identity
Time for completion: 100 minutes (2 classes)

Complete an essay of approximately **800-1,000 words** in response to one of the following prompts:

1. 'It is clear that a single, continuing self is an illusion.' Critically discuss this claim with reference to at least two thinkers studied in this Area of Study (Locke, Hume or Michaels).

2. Critically compare Locke and Michaels' accounts of personal identity, including outlines of at least one thought experiment used by each.

3. Outline and evaluate Hume's account of personal identity, and assess its implications for a relevant contemporary debate.

4. In the television show Only Fools and Horses, *Trigger* works as a road sweeper.
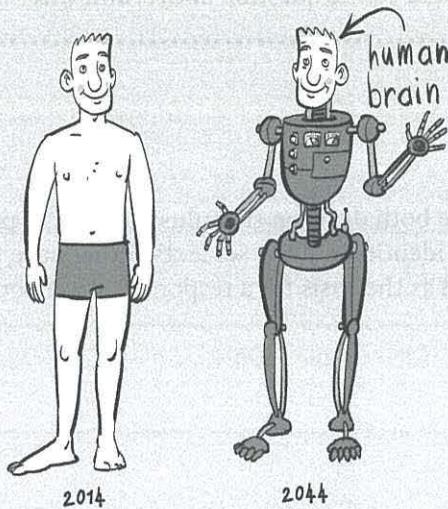
   "I've had this broom for 20 years," Trigger says, holding his broom. *"Mind you, it's had 17 new heads and 14 new handles."*

   "How can it be the same bloody broom then?" asks Sid, the café owner.

   Trigger produces an old photograph of him and his broom, looking exactly as they do now, and asks the café owner, "What more proof do you need?"

   Is the principle upon which Trigger argues he's had the same broom for 20 years a useful one in cases of personal identity? In your answer include outlines of relevant arguments from Locke and Michaels.
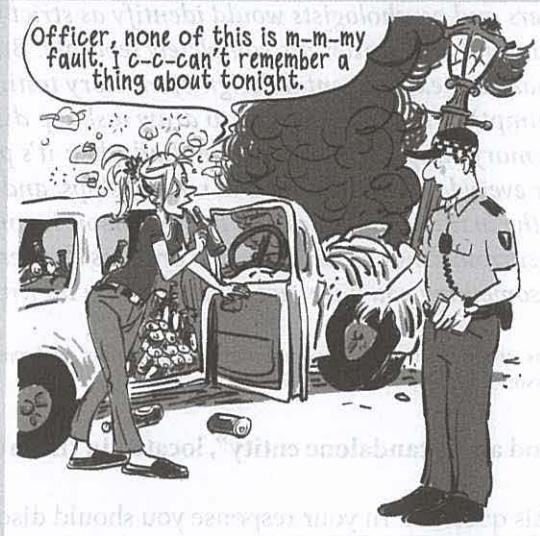
5. Is Martin, as depicted in the cartoon below, the same person in 2044 as he was in 2014? In your response, draw on the arguments of at least two of the following: Locke, Hume or Michaels.

6. *Isadora, an actress, says to her beauty therapist, "you know, this face has been my livelihood for 50 years now. Mind you, it's had 13 surgeries, so there have been many Isadoras on those big screens!"*

   Critically compare the views of Locke and Michaels in response to the suggestion that "there have been many Isadoras".

7. Critically respond to the issues of personal identity depicted in this cartoon, drawing on arguments from at least **two** of the following: Locke, Hume or Michaels.

DO

Write a detailed plan for one of the essay questions listed above. When you have completed this task, check your plan against the *Performance Descriptors* at: *https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors. aspx*

How well would your essay perform against these descriptors? What would you need to do to the essay to improve your performance?

Annotated Sample Response: Written Exercise/ Extended Response

The following annotated student response has been assessed using the Key Knowledge and Key Skills described on p.24 of the Study Design for VCE Philosophy and the Performance Descriptors at https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx

STIMULUS-BASED TASK (FROM PAGE 20):

Few respected philosophers and psychologists would identify as strict Cartesian dualists, in the sense of believing that mind and matter are completely separate. But the Cartesian cogito is still everywhere you look. The experimental design of memory testing, for example, tends to proceed from the assumption that it's possible to draw a sharp distinction between the self and the world. If memory simply lives inside the skull, then it's perfectly acceptable to remove a person from her everyday environment and relationships, and to test her recall using flashcards or screens in the artificial confines of a lab. A person is considered a standalone entity, irrespective of her surroundings, inscribed in the brain as a series of cognitive processes. Memory must be simply something you have, not something you do within a certain context.

Source: A.Berhane, 'Descartes was wrong: a person is a person through other persons', in *Aeon* 7 April 2017 (https://aeon.co/ideas/descartes-was-wrong-a-person-is-a-person-through-other-persons)

Is the self best understood as a "standalone entity", located in the mind and its memories?

Develop a response to this question. In your response you should discuss:

- how Locke might respond to this question;

- how Michaels might respond to this question;

- your response to this question, addressing the ideas in the passage and critically comparing the theories of Locke and Michaels on the nature of personal identity.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

STUDENT RESPONSE

John Locke, writing in the late 17th century, certainly adopted Descartes' ideas about the separateness of mind and body as the basis for his arguments about personal identity. While not giving emphasis to the immaterial soul that preoccupied Descartes, Locke nonetheless argues that personal identity must be located in consciousness – specifically in the memories. Continuity of memory is continuity of self, according to Locke. According to Locke, other candidates for attribution of personal identity - such as continuity of body – can be ruled out. Memory alone and in isolation from other factors makes the self, for Locke, a standalone entity.

> The opening paragraph does an excellent job of taking words and ideas from the passage and linking them to Locke, while clearly and accurately setting out Locke's views.

This view has proved influential and is still – as the article points out – "everywhere you look". Michael's essay challenges the hegemony of this Cartesian/Lockean view that continuity of mind/memory is the only trustworthy marker of self. Michaels' arguments match the sceptical tone of the given extract, similarly questioning the idea that "it's possible to draw a sharp distinction between the self and the world. "In her Wanda/Schwanda thought experiment, Michaels exposes the importance that bodies have to personal identity, in addition to self-consciousness and memory. We also appreciate from these examples, other environmental and relation factors to personal identity, including the ways our selves are embedded in relationships with other people in our families and communities; in other words, we appreciate the difficulty of drawing "a sharp distinction between the self and the world", as the extract puts it. Michaels reminds us of the well-known objection to Locke's argument of memory as the standalone criterion for personal identity: it is circular because memory presupposes the existence of personal identity. Michaels' example of bike riding refers to physical memory and shows we attribute things our bodies and brains learn to our selves. This accords with the extract's challenge to the view of memory as "something you have" rather than "something you do within a given context." The Dr Nefarious thought experiments show that we identify with and feel concerned for the future of our body, even if we don't imagine having conscious continuity within it.

My own view is more sympathetic to the scepticism of the given extract and to Michaels' views, than to Locke's straightforward positing of a standalone self within the mind/memories. I think there is more to a self than just its memories: a self is woven by, and woven into, the lives of other people and the world around it. It is formed through interactions which cannot be extracted from it, and nor can it be easily separated from its body and the surrounding physical environment. Michaels' thought experiments, to which there are no easy answers, and to which Locke's theory is unhelpful, make clear the messiness of personal identity. Michaels' view concurs with the given extract that the idea of memory testing by flashcards "in the artificial confines of a lab" is based on a misguided view of how memories and self are constructed. The self is not a standalone entity, but an intricate interplay of mind, memory, body, physical context and other people.

The response then picks up on the similarities between Michael's view and the scepticism of the extract towards the Cartesian/Lockean viewpoint, showing a thorough, detailed and accurate grasp of Michaels' arguments. Specific examples from Michaels (bike riding, the circularity criticism, the Wanda and Dr Nefarious thought experiments) are drawn on to make these links, showing sensitivity to the subtleties of Michaels' ideas and their implications. Again, the extract is quoted deftly to demonstrate its alliance with Michaels.

A strong case is made for the superiority of Michaels' view, in agreement with the extract, that personal identity is more complex than Locke would have it. The student's own viewpoint is stated clearly, elaborated on, and defended. An example from the extract (memory testing by flashcards in a lab) is aligned with Locke's view, and shown (via Michaels' arguments) to be wanting. The conclusion continues to make close use of the words of the extract. The overall impression is that this student has thoroughly synthesised the ideas, viewpoints and arguments of all three texts – the extract, Locke and Michaels – and drawn them into a convincing critical comparison which scores a direct hit on the question.

This response would earn a top score (see Performance Descriptors: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx)

CHAPTER 3

Unit 4: The Good Life

Introduction

'Who and what am I?' Given that our study began with this question, it seems only natural that, in Unit 4 Philosophy, our attention should turn to the question, 'how should I live?'

Like Unit 3, Unit 4 Philosophy invites you to explore this question through both a close examination of the viewpoints and arguments expressed within a collection of set texts and within the context of relevant contemporary debates. In Area of Study 1, the set texts define both the parameters and direction of your learning. However, in Area of Study 2, 'Living the Good Life in the Twenty-First Century', the set texts play a less prominent role as you explore a variety of sources to investigate ways in which technological development informs our conceptions of the good life. You will bring these ideas about technology and the good life into dialogue with concepts, viewpoints and arguments from the texts studied in Area of Study 1.

Although each Unit 4 Area of Study takes a different approach to exploring the good life, both require the exercise of similar skills. Like Unit 3, you will be assessed in terms of how well you are able to identify, analyse and evaluate viewpoints and arguments, and on your capacity to formulate philosophical responses. Thus Unit 4 Philosophy provides the opportunity to further develop and refine your philosophical skills within a framework of new questions, perspectives and ideas.

Area of Study 1: Approaches to Assessment

Below are some examples of assessment tasks that draw on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills of Area of Study 1, Conceptions of the Good Life.

Sample Tasks

EXAMPLE 1: SHORT ANSWER RESPONSES

Time for completion: 60 mins

Question 1

a. Callicles maintains that a good life is achieved by allowing our desires to expand unchecked. What is his argument for this view?

b. Would Aristotle agree with Callicles' views regarding the relationship between desire and the good life? Why or why not?

c. In what ways are Callicles and Aristotle's views regarding the relationship between desire and the good life informed by their views on human nature? Which of these accounts of human nature do you find more plausible? Give reasons for your response.

Question 2

a. Socrates rejects Callicles' views on the relationship between pleasure and the good life. Why? Use Socrates' example of the leaky jars to support your response.

b. Would Nietzsche agree with the argument you have described in a), above? Give reasons for your response.

c. Which of these two accounts of the place of pleasure in the good life – Socrates' or Nietzsche's – do you agree with, and why?

Question 3

a. According to Aristotle, what is the relationship between reason, virtue and the good life?

b. With reference to the relationship you have described in a), above, explain Aristotle's view of the good person.

c. Would the person you have described in b), above, be living a good life according to Wolf? Give reasons for your response.

Question 4

a. Describe what Wolf calls the 'fulfilment view' of meaningfulness.

b. Why does Wolf believe that the 'fulfilment view' offers an incomplete account of meaningfulness?

c. Would Nietzsche approve of the 'fulfilment view' of meaningfulness as a model for the good life? Give reasons for your response.

Consider the revision strategies on pp.71-73. Which of these suggestions would be most effective for preparing for the above task?

EXAMPLE 2*: WRITTEN DIALOGUE AND WRITTEN ANALYSIS

Time for completion: 150 mins (3 classes)
***see annotated sample response below**

Construct a transcript for a panel discussion on the nature of the good life using the viewpoints and arguments expressed by two or more of the Unit 4, Area of Study 1 thinkers.

Before completing the task, devise a list of questions that your 'panel host' will put to the thinkers. This list need not be extensive (around 4-6 questions should be plenty) and should be designed to bring out the similarities and differences between the viewpoints and arguments expressed by your thinkers in the set texts. You may like to use the general questions identified in the Study Design for Philosophy under the Key Knowledge for Area of Study 1, Outcome 1 (https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/philosophy/PhilosophySD_2019.pdf p.27) to help you to formulate appropriate questions.

When writing up your transcript, remember that you must:

- Demonstrate an understanding of your chosen philosophers' arguments.

- Show the similarities and differences between your chosen philosophers' viewpoints and arguments.

Your transcript should be approximately **800-1000 words** in length and must be accompanied by a critical commentary in which you discuss the comparative merits and shortcomings of the viewpoints and arguments expressed within your transcript and come to some kind of judgment regarding the persuasiveness of these viewpoints and arguments. Your critical commentary should be approximately **500 words** in length.

Which thinkers would you choose for this task? What questions would work most effectively to bring out the similarities and differences between their viewpoints and arguments?

EXAMPLE 3: ESSAY

Time for completion: 100 minutes

Complete an essay of approximately **800–1,000 words** in response to one of the following prompts:

1. 'A life without pleasure cannot be a good life.' Discuss with reference to the viewpoints and arguments expressed in two of the set texts.

2. 'How well our lives are lived cannot be measured by ourselves alone.' Discuss with reference to the viewpoints and arguments expressed in two of the set texts.

3. 'To understand what the good life is we must first understand our human nature.' Discuss with reference to the viewpoints and arguments expressed in two of the set texts.

4. 'Moral goodness is incompatible with individual happiness.' Discuss with reference to the viewpoints and arguments expressed in two of the set texts.

DO

Write a detailed plan for one of the essay questions listed above. When you have completed this task, check your plan against the descriptors for this Outcome at: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx

How well would your essay perform against these descriptors? What would you need to do to the essay to improve your performance?

Annotated Sample Response: Written Dialogue and Written Analysis

The following annotated student response has been assessed using the Key Knowledge and Key Skills described on pp.26-27 of the Study Design for VCE Philosophy and the Performance Descriptors at: (https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx).

DIALOGUE TASK (FROM PAGE 28)

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CALLICLES, SOCRATES, NIETZSCHE AND WOLF ON HAPPINESS AND THE GOOD LIFE

Host: Welcome to today's show – On Happiness and the Good Life – and to our four panellists, Callicles, Socrates, Nietzsche and Wolf. I'd like to begin our discussion with your views, Callicles. In your opinion how can one best achieve a happy life?

Callicles: Well, achieving a happy life is really quite simple. One just allows one's desires to expand until they can grow no larger and then puts all of one's efforts into fulfilling one's desires. Fulfilment of desire naturally produces pleasure and pleasure is synonymous with happiness.

> The introduction demonstrates knowledge of concepts and arguments relating to the chosen topic

Host: Socrates, I see you disagree with the hedonistic philosophy that Callicles is expressing...

Socrates: Of course I disagree with this! A life of desire is not a happy life but a terrifying life. One becomes like a man with a leaky jar, enslaved to the action of 'pouring.' Better to live a life of self-restraint. If one exercises restraint then one avoids the terrible anxiety that comes with enslavement to desire and so is content.

> The student has picked up on a fundamental difference between how Callicles and Socrates view the relationship between desire and happiness. The student has also explained why Socrates holds a different view from Callicles.

Callicles: You speak of such people as slaves, Socrates, but those who exercise self-restraint are the true slaves. This view that one should not take what one wants, that it is somehow wrong to take what one wants, is a view manufactured by the masses, who are far too timid to win the satisfaction of their pleasures and so condemn those who can.

> The student identifies a second difference between Socrates and Callicles and demonstrates knowledge of the structure of Callicles' arguments.

Host: So Callicles, are you claiming that the self-restraint that Socrates is suggesting is not natural to us?

Callicles: I am suggesting that. Nature endorses the view that we are hedonistic creatures. The life that Socrates is advocating stands in opposition to nature. It is the life of a stone or a corpse.

> The student uses a key concept. However, some definition of this term would have better demonstrated her understanding.

Host: In moving the discussion towards the connection between nature and convention we are of course touching on a key debate of the classical age – whether moral norms are part of reality or simply the products of human custom. Nietzsche, as a philosopher of the nineteenth century, would you agree with Callicles that this view that Socrates is proposing is just a convention constructed by the masses who are too timid to claim their desires? And further, do you agree with Callicles that we should be looking to nature and its prescriptions if we want to know how to live?

Nietzsche: I do agree with Callicles that many of the so-called moral ideals we hold, such as 'self-restraint is preferable to self-indulgence,' or 'it is wrong for some people to have more than others,' result from the timidity of the masses and in particular, from what the masses see as threatening. But I completely disagree with the notion that we can look to nature to discover some moral reality that can tell us the right way to live. It is my opinion that moral conventions evolve from the needs of societies. While taking what one wanted may have had some utility back in times when resources were scarce and communities had to fight for survival, nowadays, we are more likely to see such behaviour as threatening. That's why people who hold views like Callicles are considered dangerous or evil. But as to whether we can look to nature to either confirm or deny the truth of such views, no, I don't think that is possible.

Host: So you wouldn't agree with Callicles that the route to happiness is to pursue one's desires?

Nietzsche: No. People may think that Callicles and I would agree on such matters because I support his views regarding the masses and their role in the construction of conventional morality – a morality I don't endorse. But in my opinion both Callicles and Socrates are not so different from one another. They may disagree on how happiness is achieved – one maintaining that happiness is found in pursuing desires, the other, in exercising restraint – but both still place a premium on happiness and both still reduce the whole question of how to live life to one of trying to increase pleasure and avoid pain. Therefore in my opinion, both Socrates and Callicles are expressing herd values insofar as both are trying to abolish suffering. But without suffering how are humans to become better? Besides, abolishing suffering is a fantasy.

Host: Professor Wolf, what do you think of what Nietzsche has to say on this note?

Student identifies the historical context in which Socrates and Callicles' debate takes place. An explicit connection between this context and the way Socrates and Callicles' views engage with it would have better demonstrated her knowledge.

Student identifies a similarity between Nietzsche and Callicles, and a subtle point of difference.

The student has highlighted subtle points of similarity and difference and identified assumptions made within the texts.

Wolf: I would certainly agree that suffering is not antithetical to the good life, as both Socrates and Callicles suggest. Indeed, it is my view that those very things that provide us with feelings of fulfilment – which is a vital ingredient for a good life – don't always bring us pleasure or even happiness. Take, for example, writing philosophy. It's often exhausting and stressful and I certainly wouldn't say I feel happy sitting at my desk trying to get my sentences right. But that suffering isn't bad. It's really just a characteristic of those things we do that make our lives meaningful.

Nietzsche: I would agree with Wolf. It is this very suffering and our capacity to embrace it that allows us to transcend the herd…

Wolf: Hold on! I'm not so sure a good life involves setting ourselves apart from those you call the herd. I think that, as humans, we have a need to see our lives as valuable from a point of view outside of ourselves. We also have a need to feel connected with others. That's why for an endeavour to be considered meaningful it must do more than simply bring us feelings of fulfilment, it must engage us in something larger than ourselves, something considered to be objectively worthwhile.

Nietzsche: This sounds to me like herd morality, this need to have our endeavours endorsed by others for them to be considered meaningful. It doesn't sound like a good life at all!

Host: We started this discussion today talking about happiness. However, we have also discussed pleasure, morality and human nature, and the relationship each has to the good life. Callicles, you began our discussion by saying that happiness can be achieved by pursuing one's desires.

Callicles: That's correct.

Host: And Socrates, you agreed with Callicles that our goal should be to minimise pain and increase pleasure but you disagreed in terms of how this is to be achieved…

Socrates: That's correct. And my view is not simply the view of the masses. It is one endorsed by nature too.

Host: Nietzsche, you're uninterested in what nature prescribes – indeed, you maintain that there is no moral reality other than the one we create. You're also uninterested in placing a premium on happiness as the key to the good life.

The student has again highlighted subtle points of similarity and difference, and the use of an example demonstrates her understanding of a key concept related to the text.

Student demonstrates an understanding of Wolf's view of human nature and how this connects with her view of the good life.

The student has demonstrated understanding of the arguments and viewpoints in the text however some further explanation of the 'larger-than-oneself' view would have better conveyed this understanding.

This summary of the discussion works to ensure all the key points the student has identified are made clear to the reader.

Nietzsche: Yes. I think placing a premium on happiness means we fail to recognise the importance of suffering. Besides, such a view smacks of the herd and their timidity.

Host: Professor Wolf, you would agree with Nietzsche that suffering isn't incoherent with having a good life, but you don't agree with the view that a good life comes from rising above the herd. In fact, it is our human need for connection with others that provides us with clues to how we can live well.

Wolf: That's correct. I am perhaps a little like Callicles in that I think our human nature offers us some direction on how we can live a good, or meaningful, life.

Host: Thank you, philosophers. This has been a most interesting discussion.

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

In the above dialogue, Callicles, Socrates, Nietzsche and Wolf discuss the nature of happiness and the relationship between pleasure, morality, human nature and the good life.

Callicles claims that a happy life is easily achieved by allowing our desires to expand. This argument is problematic for it assumes a necessary relationship between desire and pleasure. However, this is not always the case. Even the very best efforts cannot ensure that my every desire will be fulfilled. I may desire something – an expensive car perhaps, or the affections of a particular person, or the possession of a particular talent – that, for one reason or another, I cannot fulfil. If this is the case, then allowing my desires to expand until they can 'grow no larger' is likely to result in misery rather than happiness.

> The student clearly identifies an assumption in Callicles' argument.

> The student offers a criticism of Callicles' argument by using a counter-argument supported by concrete examples to assess the plausibility of one of the premises.

This is the point that Socrates makes with his analogy of the leaky jars. Yet, while it seems certain that allowing one's desires to expand can result in misery, we might question whether a life of desire is a terrifying life. As Callicles points out, some people, for example, collectors or bargain hunters, might find the actual 'pouring' pleasurable.

> The student completes the evaluation by identifying the consequences of the counter-argument.

Nietzsche is highly critical of philosophies like those of Callicles and Socrates as he believes they fail to recognise the importance of suffering to a good life. While suffering is certainly not incompatible with a good life – as Wolf points out, suffering can be a part of activities that make our lives more meaningful – the degree of suffering's usefulness will depend on how capable we are of 'using' that suffering. One can easily imagine someone who suffers from a tragedy who,

> Student provides some critical comparison of the two arguments.

rather than becoming better, is crushed by the experience. Also, it is difficult to see how some suffering, such as that suffered by people living in areas of extreme poverty, or famine, or of war, can make people better. However, perhaps this is simply a lack of imagination. Perhaps people can be made better through such experiences. Yet, even if it is true that suffering is compatible with a good life, pleasure, or at the least, lack of pain, is surely more compatible because it doesn't require a special degree of resilience: most people whose lives are pleasant and/or are without pain would also experience a good life, whereas this would be the case for only for a few who suffer.

Of course, this isn't really true if we think of the suffering Wolf alludes to in her explanation of the fulfilment view. For Wolf, some suffering is part of the good life, for suffering often attends those activities that make our life meaningful. While it seems self-evident when we consider people who are devoted to particular pursuits (learning an instrument, or preparing for a marathon) that suffering is not incompatible with a good life, we might question her further view that for an activity to be meaningful it must also have some kind of objective worth. Objective worth – if such a measure is even possible – may have some relevance when I am considering the meaningfulness of others' lives but it doesn't necessarily play a role when I am reflecting on the meaningfulness of my own life. For example, I may actually find making copies of War and Peace incredibly fulfilling. I'm not sure Wolf provides a good enough argument for the claim that for something to be intrinsically meaningful for the individual it must be judged as meaningful by others.

> Student provides developed critical, comparative discussion on views of pleasure and pain offered in the texts.

> Student offers an evaluation of the arguments, supported by examples.

> Although there are places where further elaboration is necessary, this is a very strong piece. The student demonstrates a very good understanding of the relevant concepts, arguments and viewpoints, and identifies some subtle points of similarity and difference between the arguments and viewpoints. In her commentary she does an excellent job of evaluating the arguments, particularly in terms of supporting her evaluations with examples. She has developed the piece carefully and the writing is of a very high standard. This piece would sit in the mid to high range of the highest performance descriptor.

Area of Study 2: Approaches to Assessment

Sample Tasks

Below are some examples of assessment tasks that draw on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills of Area of Study 2, 'Living the Good Life in the Twenty-First Century'.

EXAMPLE 1: MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

Time for completion: 150 minutes (3 classes)

Using a multimedia tool such as Prezi, design a presentation that analyses a contemporary discussion of the relationship between technology and the good life. Your presentation must:

- Use an excerpt from a non-philosophical source (approximately 200 words or 1-2 scenes) that explores the relationship between technology and the good life. Appropriate sources for excerpts include (but are not limited to) printed texts such as novels, newspapers or poems, online journals such as *Aeon* or *The Conversation*, or media texts, such as films or television series.

- Identify how the chosen excerpt comments on the relationship between technology and the good life.

- Critically reflect on how the chosen text comments on the relationship between technology and the good life by drawing on the arguments and viewpoints expressed in at least two philosophical sources. At least ONE of these sources should be drawn from Unit 4, Area of Study 1.

- Provide a judgment in response to how the chosen excerpt comments on the relationship between technology and the good life in light of your critical reflection.

Modern technology: making our lives better.

THINK

How could the above task be used to help you to prepare for Section C of the exam?

EXAMPLE 2: WRITTEN REFLECTION

Time for completion: 100 minutes (2 classes)

Using relevant source material (for example an article or excerpt of an article from journals such as *New Philosopher, Philosophy Now, Aeon, The Conversation* or *Womankind*), and drawing on a selection of arguments and viewpoints expressed within the set texts for Unit 4, Area of Study 1 and/or other relevant philosophical sources, complete a written reflection of approximately **800-1,000 words** in response to **one** of the following questions:

- In what ways, and to what extent, does technological development challenge our understanding of human nature?

- In what ways, and to what extent, does technological development challenge our understanding of the relationship between being morally good and the good life?

- In what ways may technological development re-shape our understanding of happiness?

- How will the relationship between the good life for the individual and for broader society be re-shaped by technological development?

THINK

What will you need to include in your Written Reflection to make sure that it meets each of the performance descriptors for Unit 4, Outcome 2?

EXAMPLE 3*: ESSAY

Time for completion: 100 minutes (2 classes), not including research time.
*see annotated sample response below

Using one of the **four questions** identified in the Key Knowledge for Unit 4, Area of Study 2 in the Study Design for VCE Philosophy p.28, to guide you, choose an excerpt from a print or online source (see suggestions in Example 2 above on p.36) that explores or comments on the relationship between technological development and the good life. Develop an essay question that invites you to explore the perspective on the relationship between technological development and the good life expressed in your chosen excerpt. Your essay question should also invite you to use the arguments and viewpoints of at least ONE of the texts from Unit 4, Area of Study 1. Write an essay of between **800-1,000 words** in response to this question. Your essay must:

- Clearly identify an appropriate philosophical issue, and the perspective taken on the issue, in the chosen excerpt.

- Use the philosophical arguments and viewpoints to analyze and critically reflect on the perspective taken on the philosophical issue identified in the chosen excerpt.

- Provide a judgment on the perspective taken on the philosophical issue identified in the chosen excerpt, in light of the critical reflection

- Provide a focused and coherent discussion using precise and appropriate language.

Annotated Sample Response: Essay

The following annotated student response has been assessed using the Key Knowledge and Key Skills described on pp.27-28 of the Study Design for VCE Philosophy and the Performance Descriptors at: https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/adviceforteachers/philosophy/perfdescriptors.aspx

ESSAY TASK: STIMULUS-BASED RESPONSE ON THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CONCEPTIONS OF THE GOOD LIFE AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT (SEE ABOVE)

CHOSEN EXTRACT

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Hitler got off easy, given the scope and viciousness of his crimes. We might have moved beyond the Code of Hammurabi and 'an eye for an eye', but most of us still feel that a killer of millions deserves something sterner than a quick and painless suicide. But does anyone ever deserve hell?

The student has selected an appropriate excerpt that links to the interplay between technology and the Key Knowledge described in Unit 4, Outcome 2 ('What does the good life have to do with being morally good?').

That used to be a question for theologians, but in the age of human enhancement, a new set of thinkers is taking it up. As biotech companies pour billions into life extension technologies, some have suggested that our cruellest criminals could be kept alive indefinitely, to serve sentences spanning millennia or longer. Even without life extension, private prison firms could one day develop drugs that make time pass more slowly, so that an inmate's 10-year sentence feels like an eternity. One way or another, humans could soon be in a position to create an artificial hell.

Source: R. Anderson, 'Hell on Earth' in Aeon, 14 March 2014 (https://aeon. co/essays/how-will-radical-life-extension-transform-punishment)

Question: Drawing on the viewpoints and arguments of both Nietzsche and Wolf, critically discuss the consequences of technological development described in the stimulus.

> The question is stylistically similar to an exam question and relevant to Unit 4, Area of Study 2.

STUDENT RESPONSE

The secular world has grown increasingly pessimistic about the possibility of divine retribution against those who commit horrible crimes. Therefore, ideas that we might one day be able to either extend the lives of the worst offenders indefinitely, or administer drugs that make time slow to a point that one's jail time seems to take an eternity, may at first seem attractive. After all, why shouldn't such people suffer, given the enormous suffering they have visited upon others? But we might also ask whether such measures might really be considered morally defensible, even if the crimes committed are of the very worst kind.

To help us to arrive at a position on this question it is helpful to first consider exactly what prolonging the jail term of an offender – either in reality or simply from the perspective of the offender – is really doing to that offender. In her essay 'Meaning in Life' philosopher Susan Wolf describes a meaningful life as one in which one is able to pursue activities that are both personally fulfilling and which contribute to something 'larger than oneself.' The first of these criteria is relatively straightforward – activities that are meaningful are those that arouse our passion and with which we persist, even if the experience of engaging in them is not always pleasurable. The second refers to a level of objective value, the idea that the thing I am doing has a value that exists outside of my own subjective judgment. For Wolf, both of these elements respond to very basic human needs – the need for our lives to be considered worthwhile from a point

of view outside of ourselves, the need to connect with others, even in the broadest way (for example, my isolated writing of poetry, even though solitary in nature, connects me to the wider 'community' of poets living and dead), and the need to find a way out of our existential despair.

While incarceration doesn't necessarily deprive individuals from living meaningful lives- as a criminal can, for example, choose to write poetry or even study for a literature degree - one would imagine that a justice system that is punitive enough to chemically alter a criminal's perception of time, may well be punitive enough to deny such individuals the means to live meaningful lives. Indeed, given the importance of meaningfulness to the individual, perhaps simply denying the means for meaningfulness would make for an effective punishment and we may not need such drastic measures. However, putting this aside, the idea of an interminable, meaningless stretch of existence seems intolerable, even cruel.

But is it immoral? Our intuitions may lead us to one of two answers – it is absolutely immoral to enact such cruelty on another human being, even human beings of the very worst kind, or it isn't immoral to treat those who have acted so terribly in whatever way we see fit; indeed, it may be immoral not to do so.

Friedrich Nietzsche, however, provides us with another way to think of this problem. For Nietzsche, who is a moral relativist, our moral codes are socially constructed and result from the social context in which we find ourselves; what we consider good is that which serves to protect the community, and that which we consider bad is that which threatens the community. Thus the 'criminal' is one who has given in to drives that are not sanctioned by those Nietzsche calls the herd. The response of the herd is one of panic and they need to curtail the behaviour. In this understanding neither the behaviour of the criminal nor the punishment options described in the stimulus could be considered in any objective sense moral or immoral, both just reflect the needs of the herd.

Yet while Nietzsche might question the logic that makes us view the very worst offenders as 'evil' and might even view the very fact that as a society we might toy with the idea of such punishments as a sign of the degree of moral panic such unsanctioned behaviour generates, he wouldn't necessarily disagree with such punishment. In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche is critical of a kind of moral 'softening' which he believes is the result of the herd demonizing what he calls 'sterner drives.' As a result, we feel bad for feeling, for

The student provides a competent analysis of Wolf's arguments.

The student is able to apply the arguments to support critical reflection on the issue.

The student provides another astute analysis of a relevant argument.

The student has applied the philosophical arguments to the contemporary debate in a nuanced and insightful way to further their critical reflection.

example, aggressive, towards those who hurt us. Thus we are unable to enact our vengeance. So Nietzsche may applaud this quite extreme response to criminal behaviour.

Although Nietzsche's argument about the origin of morality is persuasive – we can use many examples of behaviours we consider morally wrong and see how they might be viewed as threatening to the herd – our moral views still remain the measure for judging human behaviour. We might even argue that the very fact that such behaviour threatens the herd warrants the herd's action. But even if we accept that morality is socially constructed and thus the criminal cannot be thought of as evil in any real sense, this doesn't really provide grounds to warrant such extreme punishment.

By providing some of these examples the student would have better supported their evaluative point.

The claims made in this paragraph require teasing out to provide a compelling evaluation

Of course such punishment is neither, in and of itself, moral or immoral, but it is also unnecessary to serve the herd's needs. If all we need is to remove the threat then incarceration is enough. And if we need the added incentive of wanting to make the criminal suffer and so exercise our 'sterner drives', then depriving the criminal of the means to live a meaningful life - for example through solitary confinement and the denial of activity - would succeed in doing this.

This demonstrates quite a sophisticated synthesis of the arguments and issue to arrive at some judgment.

In conclusion, if we accept the view that morality is socially constructed and not absolute, then punishments like those described in the stimulus cannot really be considered immoral. Nevertheless, they could be considered unnecessary, for there may be other ways to enact punishment that serve the herd's needs but do not require the violation of rights (over our bodies) or the enormous economic cost (of interminable incarceration) that the methods described necessarily involve.

The judgment has been well supported, proceeds naturally from the discussion and responds to the initial question. Thus the essay may be considered to be focused, sustained and coherent.

This is a very strong essay, notable for its insightful application of the philosophical material to support a discussion of the issue. The student demonstrated an excellent understanding of the arguments in the philosophical sources and was able to use this understanding to support an insightful critical reflection on the issue. While the critical reflection was strong, some more work evaluating the philosophical arguments would have made it stronger. The discussion is focused and sustained and the writing sophisticated. This piece would sit in the high to very high range. [see performance descriptors in VCE Philosophy Advice for Teachers].

The Exam

Introduction

For most students, the most daunting part of VCE Philosophy is the end-of-year examination. This is hardly surprising. The end-of-year examination includes a range of different question types and draws on all of the Key Knowledge and Key Skills for Units 3 and 4 Philosophy. Students are expected to have a detailed understanding of the concepts, viewpoints and arguments expressed within *all* of the set texts and to be able to effectively evaluate these viewpoints and arguments. Additionally, students must be able to work appropriately with written and visual stimulus material (stimulus material can appear in any section of the exam) and consider the viewpoints and arguments expressed within the set texts in relation to various contemporary debates, and in particular, debates relating to technology and the good life. All of this may seem even more daunting if we consider the fact that the examination is worth 50% of the overall study score for the subject.

Yet, however daunting the examination may appear, with diligent preparation and a detailed understanding of the different sections of the paper, you will be able to approach it with confidence. Below is a description of each of the three sections of the examination, followed by some tips for success and mistakes to avoid.

Overview of Exam Sections
Section A

The first section of the examination, which is marked out of thirty, consists of a series of written (short and extended) response questions derived from both Units 3 and 4. They may be stand-alone questions, or more typically, form part of a series of related questions. Because the section draws from both Units, the viewpoints and arguments from all of the set texts, and all of the Key Knowledge and Key Skills across all of the Areas of Study, are potentially assessable in this Section.

You should allow approximately 20-25 minutes to complete this section.

> **THINK**
>
> Carefully consider each of the Key Knowledge and Key Skills dot points listed on the relevant pages of the Study Design. Are you proficient in all of these? Where do your strengths and weaknesses lie?

Section B

The second section of the exam consists of two extended-response questions derived from Unit 3, Areas of Study 1 and 2. You might expect that each question will be asked in relation to a stimulus (visual or written) and will include some guidance on how to structure your response. Consult the Sample Exam (https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/philosophy/Philosophy-sample-w.pdf) to see examples of this scaffolding – that is, small sub-questions or dot-points that will help you to form your longer response and which may be a useful guide to your paragraphing. This book also provides several examples of this Section B formatting in Chapter 5: Practice Exam Papers, and a worked example is provided on pp.24-25.

In Section B, you can expect questions to place greater emphasis on your ability to evaluate, compare and critically compare viewpoints and arguments from the set texts. You may also be expected to integrate some knowledge of contemporary debates in your answer. Questions on personal identity may explore the consequences of thought experiments or the implications of positions on personal identity for moral responsibility. As well as demonstrating knowledge, your answers in this section will showcase key skills of coherent reasoning and argument, and clear and precise use of language.

You should allow approximately 30 minutes to complete this section.

THINK

Both Section A and Section B of the exam require a detailed knowledge of the same Unit 3 viewpoints and arguments, yet the style of question in each section is different. How will you approach your revision to ensure you are able to respond effectively to both styles?

Section C

The final section of the exam consists of **two** essay questions derived from Unit 4, of which you are to choose **one** to respond to. Although the exam specifications state that the essay questions may draw from *either* Area of Study 1 or 2, you should expect questions that require you to make connections across *both* Areas of Study.

Thus to adequately prepare for this section of the exam, you need an excellent command of *all the key knowledge and key skills of both Areas of Study in Unit 4*.

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If you look closely at the 2019 Sample Exam, you will see that the essay questions ask students to draw on varying combinations of – in particular - the elements listed below to produce an integrated response:

- **a perspective** on the interplay between technological development and the good life, **provided by stimulus material;**

- **philosophical concepts** relevant to technological development and the good life: *progress, reality, control, dependency, freedom, creativity;*

- **key questions** from the Study Design (see p. 28) including how *human nature, moral goodness, the nature of happiness* and *the individual versus broader society* have bearing on the interplay between technological development and the good life;

- **concepts used in discussion of the good life generally,** including *morality, happiness, human nature, values, hedonism, egoism, freedom, pleasure, pain, teleology, virtue, altruism, wisdom, self-restraint, justice, equality, duty, praise* and *blame* (see Study Design p.26);

- the concepts, viewpoints and arguments used in the **Unit 4 set texts** in relation to the good life;

- **Additional source material** relevant to the interplay between technology and the good life.

Some essays are specific (in naming a philosopher or concept you are to draw on) and others are more open (in giving you some choice as to which concepts or thinkers you believe are most relevant to the stimulus and prompt).

You may wish to use the list above to guide your revision strategies for the exam essay.

DO

Set up your notes with headings to cover all of the concepts and questions referenced in the list above. A table layout may also be useful. Work with classmates to fill in as many ideas as you can, relevant to each.

DO

Essay Jigsaw Game

Create 3 tubs: PERSPECTIVES, CONCEPTS/QUESTIONS and THINKERS/ SOURCES.

Into the PERSPECTIVES tub, place small cards, each of which has a broad proposition about the interplay between technology and the good life written on it. For example, a proposition could be something like: "We should embrace technological development for its capacity to improve human lives."

Into the CONCEPTS/QUESTIONS tub, place small cards, each with a concept or question from dot-points 2, 3 and 4 in the list above. Also place several blank cards into this tub. These represent "free choices" – that is, the opportunity to nominate your own concept or question if you draw this card.

Into the THINKERS & SOURCES tub, place small cards, each with the name of an Area of Study 1 thinker on it (i.e. Socrates, Callicles, Aristotle, Nietzsche, Wolf). You should also place at least 10 blank cards into this tub. The blanks are "free choice" cards, giving you the opportunity to nominate either a set-text thinker or another source you have studied in Area of Study 2.

HOW TO PLAY: Divide into teams. Each team draws: 1 card from Perspectives, 2 cards from Concepts/Questions and 2 cards from Thinkers & Sources. The teams then have 10 minutes to discuss the concepts/ questions and thinkers/sources they would draw on to discuss the given Perspective, how they would draw on these, and what kinds of conclusions might be drawn from this discussion.

Each team then shares their discussion with the class. Then draw again!

FOLLOW-UP: Practice writing plans and essays based on the cards drawn.

VARIATION: Place relevant stimulus material (e.g. written extracts printed on to cards) into the Perspectives tub.

(NOTE: It may be that some combinations of cards really don't work. In these cases, you may draw again or be granted a blank card to replace the ill-fitting one.)

ASSESSMENT OF SECTION C ESSAYS

Your Section C exam essay will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of the philosophical concepts, viewpoints, arguments and debates relevant to the question;

- critical evaluation of ideas and arguments relevant to the question;

- selection and use of relevant material and appropriate examples to support the response;

- development of a coherent and well-reasoned response that addresses the specific demands of the topic;

- use of clear and precise language appropriate to philosophy.

Although there is no word limit placed on the essay, you will generally find you will need to write at least 800 words and up to 1250 words to provide a sufficient response. You will need to allocate at least 45 minutes for writing the essay as well as time for writing a plan.

> **DO**
>
> Write a comprehensive description of what you think each of the essay marking criteria listed above would look like in practice. You can use these descriptions to help you focus your revision and assess your own writing.

Tips for Exam Success
Exam Tips Part 1: Answering Questions Fully

One of the most common mistakes students make in the examination is they fail to answer the question they are asked. This can occur for a variety of reasons: for example, the student may have insufficient knowledge of the relevant material, or have misinterpreted the question, or did not fully grasp what the question was asking him or her to do. However, this mistake can be easily avoided with the following strategies.

MAKING SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE MATERIAL

Although this may seem obvious, many students go into the examination with an inadequate understanding of the coursework. To be successful in the examination, it is important that you not only have a **detailed** and **accurate** understanding of the concepts, viewpoints and arguments expressed within the set texts and relevant to each of the Areas of Study, but that you also understand the counter-arguments and counter-examples you intend to use. This will ensure that your descriptions of concepts, viewpoints and arguments are accurate and that any evaluations you give are plausible and appropriately directed.

READING THE QUESTION CAREFULLY

This point, too, may seem obvious. However, within the anxiety-inducing atmosphere of an exam, it's easy to misread questions, skip key words and read questions as you expect to see them, not as they actually are. It is therefore vital to read each question carefully, both during reading time and before answering. If you think you may be prone to misreading questions, you might find it helpful to highlight or underline the key words (outline, compare, critically compare, evaluate, etc) so as to draw your attention to what you need to do in your responses.

ANSWERING THE WHOLE QUESTION

If you are reading questions carefully and paying particular attention to the various tasks the questions are asking you to perform, this is probably an error you will avoid. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning. Failing to answer the whole question (for example, only outlining when you are asked to outline *and* evaluate, or only comparing when you are asked to *critically* compare) can reduce your mark for that question significantly – which is disappointing if you know the material. Once again, by reading carefully and highlighting key words in questions you can avoid this.

ANSWERING ONLY THE QUESTION YOU ARE ASKED

While writing too little can result in reduced marks, so too can writing too much. An answer that goes far beyond what the question requires not only wastes both your time and the assessors', it also puts you at risk of contradicting yourself or of the correct answer being lost in a bombardment of information. Therefore, if you are asked only to outline an argument, don't evaluate it. Likewise, if you are asked to outline a particular argument, don't also outline other, related arguments. There is absolutely no benefit to be gained in writing more than the question asks.

While over-writing is a risk across the whole of the paper, students tend to be most vulnerable to this error when writing essays. Many students have a tendency to 'throw everything they know' into an essay, rather than judiciously selecting only those viewpoints and arguments of direct relevance to the question. Given that students are marked on 'the selection and use of relevant material and appropriate examples,' an indiscriminate approach to what viewpoints and arguments are included in your essay could significantly affect your grade. This can be avoided by knowing the relevance of viewpoints and arguments to particular questions, and by ensuring you put aside some time in the exam for constructing a brief plan of your essay.

Conversely, students must be wary of underwriting, particularly in Sections B and C. These sections of the exam require students to develop responses, not simply provide descriptions of the relevant arguments. To avoid underwriting (and, by the same token, overwriting), it is important to understand the difference between a description and an analysis. While a description involves describing the 'bones' of the argument (its premises and conclusions), an analysis involves a more detailed examination that reveals how the parts of the argument fit together (and in turn fit together to form a viewpoint), identifies any assumptions and provides a sense of how the viewpoint is operating as a piece of reasoning.

A common misconception that can often lead to students writing too much (or too little) is that the number of lines supplied for an answer indicates the length of the answer required. The number of lines is dictated by a formula linked to the number of allocated marks, and has nothing to do with expectations about how much or how little you need to write, so don't use the number of lines to guide your response.

It is also worth clarifying some instances where wording of questions can mislead students into writing too much. If a question contains the word 'or', (for example, 'Refer to arguments from Locke or Hume'), you should realise you can only be rewarded for work on the first of these thinkers you refer to. Likewise, if asked to list three things and you list five, assessors will only consider the first three. A different kind of case is questions (typically extended responses and essays) containing the phrase 'at least'. This indicates a minimum number of items to address in your response. Do not be misled into thinking that an answer which exceeds this minimum requirement will necessarily rank higher than one which merely matches it. For example, if asked to refer to 'at least two thinkers', a response which includes arguments from three thinkers will not be considered necessarily superior to one which limits itself to two thinkers. Remember that including greater breadth may be at the expense of depth in your answer. Rubrics or criteria are your best guides to shaping your essay or extended response.

ANSWERING THE *ACTUAL* QUESTION YOU ARE ASKED

Strange as it may seem outside of the exam room, inside the exam many students often fail to answer the question they have been asked. Sometimes this can be because their knowledge of the coursework is weak. However, it can also be because they have tried to fit a prepared answer to a

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question, or because they are unclear as to what arguments are used to support which conclusions, or, in the case of the essay, they mistake an exposition of philosophers' arguments for a response to a question or prompt. If you do not address the question you have been asked, or do not address it adequately, you cannot be awarded full marks. It therefore makes sense, particularly in the case of the essay, to avoid preparing answers, to know the correct structure of arguments and to practise writing essays to prompts. It is also vital that you refer closely to any stimulus material provided, and work its ideas into your response.

For more information on essay writing see pp.10-11.

FAMILIARISING YOURSELF WITH THE LANGUAGE USED IN QUESTIONS AND WHAT IT MEANS

Knowing what you are being asked to do is vitally important if you are to do it correctly. In the table below are some of the words and phrases you may see in the exam and what you should and shouldn't do when responding to questions that include these words and phrases.

WORD/PHRASE	DEFINITION	WHAT TO DO/NOT TO DO
Define ('what does X mean by…')	Give concise, clear meanings of words, concepts or ideas.	DO NOT go into unnecessary detail, but ensure you give a complete definition. DO NOT describe the argument in which the word/concept/idea is embedded unless asked to. DO NOT evaluate, give an opinion on or critically comment unless asked to.
Describe	Recall facts, arguments, examples or ideas from the text.	DO NOT explain or interpret. DO NOT evaluate, give an opinion or critically comment, unless asked to. Be as thorough (while still remaining succinct and precise) as the question will allow.
Explain	Provide an explanation of the concept, viewpoint, argument or idea.	Try to use brief examples to help clarify what you are trying to explain. Put the concept/viewpoint/argument/idea into your own words to show the assessors that you understand it. DO NOT evaluate, give an opinion on or critically comment unless asked to.
Justify/give reasons for	Support or give evidence or reasons for your opinion.	If possible, give concrete examples to support your reasons. DO NOT recourse to your own opinions to support your claim (for example 'I believe Callicles is correct because I am a hedonist' or 'I believe Socrates is correct because I believe in equality for all'). DO NOT mistake prejudices / personal beliefs for justifications (for example 'I think stealing is wrong because it is wrong to take things from other people').

Summarise	Give the main points in a condensed form, leaving out the details and examples.	Remember to be concise and to the point. DO NOT evaluate, give an opinion or critically comment unless asked to.
Analyse	This usually refers to an argument and means the same as 'outline' and 'explain' or 're-construct' – that is, break the material into its component parts.	Express the argument in a clear and precise fashion. Include only what is important to expressing the argument that you have been asked to analyse – do not include other arguments or extraneous material. DO NOT evaluate, give an opinion on or critically comment unless asked to.
Evaluate (Do you agree? Is this convincing?)		DO NOT recourse to personal opinion or your own convictions. Evaluation is about assessing the plausibility of the argument *ON ITS OWN TERMS*. So you should be asking 'how plausible is this premise?' rather than 'do I like it?' or 'do I personally agree with it?' Begin by identifying the strengths / weaknesses of the argument, then show your reader why it is a strength / weakness by supporting your claim with reasons and, if possible, a concrete example. Conclude with your judgment (which should proceed from this discussion). If you are going to use technical language (validity, invalidity, cogency, deductive/inductive, soundness, etc) make sure you understand the precise meanings of terms and know how to apply them correctly.
Compare Critically compare	Identify similarities and differences between two or more arguments / ideas. Evaluate the arguments or ideas against each other. In other words, identify similarities and differences between the arguments and explain which argument /idea is better by weighing up their merits / shortcomings. If you think both arguments / ideas are equally weak and / or problematic also explain why.	Be explicit. DO NOT simply imply what the points of similarity and difference are, state them. DO NOT simply compare if you are asked to critically compare.
Discuss	Present a point of view – either that of others or your own.	If presenting your own viewpoint, it should be supported by arguments and evidence. Always give reasons to support your claims. Remember the importance of examples in helping to support your arguments.

Exam Tips Part 2: Giving Clear Responses

Sometimes, students who have a good grasp of the material and clearly comprehend the questions can still perform poorly because the answers they have constructed are difficult for the assessors to understand and thus mark. This is a fairly common problem in the Philosophy exam and, like failing to answer the question, can be easily resolved with the following strategies.

WRITING CLEARLY, NOT CLEVERLY

Because philosophy deals with complex ideas, often embedded in writing that is difficult to understand, it is easy to be misled into thinking that the only language appropriate for its discussion is one characterised by complicated sentences liberally peppered with big words. However, such 'cleverness' is often counter-productive because it tends to obscure what you are trying to say. Rather than trying to sound impressive, you should aim for clarity. Simple, straightforward language that foregrounds what you are saying, rather than how you are saying it, is much better than long sentences full of clever words. This is not to say that there isn't a place for sophisticated writing in Philosophy – there is – only that 'cleverness' should not be your primary goal when producing your responses.

AVOIDING CONVOLUTED RESPONSES

Just as unnecessary cleverness can obscure the value of a response, so too can convolution. A convoluted response can appear not to answer the question, or it can appear to contradict itself or, in the case of the essay or the Section B responses it can suggest an inability to discriminate what is relevant from what is irrelevant when responding to a prompt. As convolution is often the product of students 'writing their way into an answer' (in other words, thinking out their response as they write), probably the easiest way to avoid it is by identifying the different kinds of questions you may be asked (for example 'outline and evaluate,' 'critically compare', etc) and developing templates for your responses (see Evaluation, pp.4-5). Although it is possible to write a convoluted response in any section of the paper, it is perhaps a more prevalent (and more dangerous) possibility in Section C. Therefore, you should spend a few minutes of your time during the exam planning the essay. You should also practise writing essays to prompts and stimulus material before the exam.

USING THE LANGUAGE OF PHILOSOPHY CORRECTLY OR NOT AT ALL

By the time students reach the end of Unit 4, they are usually familiar with the language of philosophical reasoning. Yet, although terms such as 'premise,' 'conclusion,' 'cogent', 'valid,' 'invalid' and 'sound' are useful for describing and evaluating arguments, their value is entirely dependent on how well you understand them. Therefore, if you are unsure of the correct meaning of a particular technical term, it is better to avoid using it. This way you will ensure your meaning is not misinterpreted.

AVOIDING 'SILLY' MISTAKES

There would be very few students who have not, at one point or another, failed to punctuate their work appropriately, left an important word out of a sentence, written one name when they actually meant another, or who have accidentally written 'is' when they meant to say 'isn't.' Often this isn't a problem. A teacher who knows you well and is very familiar with your work can often identify the difference between a genuine error in understanding and a 'silly mistake.' The exam assessors, however, do not know you. What may, in other circumstances, be nothing more than an oversight can, within the context of the exam, compromise your marks. To avoid this happening, it is important that you reread your responses before completing the exam.

KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR HANDWRITING

Although assessors are skilled at reading difficult handwriting, such handwriting can make interpreting what a student is trying to say quite difficult. To do your responses justice it is important that you write as legibly as you can – a feat that is often tricky when you are writing against the clock. It is therefore important to practise handwriting to time before the exam. Such practice improves your ability to access your memory of the material, thus providing you with more time to write your response. It also gives you the opportunity to work on your ability to write clearly, quickly.

CHAPTER 5

Exam Practice Papers

Practice Exam Paper 1

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

a. Does modern science discredit Descartes' theory of mind? Why or why not? (4 marks)
b. Is Nagel sceptical about science? Explain your view. (3 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. Explain the significance of causation and resemblance for Hume's view on personal identity. (4 marks)
b. How plausible is this view of the self and why? (4 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. Give one reason Aristotle offers to support his claim that human beings have a function. (2 marks)
b. Outline Aristotle's argument for the conclusion that the human function is reason. (2 marks)
c. Evaluate the argument you have outlined in (b), above. (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. According to Wolf, why does the 'larger-than-oneself' view fail to provide a complete account of meaningfulness? (2 marks)
b. How plausible is the argument you have described in (a), above? Use an example to support your response. (4 marks)

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

These days... it is widely assumed that many non-human brains are conscious – that a dog really does feel pain when he is hurt. The problem is that there seems to be no logical reason to draw the line at dogs, or sparrows or mice or insects, or ... trees or rocks. Since we don't know how the brains of mammals create consciousness, we have no grounds for assuming it's only the brains of mammals that do so – or even that consciousness requires a brain at all. [Perhaps] an ordinary household thermostat... might in principle be conscious.

Source: O. Burkeman, 'Why can't the world's greatest minds solve the mystery of consciousness?' in The Guardian, 25 January 2015, (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/21/-sp-why-cant-worlds-greatest-minds-solve-mystery-consciousness)

Should a dog or a thermostat be considered to have consciousness?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

• how Smart might respond to this question and why;

• how Nagel might respond to this question and why;

• which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this question, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

QUESTION 2 (10 MARKS)

Alice Howland's dementia was confirmed, like most people's, when she failed a simple memory test set by her doctor. The memory test is practically a SAT test for the over-75s, who will be separated into two lines: those who can recall who the President is and those who cannot. People lucky enough to have a fully functioning memory find themselves thrust into the roles of carers and keepers, controllers and jailers: it will not be pleasant for them either.

The memory-based account of identity is powerful, deeply rooted and dangerously partial. It will direct us to potential memory cures – a mixture of implants and drugs – that will almost certainly disappoint as much as they excite. Memory is not created in a little box in the brain, but by diffuse and dispersed circuits of neurons firing in concert. Someone with dementia would need more than an implant: they would need their brain refreshed and rewired. And still the nagging question would remain: are they the same person?

Source: C. Leadbeater, 'The Disremembered', in Aeon, 25 March 2015, (https://aeon.co/essays/if-your-memory-fails-are-you-still-the-same-person)

Should we accept that memory is all there is to personal identity?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Locke might respond to this question and why;

- how Michaels might respond to this question and why;

- some implications of accepting memory as the only marker of personal identity.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

Section C

Write an essay in response to one of the following questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1

> *"There isn't yet a true wonder-drug,"* says Pearce. *"And diet and exercise won't take us above the low, genetically-determined ceiling of well-being/ill-being that Nature has given us..."* However, Pearce is optimistic about the future. He thinks there will come a time when we won't need drugs to improve our moods. *"Soon evolution will neither be 'blind' nor 'random',"* he claims. *The human genome has been mapped and Pearce predicts that in several decades we will discover which combinations of genes tend to depress mood. It will then be possible for parents to "choose the allelic combinations of their future children in anticipation of their likely behavioural and psychological effects." Given that most parents want happy children, this coming genetic revolution in reproductive medicine may be enough to make mental suffering a thing of the past.*
>
> Source: K. Power, 'The End of Suffering', in Philosophy Now, Issue 56, 2006 (https://philosophynow.org/issues/56/The_End_of_Suffering)

How might Nietzsche respond to Pearce's predictions regarding the use of technology and why? To what extent do you agree with Nietzsche's views? In your response, you may also draw on other sources if you wish.

QUESTION 2

> *Sally: The tool goes by the name 'CRISPR' [pronounced 'crisper']. It stands for a mouthful: 'Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats'. The name is ugly; but what it does is a thing of beauty.*
>
> *Pat: You're right, the name doesn't tell me much – although I can already hear alarm bells. What does CRISPR do? And how will you use it in planning your family?*
>
> *Sally: I'm grossly oversimplifying, but CRISPR repairs or replaces genes, which it can do faster and cheaper than earlier tools for manipulating genes. CRISPR was first used to fix gene mutations that cause inherited disorders such as multiple sclerosis...*
>
> *Pat: Hold on right there! What right do we have to willy-nilly judge whether certain conditions are or are not okay?*
>
> *Sally: Different parents can always make their own choices for genetic intervention or not, for sure. But to claim that harmful inherited disorders must forever be part of, let's say, human variation, strikes me as too single-minded. I disagree with you when you say we should leave well enough alone, when we have the tools to head off illnesses and disabilities in new-borns.*
>
> *Pat: What I'm really getting at is that future generations might lose something important, such as being different from one another, as a result of us messing with our genes when we're all chasing the same qualities. Variety is good.*
>
> Source: K. Tidman, 'Are designer babies our future?' in Philosophy Now, Issue 119, 2017 (https://philosophynow.org/issues/119/Are_Designer_Babies_Our_Future)

Critically discuss the perspectives on technology expressed in the above stimulus. In your response draw on the views of either Callicles OR Nietzsche and at least **one** of the following philosophical concepts: progress, reality, control, dependency, freedom, creativity.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

Practice Exam Paper 2

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

a. Outline Smart's view on the nature of the mind. (3 marks)
b. Explain an implication of this view of the mind for a contemporary debate. (4 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. For Locke, on what principle should personal identity be attributed? (2 marks)
b. Locke considers several problem cases for this theory of personal identity: the cases of (i) sleep, (ii) forgetfulness or amnesia, and (iii) drunkenness. Explain Locke's response to each of these cases. (3 marks)
c. How effective is Locke's theory in the case of drunkenness? Justify your answer. (3 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. Describe Aristotle's Mean using one of Aristotle's examples to support your response. (4 marks)
b. Is the Mean a good tool for moral decision-making? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. According to Callicles, how do ethical ideals, such as that it is more contemptible to do wrong rather than suffer wrong, come about? (2 marks)
b. Why does Callicles disapprove of the ethical ideal identified in (a), above? (2 marks)
c. How would Nietzsche respond to the views you have described in (a) and (b), above, and why? (4 marks)

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

> The famous psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, wrote in 1940:
>
> *We know two things concerning what we call our psyche or mental life: firstly, its bodily organ and scene of action, the brain (or nervous system); and secondly, our acts of consciousness, which are immediate data and cannot be more fully explained by any kind of description. Everything between these is unknown to us and there is no direct relation between the two end-points of our knowledge.*
>
> Source: S. Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, 1940, *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 21:27-84, (http://icpla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Freud-S.-An-Outline-of-Psychoanalysis-Int.-JPA.pdf)

What is the relationship between mind and body, and what is our best evidence for knowing this?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Descartes might respond to this question and Freud's viewpoint, and why;

- how Nagel might respond to this question and Freud's viewpoint, and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this question, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

QUESTION 2 (10 MARKS)

> Leading neuropsychologist, Paul Brooks, reflects on his experience of giving a talk at a literary festival:
>
> "…One woman came to the brink of physical assault… I'd said that studying brain function and working with brain-damaged people had led me to certain views about the nature of personal identity; that neuroscience had no place for the soul; that the human brain was a storytelling machine, and that the self was a story.
>
> I said that our deepest intuitions about what it means to be a person are based on an illusion. There is no inner essence, no ego, no observing 'I', no ghost in the machine. The story is all and, moreover, the story is enough."
>
> Source: P. Brooks, 'Go to work on an ego', The Guardian, 4 Dec 2005, (https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/dec/04/theatre.society)

Is the self "a story" and is it "enough"?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Hume might respond to this question and why;

- how Locke **and/or** Michaels might respond to this question and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this thought experiment, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

Section C

Write an essay in response to one of the following questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1

> Before anaesthesia, surgery used to be agony. It's hard to imagine that anyone could have been anything but pleased when painless surgery was introduced in the mid-19th century. And yet, although many welcomed anaesthesia, some did object. In Zurich, anaesthesia was even outlawed. "Pain is a natural and intended curse of the primal sin. Any attempt to do away with it must be wrong," claimed the Zurich City Fathers.
>
> David Pearce, author of The Hedonistic Imperative, suggests that one day the assumption that emotional pain is indispensable may sound just as quaint. He believes that no pain, physical or emotional, is necessary. On the contrary, Pearce argues that we should strive to "eradicate suffering in all sentient life" – a project which he describes as "technically feasible" thanks to genetic engineering and nanotechnology, and "ethically mandatory" on utilitarian grounds.
>
> Source: K. Power, 'The End of Suffering', in Philosophy Now, Issue 56, 2006 (https://philosophynow.org/issues/56/The_End_of_Suffering)

Critically discuss the relationship between technology and happiness expressed in the above stimulus, drawing on the views of Nietzsche. You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

QUESTION 2

> One day, sitting at his desk at home, American physicist Alan Lightman had the horrifying realization that he no longer wasted time. From the instant he opened his eyes in the morning until he turned out the light at night, he was 'on project' – working on his laptop, answering letters, checking telephone messages – his day subdivided into smaller and smaller units of efficient time. "I hardly ever give my mind permission to take a recess, go outside, and play," he writes in his book The World is Too Much With Me. "What have I become?" he asks. "A robot? A cog in a wheel? A unit of efficiency myself?"
>
> Source: 'On Project' from New Philosopher, Issue 11, Feb-April, p.13

Discuss how Wolf might respond this perspective on the relationship between progress and technology. To what extent do you agree with Wolf's views?

In your response, you may also draw on other sources if you wish.

Practice Exam Paper 3

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

a. Outline an argument for dualism made by Descartes. (3 marks)
b. Explain one strength and one weakness of this argument. (3 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. Outline Locke's thought experiment of the prince and the cobbler and explain what he intends it to demonstrate about personal identity. (3 marks)
b. Outline Michaels's Wanda/Schwanda thought experiment and explain how it challenges Locke's theory of personal identity. (3 marks)
c. Which thought experiment – Locke's prince/cobbler or Michaels' Wanda/Schwanda - offers a more convincing argument about personal identity, and why? (3 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. According to Socrates, why is a life of self-restraint preferable to a life of pleasure? (2 marks)
b. Would Nietzsche agree with Socrates? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)
c. To what extent do you agree with the view that self-restraint is important for a good life? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. Wolf claims that the two traditional philosophical accounts of human motivation – psychological egoism and the 'dualistic model' – are insufficient. Why? Use at least ONE example to support your explanation. (3 marks)

b. What is the third alternative that Wolf offers to the two accounts of human motivation that you have described in (a), above? (1 mark)

c. Would Aristotle approve of Wolf's own account of human motivation? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

> *On the one hand, phenomenal aspects of conscious experience, such as a powerful feeling of thirst after a hot day's hike, the sensation of ice cold water in one's mouth and running down one's throat, and the pleasant sense of satisfaction that comes from quenching one's thirst, do not feature in the vocabulary or the explanatory aims of any science. Neither do the sour taste of lemon candy, or the amber hue and the felt warmth coming from the fireplace, or the fuzzy texture of a ripe peach in one's hand. These are just a few examples of a whole multitude of phenomenal aspects of one's ordinary conscious life, and yet they don't seem to have any place in theories that talk only about particles, waveforms, neuronal structures and the like, all described in terms of physical magnitudes. Perhaps, then, it is unduly optimistic to think that psychology or neuroscience or a naturalistic philosophy that remains within a scientifically legitimate ontology will come up with an explanation of the conscious mind. This first intuition pulls us towards saying that the problem of consciousness lies outside the explanatory range of present-day science.*
>
> Source: G. Güzeldere, 'Consciousness Resurrected', in Philosophy Now, Issue 36, 2002, (https://philosophynow.org/issues/36/Consciousness_Resurrected)

Should we accept that the complexities of consciousness cannot be reduced to scientific explanation?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Smart might respond to this question and why;

- how Nagel might respond to this question and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this question, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

QUESTION 2 (10 MARKS)

> *Jane suffers from depersonalisation disorder (DPD) – a condition that typically manifests as a profound and distressing feeling of estrangement from one's own self and body, including one's experiences, memories and thoughts. Often, depersonalisation is accompanied by derealisation, an alienation from one's surroundings and environment. Sufferers report feeling like zombies, robots or machines, just going through the motions of their own lives.*
>
> *. … I became interested in what DPD might reveal about certain understudied aspects of our experience of selfhood… It's become fashionable for philosophers to question the idea that the 'self' is real, or to suggest that it's little more than an 'illusion' that our brain creates in order to keep us alive in a constantly changing world. Yet if the self is a mere sham or a trick, why does the loss of 'self-illusion' trigger such dramatic feelings of unreality? Why does losing a link to your self make you feel as if you are dead or sleepwalking? If depersonalisation is a misfiring of some psychological coping mechanism, why is living with the condition so unbearable?*
>
> Source: A. Ciaunica and J. Charlton, 'When the Self Slips', in Aeon, 21 June 2018, (https://aeon.co/essays/what-can-depersonalisation-disorder-say-about-the-self)

How convincing is the idea that the self is an illusion?

Develop a response to this question. In your response you should discuss:

- how Hume might respond to this question;

- how Locke and/or Michaels might respond to this question;

- your response to this question, addressing the ideas in the passage and critically comparing the theories of one or more thinkers on the nature of personal identity.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

Section C

Write an essay in response to one of the following questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1

> *Today, video-game franchises such as Halo, Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty power an industry worth an estimated $65 billion globally in 2011. But money is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to measuring the impact of gaming on contemporary culture and society at large. The American video-game designer and researcher Jane McGonigal estimates that there are ==500 million 'virtuoso gamers'== (people who have spent more than 10,000 hours in game worlds) active today. She argues that this number will increase threefold over the next decade: around a fifth of the world's population will spend as much time in digitally generated worlds as they do in full-time education. We're embarking on a daring social experiment: the immersion of an entire generation into ==digitally generated escapist fantasies of unprecedented depth and complexity==. And the most remarkable aspect of this potential revolution is how little consideration we are giving it.*
>
> Source: D. Walter, 'The Great Escape', in *Aeon*, 12 July 2013 (https://aeon.co/essays/does-fantasy-offer-mere-escapism-or-real-escape)

Discuss how Nietzsche OR Wolf might critique the results of technological progress described in the stimulus. To what extent do you agree with Nietzsche's / Wolf's views? In your response draw on at least **one** of the following philosophical concepts: progress, reality, control, dependency, freedom, creativity.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

QUESTION 2

> *Swedish thing Nick Bostrom says the potential benefits of superintelligence are immense, going as far as to say that ==it is hard to think of any problem that a superintelligence could not either solve or at least help us to solve…==*
>
> *For Bostrom, a superintelligence would be better at moral decision making. "To the extent that ethics is a cognitive pursuit," writes Bostrom, ==a superintelligence could also easily surpass humans in the quality of its moral thinking.==" In other words, where ethical questions have correct answers arrived at by reasoning and the weighing of evidence, then a superintelligence would ==perform the task better than humans.==*
>
> **Superintelligence refers to technology that can outperform the human intellect.*
>
> Source: 'Inventing our own Demise' in New Philosopher, Issue 11, Feb-April, p.15

Discuss how Aristotle might respond to this perspective on technological progress. To what extent do you agree with Aristotle's views?

In your response, you may draw on other sources if you wish.

Practice Exam Paper 4

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

a. According to Descartes, what can a piece of wax show us about the human mind? Outline his argument. (4 marks)
b. Evaluate this argument. (4 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. According to Hume, why do our imaginations create the "fiction" of an enduring self or identity? (3 marks)
b. How plausible is this view of personal identity and why? (4 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. Outline Callicles' argument for the conclusion that a life of pleasure is a good life. (2 marks)
b. Outline one of the analogies Socrates uses to criticise the argument you have described in (a), above. (2 marks)
c. How effective is the analogy you have described in (b), above, as a criticism of the view that a life of pleasure is a good life? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. According to Aristotle, what is the relationship between the mean and the development of a virtuous character? (3 marks)
b. Aristotle acknowledges that it's no easy task to be good. What are two recommendations he gives to improve our chances of hitting the mean and thereby to become virtuous? (2 marks)
c. Evaluate one of the recommendations you have described in (b), above. (3 marks)

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

> *(The) field of artificial intelligence – which focuses on recreating the abilities of the human brain, rather than on what it feels like to be one – has advanced stupendously. But ...the Hard Problem remains. When I stubbed my toe on the leg of the dining table this morning, as any student of the brain could tell you, nerve fibres called "C-fibres" shot a message to my spinal cord, sending neurotransmitters to the part of my brain called the thalamus, which activated (among other things) my limbic system. Fine. But how come all that was accompanied by an agonising flash of pain?*
>
> Source: O. Burkeman, 'Why can't the world's greatest minds solve the mystery of consciousness?' in *The Guardian*, 25 January 2015, (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/21/-sp-why-cant-worlds-greatest-minds-solve-mystery-consciousness)

Would you agree that the technological developments described in the stimulus would enable us to live better lives? Draw on the viewpoints and arguments of Nietzsche OR Wolf in your response. You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

Practice Exam Paper 5

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

"If we used our imaginations, we could come to know what it is like to be a bat."

a. Would Nagel agree with this statement? Why or why not? (2 marks)
b. Why is this view of Nagel's important to his argument about consciousness? (3 marks)
c. How plausible is Nagel's argument about the significance of consciousness in the mind/body debate? (3 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. Hume's attempt to establish a basis for personal identity begins with him looking into his *self*. What does Hume find there and what claims about personal identity does it lead him to make? (3 marks)
b. How might Michaels respond to this view of Hume's? Make reference to one of her thought experiments in your answer. (4 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. Although acknowledging a *role* for pleasure in the good life, Aristotle thinks it cannot be our purpose. Why? (2 marks)
b. Would Callicles agree with Aristotle? Give reasons for your response. (2 marks)
c. Of the two views you have described in a) and b) above, with which do you agree, and why? (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. According to Wolf, how do feelings of fulfilment differ from happiness? (2 marks)
b. Why does Wolf believe that the fulfilment view is an inadequate account of meaningfulness? Use one of Wolf's examples in your explanation. (3 marks)
c. Would Nietzsche agree with Wolf's claims regarding fulfilment? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

VCE Philosophy: Units 3 & 4

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

> *...Most of us... think of consciousness as something over and above our physical being – as if your mind were "a chauffeur inside your own body", to quote the spiritual author Alan Watts. But to accept this as a scientific principle would mean rewriting the laws of physics. Everything we know about the universe tells us that reality consists only of physical things: atoms and their component particles.... If this non-physical mental stuff did exist, how could it cause physical things to happen – as when the feeling of pain causes me to jerk my fingers away from the saucepan's edge?*
>
> Source: O. Burkeman, 'Why can't the world's greatest minds solve the mystery of consciousness?' in *The Guardian*, 25 January 2015, (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/21/-sp-why-cant-worlds-greatest-minds-solve-mystery-consciousness)

Is the mind like "a chauffeur inside your own body"?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Descartes might respond to this question and why;

- how Smart might respond to this question and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this question, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

QUESTION 2 (10 MARKS)

> *Philosophers are in the habit of saying that we 'have' a body. But as Merleau-Ponty points out: 'I am not in front of my body, I am in my body, or rather I am my body.' This simple correction carries important implications about learning. What does it mean to say that I am my body?*
>
> *Merleau-Ponty would respond: 'The body is our general means of having a world.' Everything we learn, think or know emanates from our body. It is by walking through a meadow, hiking beside a river, and boating down a lake that we are able to appreciate the science of geography. It is by talking with other people and learning their stories that we can appreciate literature. Buying food for our family infuses us with a conviction that we need to learn mathematics. We cannot always trace the route from experience to knowledge, from a childhood activity to adult insight. But there is no way for us to learn that bypasses the body: 'the body is our anchorage in a world'.*
>
> Source: N. Tampio, 'Look up from your screen', in *Aeon*, 2 August 2018, (https://aeon.co/essays/children-learn-best-when-engaged-in-the-living-world-not-on-screens)

We generally judge learning and intelligence on the basis of minds and memories. Do bodies deserve greater consideration when answering the question of who we are?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Locke might respond to this question and why;

- how Michaels might respond to this question and why;

- some implications of adopting or rejecting the bodily continuity theory of personal identity.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

Section C

Write an essay in response to one of the following questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1

[Edward] Snowden was right. Re-reading Nineteen Eighty-Four in 2018, one is struck by the 'TVs that watch us', which Orwell called telescreens. The telescreen is one of the first objects we encounter: 'The instrument … could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely.' It is omnipresent, in every private room and public space, right up until the end of the book, when it is 'still pouring forth its tale of prisoners and booty and slaughter' even after Smith has resigned himself to its rule.

What's most striking about the telescreen's ubiquity is how right and how wrong Orwell was about our technological present. Screens are not just a part of life today: they are our lives. We interact digitally so often and in such depth that it's hard for many of us to imagine (or remember) what life used to be like. And now, all that interaction is recorded. Snowden was not the first to point out how far smartphones and social media are from what Orwell imagined. He couldn't have known how eager we'd be to shrink down our telescreens and carry them with us everywhere we go, or how readily we'd sign over the data we produce to companies that fuel our need to connect. We are at once surrounded by telescreens and so far past them that Orwell couldn't have seen our world coming.

Source: H. Cowles, 'Orwell knew: we willingly buy the screens that are used against us,' in *Aeon* 24 July 2018 (https://aeon.co/ideas/orwell-knew-we-willingly-buy-the-screens-that-are-used-against-us)

Drawing on Nietzsche's viewpoints and arguments, critically discuss this perspective on technological development. In your response, draw on at least *one* of the following philosophical concepts; progress, reality, control, dependency, freedom, creativity.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

QUESTION 2

> *Science inspires a sense of awe within us, with its brave hypotheses and its measurable logic. The carrot of technology lures us into the future with the promise of an accelerated existence, an easier way of life, full of ever-greater efficiencies. We are seduced by the new and beckoned along the path of least resistance, where the signs only point onward and upward…It appears that we have been able to shape the world around us to suit our needs.*
>
> Source: M. Donohue, 'Reversing into Tomorrow' in *New Philosopher*, Issue 8, May-Jul 2015, pp.116-117

Drawing on the arguments and viewpoints in Plato's Gorgias, critically discuss the views regarding happiness and technological progress expressed in the above stimulus.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

Practice Exam Paper 6

Section A

Answer all questions. Total: 30 marks

QUESTION 1

a. Why does Descartes think he can be more certain that he has a mind than that he has a body? (3 marks)
b. How plausible is this view of Descartes? (3 marks)

QUESTION 2

a. In what ways does Hume think the image of the theatre is a useful way to think about the mind? (2 marks)
b. However, Hume warns us not to take this analogy too far. In what ways does Hume say the image of the theatre can be a misleading way to think about the mind, and how does this link to his theory of personal identity? (4 marks)
c. How plausible is this view of personal identity, as presented in Hume's theatre analogy? (3 marks)

QUESTION 3

a. What role does suffering play in the development of Nietzsche's 'higher man'? (2 marks)
b. Would Callicles agree with Nietzsche's views on suffering? Give reasons for your response. (2 marks)
c. To what extent is suffering necessary for a good life? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

QUESTION 4

a. How does Aristotle argue to the conclusion that 'virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain'? (2 marks)
b. How does the argument you have described in a), above, inform Aristotle's views regarding a virtuous character? (2 marks)
c. Would Socrates agree with Aristotle's understanding of a virtuous character? Give reasons for your response. (3 marks)

Section B

Answer both questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1 (10 MARKS)

> *(Patricia) Churchland's opinion of the Hard Problem… is that it is nonsense… In the 17th century, scholars were convinced that light couldn't possibly be physical – that it had to be something occult, beyond the usual laws of nature. Or take life itself: early scientists were convinced that there had to be some magical spirit … that distinguished living beings from mere machines. But there wasn't, of course. Light is electromagnetic radiation; life is just the label we give to certain kinds of objects that can grow and reproduce. Eventually, neuroscience will show that consciousness is just brain states.*
>
> Source: O. Burkeman, 'Why can't the world's greatest minds solve the mystery of consciousness?' in *The Guardian*, 25 January 2015, (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/21/-sp-why-cant-worlds-greatest-minds-solve-mystery-consciousness)

Is consciousness "just brain states"?

- how Smart might respond to this question and Churchland's viewpoint, and why;

- how Nagel might respond to this question and Churchland's viewpoint, and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this question, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

QUESTION 2 (10 MARKS)

> *…In the sci-fi novel Flowers for Algernon (1966) by Daniel Keyes[,] Charlie Gordon begins the story as mentally disabled. He enters surgery and, afterwards, the post-surgery patient is more intelligent. Some see this part of the story as an example of continuous personal identity despite radical change. However, eventually, the post-operative patient begins to deteriorate, resulting in a less intelligent individual. Unlike the identity-preserving improvement, this deterioration is cited as a personal death.*
>
> Source: K. Tobia, 'The Phineas Gage Effect', in *Aeon*, 21 December 2016, (https://aeon.co/essays/how-a-change-for-the-worse-makes-for-a-different-person)

What makes someone the same person, or a different person, over time?

Develop a response to this question. In your response, you should discuss:

- how Locke might respond to the Charlie Gordon example and why;

- how Michaels might respond to the Charlie Gordon example and why;

- which thinker offers the most helpful theory when considering this example, and why.

Justify your response, taking into account the ideas presented in the passage.

VCE Philosophy: Units 3 & 4

Section C

Write an essay in response to one of the following questions. Total: 20 marks

QUESTION 1

Interview question: How will artificial intelligence affect society and jobs?

Peter: Most jobs won't be under threat for a long time, probably several generations. Real people are needed to actually make any significant decisions because AI currently has no common sense.
Instead of replacing jobs, our overall quality of life will go up. For example, right now few people can afford a personal assistant, or a full-time life coach. In the near future, we'll all have a (virtual) one!

Michael: It's likely that a significant fraction of jobs will be under threat over the coming decade. It's important to note that this won't necessarily be divided by blue-collar versus white-collar, but rather by which occupations are easily automatable...

That leaves the question of what happens then. There are two scenarios - the first being that, like in the past, new types of jobs are generated by the technological revolution.
The other is that humanity gradually transitions into a Utopian society where scientific, artistic and sporting pursuits are pursued at leisure. The short to medium-term reality is probably somewhere in between.

Source: P.Stratton and M. Milford, 'The future of artificial intelligence: two experts disagree' in *The Conversation*, July 17, 2017, (https://theconversation.com/the-future-of-artificial-intelligence-two-experts-disagree-79904)

Critically discuss how Nietzsche OR Wolf might respond to the consequences of technological progress described in the stimulus.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

QUESTION 2

As a child, I can remember watching The Jetsons, a cartoon series about a futuristic family who had all manner of technological appliances to help around the house. In the 60s and 70s there was a belief that technology would reverse the ratio of work and leisure and we would be able to spend less time working because there would be less work to do. Like the Jetsons, we would be free to focus our attention on other aspects of our lives. But has this happened?

Fast forward to now. No sector of the economy is immune from the influence of technology. How many of us work at home in the evenings and on weekends? Have a mobile phone which we use for work? Check our email messages at home or work regularly with other people in other time zones? There is no doubt that technology has changed the way we work and provides challenges for work-life balance.

On the football field, the boundary marks the edge of the field. Inside the boundary, the ball is in play; beyond the boundary it is out of play. The trouble with the boundary between work and personal lives is that it is very permeable. As renowned sociologist Arlie Hochschild identified, workplaces are greedy institutions and technology has allowed them by stealth to expand the boundary line and encroach on our personal lives.

Source: A. Bardoel, 'Tool or time thief? Technology and the work-life balance' in *The Conversation*, July 30, 2012, (https:// theconversation.com/tool-or-time-thief-technology-and-the-work-life-balance-8165)

Drawing on Wolf's viewpoints and arguments, critically discuss this perspective on the interplay between technological development and the good life.

You may also draw on other sources if you wish.

Revision Strategies

On completing each set text study

Text summaries are an excellent way to consolidate your knowledge of the set texts. The best time to do a text summary is right after completing your study of a text, when all you have learned is still fresh in your mind. Completing summaries at this time is also less of a chore: it is far easier to do a single text summary, rather than several, at a given time.

Although how you do your summary is entirely up to you, there are some basic rules that are worth following to ensure your summary will be of maximum use to you when you are revising for school-assessed coursework tasks or the exam:

- Your summary should always be word-processed as opposed to hand-written and be formatted in such a way as to be easy to navigate.

- All arguments should be expressed in such a way as to reveal their logical structure (you may, for example, choose to express them in standard form).

- You should include evaluations of arguments and, where possible, concrete examples to support them.

- You should include notes about the implications of arguments where relevant.

To ensure your summary follows these basic rules you may try using the following format:

- Start with a brief overview (one short paragraph) in which you identify the central preoccupations of the text.

- Outline each argument presented in the text in point form or standard form.

- Underneath each argument write out any relevant evaluations in point form and italics (to distinguish it from the argument). Be sure to include examples to support your evaluations.

- Where relevant, and after evaluations, add any additional notes (such as remarks about implications).

When you have completed each summary, put it in a plastic display folder for later use.

On completing each Area of Study

The capacity to identify similarities and differences between viewpoints and arguments expressed in the set texts, and to critically compare these viewpoints and arguments, is one of the Key Skills described in three of the four Areas of Study, making it vital to your success in both the school-assessed coursework tasks and the exam. To consolidate your knowledge of these similarities and differences and prepare for tasks that require critical comparisons, it is worth creating a **comprehensive comparison table** at the conclusion of each Area of Study. You can do this independently or as a whole class, but if you choose this latter option, you should ensure you have your own copy to refer to when you need it. Although there are various ways of composing such a table, you might like to use the following structure based on Unit 3, Area of Study 1.

	DESCARTES	**SMART**
Nagel	• Agree that materialism doesn't fully capture our first-person experience of consciousness • D argues that thinking / consciousness must be non-physical but N doesn't rule out a materialist conception of mind. • etc	
Smart		

On completing each Unit of Study

Create a **comprehensive study package** for the exams by filling a plastic display folder with each of your text summaries (arranged according to Areas of Study), your comprehensive comparison tables and any examples of stimulus that you have collected (both placed at the end of each Area of Study).

Use your comprehensive study package, together with the Study Design and a sample exam, to **create a file** of short (Units 3 and 4) and extended (Unit 3) response questions, and essay questions (Unit 4). These can be shared among the class at exam time and are also useful for your own exam revision.

Before the Exam

Reread the texts. Ideally, you should do this in the Term 3 holidays.

Revise your comprehensive study package. You may find you need to add or correct the information within the package after rereading the texts and in light of the additional learning you have completed since writing them. Once corrected these will be your primary revision reference.
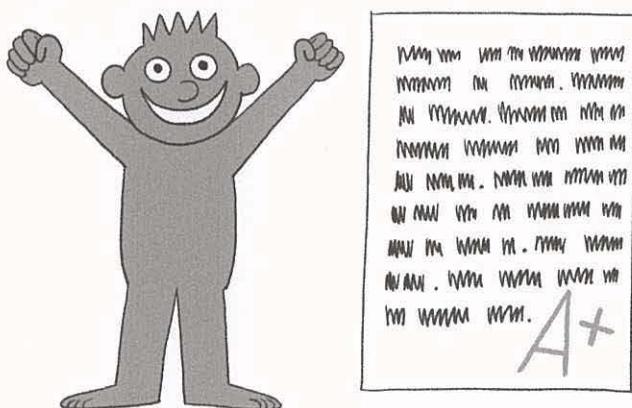
Share your file with your classmates. You may like to create practice exams for each other using the stimulus materials you have collected and the questions you have written, or you may simply like to use the questions to practise your responses and to identify gaps in your knowledge.

Complete timed practice exams and exam sections.

Discuss philosophy with your classmates. Although sitting in isolation, reading over your notes and writing practice responses is perhaps one of the main strategies you will use when revising for your exam, it doesn't need to be the only one. Getting together with your classmates to discuss philosophy is also useful and helps to break the monotony of isolated study. Some of the things you can do in small groups include:

- Quizzing.

- Giving mini lectures. Each member of the group takes a turn at outlining and evaluating, or critically comparing a viewpoint or argument, or presenting on a contemporary debate.

- Role-playing. Select an Area of Study. Each member of the group takes on the role of one of the philosophers relevant to the Area of Study and the group engages in a discussion. This is a very good way to draw out similarities and differences between viewpoints and arguments. Afterwards, critically discuss the viewpoints and arguments presented. Consider, in particular, their merits and shortcomings when considered comparatively.

- Discuss your responses to the viewpoints and arguments. This is a good way to practise your skills of evaluation.

The most important thing is not to leave all your revision until exam time. With such a big course and so much to remember, it is easy to become overwhelmed. Consistent effort over the whole year will help you to avoid this situation and allow you to approach your exams calmly and confidently, ultimately achieving the success you deserve.

About the Book

VCE Philosophy: Assessment and Examination Supplement is an indispensable resource for both teachers and students. Its fully revised format and content respond to the latest Study Design (2019-2023) and List of Prescribed Texts (2019), as well as the newly issued VCE Philosophy Examination Specifications and Sample Examination (2019).

These changes have important implications for the ways students and teachers should prepare for the challenges of assessment and exams. This book unpacks these and provides fully updated advice, practice examples and questions. In particular, students will benefit from the wealth of practice tasks based on written stimulus material, in the style of the 2019 Sample Exam.

Geared primarily to VCE Philosophy Units 3 and 4, this text also offers advice relevant to success in Units 1 and 2 assessment tasks.

The book includes:

- How to handle different task types in VCE Philosophy: short answers, extended responses, essay responses, written analyses, dialogues, presentations and reflections;
- How to approach tasks involving stimulus material;
- How to develop key knowledge and key skills in VCE Philosophy;
- How to prepare for assessment tasks and the year 12 VCE Philosophy exam;
- Sample assessment tasks for Units 3 and 4;
- Annotated student responses;
- Guidance on the new exam format;
- Over 100 new practice questions, tasks and activities;
- Essential exam strategies – including how to manage time and satisfy mark allocations;
- General advice for success in VCE Philosophy.

About the Authors

Anna Symes has more than 20 years of teaching experience in primary, secondary and tertiary settings. Over a decade at St Leonard's College, Melbourne, she established the school's VCE Philosophy program, taught IB Theory of Knowledge and presented professional development sessions to beginning Philosophy teachers around Victoria. Anna has been a consultant to the VCAA in its development of VCE Philosophy curriculum and assessment since 2006, and has worked on state and international examination panels since 2001. She has tutored and lectured at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education and is currently working on her doctoral thesis in the philosophy of education.

Dr. Lenny Robinson-McCarthy is the IB Diploma Coordinator and Head of Philosophy at Preshil, a progressive, independent, co-educational school in Melbourne, where she teaches both VCE and IB Philosophy. She has worked as a VCE Philosophy teacher for almost two decades and for the VCAA in areas related to VCE Philosophy curriculum development and assessment for 15 years. Lenny is a qualified Philosophy for Children Educator, has mentored new VCE Philosophy teachers and is a member of PEiPL, a consortium of philosophers, academics and teachers working together for philosophical engagement in public life. Since 2014, Lenny has coordinated the popular Preshil Philosophy conferences which bring together international and Australian philosophers, teachers and high school students to share ideas and engage in philosophical dialogue.