



General Certificate of Education

Philosophy 5171/6171

PLY1 Theory of Knowledge

Mark Scheme

2005 examination - June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Theory of Knowledge PLY1

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1.

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a) Briefly explain what foundationalism involves. (6 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the term ‘foundationalism’ as involving an attempt to found our knowledge and/or justified beliefs upon what is known, or justified, *immediately*; on what is given in experience or in consciousness; the foundations upon which the structure of our knowledge or belief-system depends and/or upon which we make further deductions or inferences. It is likely that the concept will be associated with immunity from error, refutation and doubt (because of its historical origins) however full marks can be earned without this. Brief explanation could refer to classical empiricism (to perceptions, ideas, sense data, etc as what is directly given in experience and from which knowledge of external reality is inferred) or rationalism (clear and distinct ideas or self-evident propositions such as the cogito). Answers which accurately define the term but which assert that it only applies to either rationalism or empiricism should be placed at the bottom of this band.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding by accurately defining the term without further explanation or by providing a partial and confused explanation of foundationalism.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

(b) Explain and illustrate how knowledge differs from true belief. (15 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of how knowledge differs from true belief. The view of knowledge as *justified true belief* (with or without an extra ingredient) will be referred to and the notion of justification may be further explored through, eg the belief is basic and requires no further justification (foundationalism) and/or the belief is intuitively self-evident and doesn’t require further justification (intuitionism), the belief coheres with/is consistent with other beliefs we hold (coherentism), the belief was generated through a reliable process (reliabilism). There may also be references to pragmatism. The point is that without *justification* a true belief is not knowledge.

- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding probably through offering a confused account. Tangential responses which *either* focus on an alleged distinction between knowledge (as certainty) or belief (as uncertainty) *or* on whether justified true belief is knowledge (ie an evaluative response) but which display some understanding of the role of justification should be rewarded in this band.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Illustrations of at least one belief should be provided and related to how knowledge differs from true belief. This might include beliefs derived from reliable sources such as authoritative texts and/or personnel or from traditional authorities *or* beliefs which cohere with other beliefs such as evidence provided by two or more senses *or* any other reasonable example (of which there are many). The point of any illustration provided should be to show that true belief, on its own, is not knowledge. Some candidates may attempt to adapt Gettier-type illustrations although care should be taken to address this specific question rather than the issue of whether justified true belief is knowledge.

- 7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, at least one relevant point or example and applies this to provide a clear illustration of how knowledge differs from true belief. In this band the illustration provided will clarify precisely why true belief, on its own, is not knowledge.
- 4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, at least one point or example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail and precision, of how knowledge differs from true belief. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition, explaining why justification is necessary for knowledge, and brief illustration of why true belief is not knowledge.
- 1 – 3 Selects at least one illustrative point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague account of how knowledge differs from true belief, eg it is not clear how the example provided is relevant to the difference between knowledge and true belief **or** an example is provided but application to the question is tangential (eg accounts of why justified true beliefs are not knowledge); or while exposition is relevant, no illustration is offered.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points.

(c)	Assess whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt.
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(24 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

The question is quite permissive and a good account of why knowledge has been linked to certainty (as the impossibility of doubt) and/or whether knowledge should be divorced from certainty could take a number of forms – including an extended discussion of justification and/or what constitutes reasonable grounds for a knowledge claim. The reference to ‘doubt’ in the question may lead some candidates to concentrate on Cartesian rationalism, and to an account of systematic doubt leading to certain truths which are (allegedly) immune from doubt because they are analytic, necessary or ‘a priori’ truths, and this would be an acceptable approach as would a more general account of the role of doubt and/or scepticism in the search for knowledge.

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of at least one debate relating to whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt.

- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding of whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Depending on the approach taken, some of the following, or equivalent, points will be raised:

- Some candidates might legitimately repeat some comments on foundationalism, from part (a), and relate this to classical empiricist and rationalist epistemology. This is likely to involve a discussion of whether further deductions from self-evident truths are immune from doubt and the only propositions that can properly be said to be ‘known’ (so that knowledge is equated with certainty) or whether inference from what is given in experience to the best explanation of that experience also provides grounds for knowledge (so that knowledge is not equated with certainty).
 - Some material may be employed to outline and/or reinforce the view that only that which is certain can properly be called knowledge. This may involve illustrations of particular arguments employed by Plato (the forms, the divided line) or Descartes (the cogito) *or* illustrations of analytic propositions/necessary or a priori truths more generally.
 - Alternatively, more general approaches may be rooted in discussions of whether global scepticism is possible or self-defeating (so that some propositions are known with certainty) or in discussions of what justifies a knowledge claim (so that some propositions can be said to be known on reasonable grounds albeit not with certainty).
- 7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt.
- 4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, some relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis, either narrowly focused or lacking detail and precision, of philosophical arguments about whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt.
- 1 – 3 Selects and applies some relevant points to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a tangential approach to philosophical arguments about knowledge and certainty.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible but discussions, eg of scepticism and/or justification should be linked to an assessment of whether only that which is certain can be regarded as knowledge. Candidates may employ:

- General criticisms of the view that knowledge is immune from philosophical doubt (that knowledge equals certainty) including: whether there are any ‘foundational’ truths and the limitations of what can be known if this view is adopted (how much did Plato or Descartes ‘know’?).
- Alternatively, some might argue that everything which can be doubted is uncertain and cannot count as knowledge: that propositions which are synthetic and contingent cannot be justified as

knowledge. Some may go beyond this and argue for global scepticism so that nothing counts as knowledge.

- Those divorcing knowledge from certainty may argue that experience is more important in the generation of knowledge *and* that there are grounds which justify non-trivial, synthetic and contingent propositions as knowledge. This may be linked to a discussion of, eg reliable sources, coherence, utility and pragmatism.

- 7 – 9 Demonstrates a critical appreciation of arguments concerning whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt and advances a clear position.
- 4 – 6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt but is either implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches or asserted with limited supportive explanation.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning whether knowledge requires the impossibility of doubt in which a view is merely described, or points are listed or asserted without justification, or the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights.

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2.

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a) Briefly explain one difference between idealism and phenomenism. (6 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** difference between idealism and phenomenism. These include:

- Idealism is about the nature of reality; the view that reality is confined to the contents of our minds or, at least, that knowledge of reality is mind dependent; that what we immediately perceive are ideas and either that this is all that is real or all that can be known. Phenomenalism may be presented as a linguistic thesis about how reality must be described in language which refers to the contents of our minds, our experience or our sense data; that the analysis of physical objects, or statements about physical objects, involves phenomenal statements describing sensory experience or sense data.
- This may also be expressed as the difference between perceptions (ideas) constitute what is real (idealism) and perceptions (sense data) provide the foundations of our empirical knowledge and the basis from which we make logical inferences to objects (phenomenalism).
- Idealism, or at least Berkeleian idealism, requires the existence of God (an ideal mind) to explain the continued existence of the unperceived. Phenomenalism addresses this issue through hypothetical statements about possible perceptions, what a perceiver would experience if... . This point may also be linked to the difference between the view that reality is what is perceived (idealism) and reality and/or matter as the permanent possibility of sensation (phenomenalism).
- It may be claimed that there is no difference between weak idealism and phenomenism (eg via Mill) but only a difference between Berkeley’s strong idealism and phenomenism *or* the difference may be expressed as a difference between strong and weak idealism.

At the lower end of the mark-band explanations may lack clarity, or more than one difference may be identified.

1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding by giving an accurate account of both positions in which a difference is implicit rather than clearly identified. Responses at the bottom of this band will provide a confused account of one or both positions or focus on a similarity rather than a difference.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

- (b) Explain and illustrate why dreaming may lead to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge.
(15 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of why dreaming leads to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge. For example, dreaming is an instance of the argument from illusion; we cannot distinguish between a veridical state and dreaming about this state; in a vivid dream we have the same justification for believing falsely that... (ie an experience, a perception that something is the case) as we do in veridical experience that... . Because the two states are indistinguishable (allegedly) the general possibility exists that we can never be certain that an experience is veridical. At the lower end of the mark-band explanations will lack clarity.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge and/or partial understanding by offering a confused account of why dreaming leads to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge. At the bottom of this band responses may be very generalised and tangential, ie about hallucination and deception generally.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

The point is likely to be illustrated through examples of vivid dreams showing how a given sensory experience of 'x-ing' does not entail that 'x' is actually occurring. Some candidates may have Descartes sitting by his fire, or borrow from literature/films, but hopefully candidates will take the opportunity to construct reasonable examples of their own to make the point appropriately.

- 7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, a relevant example and applies this to provide a clear and precise illustration of why dreaming leads to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge.
- 4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, an example to provide a partial illustration lacking detail and precision of why dreaming leads to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge or uses an example or examples as a basis for listing points about scepticism generally. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and brief illustration.
- 1 – 3 Selects at least one example to provide a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of why dreaming leads to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge **or** a relevant example (of dreaming) is given but application is tangential to scepticism about perceptual knowledge **or** the response is about scepticism but the example is not about dreaming; or while exposition is relevant, no illustration is offered.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points.

(c) Assess naïve realism.

(24 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of naïve realism. This may be described as commonsense realism or as ‘vulgar’ and not philosophical. It may also be described as a two-component theory of perception in which we have direct, unmediated, access to a world of physical objects which do really possess the properties they are perceived to have and which continue to exist when not perceived. We know what the world is like through perceiving it directly rather than through making inferences from subjective intermediaries like sense data.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge of limited aspects of naïve realism or partial understanding of naïve realism through a confusing or general account of perception in which naïve realism is not clearly distinguished from other positions.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Candidates are likely to select and apply some of the following or equivalent points:

- Naïve realism offers no response to sceptical arguments and is incompatible with the existence of illusory or deceptive experience.
- It is a refusal to treat philosophical problems concerning perception seriously.
- It is incompatible with science – naïve realism leads to physics but physics if true shows that naïve realism is false.
- It is incompatible with the psychology of perception – with what we know about perceptual sets.

Also, candidates may contrast this commonsense view with the difficulties inherent in philosophical accounts of perception. For example:

- Other positions, eg idealism, provide accounts of perceptual knowledge which tend to get rid of the object. Is this counter-intuitive?
- It doesn’t follow from the possibility of perceptual error that we are never directly acquainted with constituents of physical objects.
- Some sceptical arguments about perception are self-defeating and require veridical experience in order to get off the ground.
- Naïve realism is pragmatic.
- It accords with our actual experience – that is, our experience and beliefs about the world do not involve us in a process of making inferences.
- Do sense data exist?

7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about naïve realism.

4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, some relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis, narrowly focused or lacking detail and precision, of philosophical arguments about naïve realism.

1 – 3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague, analysis of philosophical arguments about naïve realism **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a tangential approach to philosophical arguments about naïve realism.

0 No relevant philosophical points.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible:

- Arguments for naïve realism. What we are directly aware of in perception is an object, perceptual errors do not require us to abandon this position in favour of extreme subjectivity. The fact that we know objects only through their appearances does not necessitate the view that we are aware of something other than the objects themselves.
- *Or* it may be argued that what we are directly aware of in perception is a representation *and* the hypothesis of an external world causing these representations is the best explanation. That is, realism is right but representative realism is preferred to naïve realism.
- Some may argue that realism does not require materialism. What we are aware of in perception is an idea (sensation, sense-experience, impression, etc). There is no access to reality other than what the mind provides us with and (some form of) idealism is true.
- It might be argued that, in response to scepticism, it is better to construct a perceiver-independent language of perception rather than an object-independent language of perception.

7 – 9 Demonstrates a critical appreciation of arguments concerning naïve realism and advances a clear position.

4 – 6 Evaluation is present within a clear exposition of arguments about naïve realism but is either implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches or asserted with limited supportive explanation.

1 – 3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning naïve realism in which a view is merely described, points may be listed or asserted without justification, or the argument is confused.

0 No relevant philosophical insights.