



General Certificate of Education

Philosophy 5171/6171

PLY1 Theory of Knowledge

Mark Scheme

2007 examination – June series

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The following marking notes are not prescriptive and do not constitute ‘model answers’: they are intended as an ‘aide-memoire’ for Examiners. Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels of response marking criteria.

1

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a)	Briefly explain what is meant by reliabilism.	(6 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the term ‘reliabilism’. Put simply, reliabilism is the view that a belief is justified if it is produced by a reliable method: a reliable method is one that tends to generate true beliefs. Beyond this, there may be some indication of what might count as a reliable method: there could be references to expertise, authority, appropriate sources or mechanisms, beliefs formed via appropriate causal chains and/or beliefs that track the truth. These may be expressed as reliable methods of justification **or** as existing in some tension with justification if reliabilism is described as belonging to an externalist theory of knowledge (ie we have knowledge even though we can’t provide a reasoned account or internal justification of how we know). No marks are available for evaluation although knowledge and understanding of the term may be present in evaluative answers. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented.

1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of the term reliabilism by offering a partial explanation, eg a brief, accurate definition with little or no elaboration, or a confused explanation, eg it is difficult to distinguish reliabilism from coherentism.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

(b)	Explain and illustrate the view that justified true belief is not knowledge.	(15 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the view that justified true belief is not knowledge. Candidates might provide an outline of the tripartite approach to knowledge before attacking it but full marks can be earned for responses that begin by questioning whether these criteria are sufficient for knowledge. Explanation is likely to focus on justification and demonstrate how a belief may be true *and* justifiably held but fall short of knowledge because the justification is fortuitous, coincidental, accidental etc. No marks are available for evaluation but some relevant material may be present in answers claiming that a fourth criterion is necessary for knowledge. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented.

1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding either by offering a very limited explanation, e.g. it is assumed that the illustration provided is self-explanatory, or by offering a confused account in which it isn’t clear that a belief is justifiably held. Tangential accounts focusing on whether each individual criterion is necessary should be placed at the bottom of this band.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Illustrations of at least one justified true belief which cannot be seen as knowledge should be provided. Candidates will probably either offer one of Gettier's examples (eg two applicants for a job) or a Gettier-type example (eg a stopped clock, a cow in a field etc.) Candidates attempting their own illustrations should be rewarded although care should be taken to ensure the belief is both justified and true.

- 7–9 Selects at least one relevant example and applies this to provide a clear, detailed illustration in support of their explanation of the view that justified true belief is not knowledge.
- 4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail or precision, of the view that justified true belief is not knowledge. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and very brief but clear illustration.
- 1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague account of the view that justified true belief is not knowledge (eg it is not clear that the example provided is a justified and/or true belief) **or** a relevant example is used but application to the question is tangential (eg the focus is on true belief) **or** the response consists of explanation only, no attempt is made to illustrate.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

(c) Assess empiricism.

(24 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

Empiricism may be described as the view that sense experience is the source of most (if not all) of our knowledge and of our conceptual framework and/or as the view that sense experience is the source of important rather than trivial knowledge. Genuine, or important, knowledge claims describe that which can be verified or falsified through sense experience and synthetic and contingent. Meaningful talk is expressed in experiential terms. Some may refer to the radical empiricist view that all knowledge, including analytic propositions, is rooted in experience and/or that no knowledge is genuinely *a priori*. References may be made to *a posteriori* knowledge, empiricist foundationalism and/or sense–data, the mind as a ‘tabula rasa’ and to experience as the source of, and the test of, the legitimacy of our ideas. There may be references to specific philosophers eg Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Russell, Ayer etc and good answers may focus on any one of these to provide an exposition of empiricism.

4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of empiricism.

1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of empiricism. Answers will lack depth, precision and/or detail.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

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

- Empiricists tend to be sceptical about the validity of knowledge claims not defined in experiential terms – for example claims about ethics, religion, universals and so on – and sceptical about the role of reason, intellect and intuition in gaining knowledge.
- This may lead to a discussion of the limitations of empiricism. Are all concepts drawn from experience? Are some concepts (and ideas) *a priori*? Are all *a priori* truths trivial? Are they all analytic? Is reason downgraded too far?
- Some issues concerning what is revealed directly and non–inferentially in sense experience, and what can be inferred from it, may be raised. This may lead to a discussion of perception and some theories of perception. The status of sense–data may be questioned.
- The fallibility of the senses and the contrast with rationalism.
- Problems concerning the justification of inferential knowledge may be raised, eg the problem of induction; whether justification requires non–empirical assumptions to be made and whether, without these, empiricism leads to scepticism.
- The paradox of empiricism – are empiricist claims empirically based?
- The problem of solipsism.

7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about empiricism. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.

4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of philosophical arguments about empiricism, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues **or** listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated.

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

0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible and note that evaluative points may feature in the treatment of various issues and points selected for discussion without any additional ‘summing-up’.

- It could be argued that experience is clearly important to concept formation and to the generation of knowledge or belief networks.
- *Although* it is less clear how experience justifies knowledge. This may lead to a sceptical conclusion.
- It could be argued that an adequate account of our conceptual framework cannot be given in purely experiential terms and/or that general principles which are not derived empirically underpin our experience.
- It could be argued that divisions between empiricism and rationalism have been drawn too sharply; some might suggest that traditional oppositions between *a priori*, necessary and analytic truths and *a posteriori*, contingent and synthetic truths are mistaken.

7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning empiricism is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged.

4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning empiricism but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation is limited or the supporting evidence is limited).

1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning empiricism is present either in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed or asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused.

0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

2

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a)	Briefly explain what philosophers mean by sense–data.	<i>(6 marks)</i>
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of what is meant by sense–data. A sense–datum might be explained as the subjective intermediary between the perceiver and the external world; or possibly as something that exists on the surface of objects; as that which is immediately given in experience, that which we are directly aware of (or simply as ‘the given’); as the basis or foundation of empirical knowledge, that which is certain or incorrigible. There may also be references to other properties of sense–data eg privacy, transience, indeterminateness etc. and/or to theories of perception in which the term (or similar term) features. Illustrative examples may be used to assist explanation. No marks are available for evaluative critiques of sense–data although marks should be awarded for relevant knowledge and understanding contained within them. Locate answers in this band according to the depth and detail presented.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of sense–data either by giving a brief accurate definition without further elaboration or by giving a confused or tangential account of sense–data.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

(b)	Explain and illustrate one criticism of representative realism.	<i>(15 marks)</i>
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** criticism of representative realism. Candidates will probably describe representative realism as the view that we gain knowledge of reality indirectly; reality, an external realm of physical objects, is the cause of our perceptual experience but what we are directly aware of in perception is a representation (sensation, sense–experience, impression, idea); physical objects exist behind a veil of perception; the primary–secondary quality distinction etc. However, this (or some of this) may be implicit in the criticism selected for discussion and full marks are available for clear, precise statements of one criticism. This will probably cover an aspect of the view that representative realism is not a complete response to sceptical arguments. For example, how do we know that objects resemble our representations of them? How do we know that objects (rather than demons or God) are the causes of our perceptions? How do we know there is anything beyond our perceptions? Is the primary/secondary quality distinction valid? Solipsism and other problems concerning sense–data may be referred to. At the lower end of the mark–band explanations are likely to include or blur together more than one criticism and possibly list criticisms.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of one criticism of representative realism by offering a confused account of a relevant point or by making a point which is not clearly a criticism of representative realism.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

The criticism could be illustrated through reference to weaknesses in illustrative examples used by eg Locke or Descartes; illustrations used in numerous texts (eg the private cinema example) although care should be taken to clarify what critical point is being made; candidates' own illustrative examples.

- 7–9 Selects at least one relevant example and applies this to provide a clear, detailed, illustration in support of their explanation of one criticism of representative realism.
- 4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example and applies this to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail or precision, of one criticism of representative realism. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and a very brief but relevant illustration.
- 1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague account of one criticism of representative realism (eg it is not clear how the example provided relates to representative realism) **or** the response consists of explanation only, no attempt is made to illustrate.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

(c)	Assess phenomenalism.	(24 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

Phenomenalism may be presented *either* as the view that objects are 'permanent possibilities of sensation' *or* as the view that statements about objects are 'reducible to a statement, or a set of statements, which refer exclusively to sense–data'. (NB some candidates may trace phenomenalism back to Berkeley). Either approach is fine. Beyond this, candidates should clarify that phenomenologists invoke both actual and possible sense–data to account for our experience (possibly via illustration); some may also refer to the coherence, order or pattern of our perceptual experiences; there may also be references to sceptical arguments and to phenomenalism as a response to scepticism.

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of phenomenalism.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of phenomenalism. Answers will lack depth, precision and/or detail. At the bottom of this band some relevant material may appear in an otherwise poorly focused or tangential response.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

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

- An outline of sceptical arguments and the problems posed for realist theories of perception: the benefits of non–realism.

Critical points are likely to focus on:

- Whether phenomenalism can provide an account of what a possibility of sensation *is* or whether it can explain *why* our perceptual experience is coherent and regular.
- Whether all statements about objects *can* be translated into statements about sense–data. This involves a tangle of different points: the difficulty of specifying conditions under which possible sense experiences would occur (without reference to physical objects or spatial location); the difficulty of translating statements which include references to the perceiver, place and/or time into precise sense–data experiences (eg ‘I was born in Lincoln in June, 1978’); physical object statements do not entail that I will have certain sensory experiences, and statements describing my sensory experiences do not entail the presence or properties of physical objects; statements about sensory experiences underdetermine reality (eg the door appears blue could mean that it is blue under white light or white under blue light) etc.
- A range of points about sense–data may also be raised (including whether or not they, as appearances, exist). For example: sense–data may be vague; it is difficult to see how they relate to each other (whether a sense–datum of a book is on top of a sense–datum of a table); if the appearance of the book gets smaller as I walk away from it whether this should be described as a series of sense–data or one changing sense–datum etc.
- Solipsism.

7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about phenomenalism. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.

4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of philosophical arguments about phenomenalism, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues or listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated.

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

0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

It might be argued that:

- While linguistic phenomenalism has few adherents some form of non–realism stemming from Berkeley and/or Mill is to be preferred to realism. Theories of perceptual knowledge must make some reference to the experiences of perceivers.
- ‘Phenomenalese’ is clumsy, the language of commonsense realism is to be preferred and there are not strong reasons against adopting it: if we need to we can make it more technically precise, and defeat scepticism, by removing references to perceivers. Alternatively, references to physical objects are the best explanation we have of why our experience is ordered and coherent. So, some form of realism is to be preferred.

7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning phenomenalism is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced and supported. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged, or a positive or negative conclusion might be reached.

4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning phenomenalism but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that

critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation is limited or the supporting evidence is limited).

- 1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning phenomenalism is present either in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed or asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.