



General Certificate of Education

Philosophy 1171

Specification

PHIL2

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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PHIL2

- 01** Most students had a good grasp about the key ideas associated with representative realism. Many candidates made reference to sense-data and the primary/secondary quality distinction, though some candidates demonstrated a muddled understanding of the latter. Students who scored well on this question not only listed some key ideas associated with representative realism but linked the themes together to directly respond to the question. This would typically involve giving a causal account of sense-data and, perhaps, associating this with some other ideas such as the 'veil of perception' and/or the external world as a hypothesis.
- 02** Answers to this question were mixed, and few candidates demonstrated the requisite knowledge and understanding to achieve scores in the higher bands of the generic mark scheme. A good proportion of the responses gave a simple, brief account of direct realism, followed by a quick dismissal of the theory (usually with a short reference to Hume) and then proceeded to trawl through representative realism and idealism. Idealism could have been made relevant to the question, but few candidates succeeded in doing this. The best replies demonstrated an understanding of direct realism by replying to various attacks made of them (e.g. illusion, scientific descriptions of reality), and taking the debate head on, perhaps with reference to Austin, Strawson, Stebbing, disjunctivism, etc.
- 03** On the whole, candidates responded fairly well to this question. Many students clearly identified two ways in which the idea of tolerance can produce a paradox/contradiction, which is impressive considering how similar some of the paradoxes appear. There was, on occasion, the inevitable blurring, whereby candidates had only actually demonstrated one example, or where the examples produced did not demonstrate the paradox presented. Some examiners found that a number of candidates spelled out potentially undesirable consequences of a tolerant society without ever really identifying the contradiction/paradox. Some candidates received full marks for this question.
- 04** Responses to this question tended to demonstrate a general knowledge of the content of the specification, which was often accurate, yet the content was not clearly applied to the question. Many students referred to Forst, but presented the material as a taxonomy of the different types of tolerance, rather than using the material to answer the question directly. Similarly, some candidates used the question to engage in a discussion about the relative merits of liberalism/conservatism/anarchism, but, again, without applying this knowledge directly to the question. Examiners also noted that there was often a lack of discussion about what actually constitutes offence and that whilst there were reasonable attempts to refer to the limits of free speech there was often little or no engagement with wider offensive cultural expressions. Marks towards the higher end of the generic mark scheme tended to note that tolerance has instrumental value for a liberal to secure some higher political good such as freedom, utility, fairness, truth, etc and that they cannot be secured without tolerance (Mill on fallibilism, Rawls on reasonableness, Locke on coercion, etc), and took the debate from there about the limits of tolerance. (E.g. what is harm, are there any self-regarding acts, etc)
- 05** Candidates answered this question well for the most part. Responses could have been drawn from any of the theories suggested in the specification, though most candidates referred to the representative and the expressivist account of art. Candidates that scored higher in the generic mark scheme gave two clear accounts as to how art can illuminate experience and supported this with eloquent examples that emphasised the key idea of 'illuminating'. Many students failed in this last respect. For example, the Guernica doesn't just record, it also captures the horror of the wars of the 20th century in a way

that watching a documentary, or even being there (controversially), can't capture. Candidates that keyed into this idea were rewarded appropriately. There was some confusion here about whose experience was being illuminated - the artist or the consumer of the art. The two could (and sometimes were) brought together by way of expressivism, but this wasn't always clear.

- 06** There were several strong responses to this question whereby candidates were clearly acquainted, and in some places well acquainted, with the ideas of Kant and Bell. Candidates that had a firm grip of the subtleties of this theory used this platform to engage in some very good analysis and evaluation. However, there were a number of students that tended to juxtapose their sketchy grasp of formalism against other theories (representationalism and expressivism) without directly tackling the question. Sometimes candidates concluded that expressivist or representational aspects of art are just as (if not more) important than formal qualities, but without saying much about these features of art in the main body of their discussion. Several students also conflated Plato's theory of forms with the idea of significant form. Higher scores were rewarded to students that focussed on the issues related to form and did not merely trawl through all of the various alternatives on offer.
- 07** Most candidates understood the needs of the question and achieved scores around the higher end of Level 2 of the generic mark scheme. However, although not compulsory for Level 3, students that first presented the problem (either logical or evidential) and then applied a theodicy appropriately scored highly. Some candidates would have benefitted from presenting their chosen theodicy more holistically, e.g. by showing how free will and soul-making are linked together. However, with many candidates, the links were not clearly established. For instance, St Augustine's theodicy interweaves elements which could, in principle, be taken as separate solutions: biblical accounts of creation, fall and redemption; evil as the privation of good; contrast theodicy; free will. Some candidates tended to list these features without directly applying the points raised to the question.
- 08** There was a lot of material that the candidate could have used here, and the result was that many responses were long, but lacking in detail. These responses, providing they were accurate and engaged in the debate were rewarded, but the highest scores were given to candidates that selected and applied several arguments in detail. A paradigm example of a lacking in detail was found in candidates' exposition of Paley's watch, which was often too brief and prosaic. Some candidates referred to the material on 'seeing-as' and Flew/Wisdom's gardener, which, for the most part, was tangential to the needs of the question. Several candidates also tended to bundle Hume's criticisms together, rather than addressing each argument with separate care and attention.
- 09** On the whole responses to this question were mixed. Many candidates failed to discern that this question was related to the issue of the implications of determinism and launched into a tangential comparative analysis of determinism and libertarianism. Candidates that restricted their discussion to reasons and causes were rewarded, though this was not sufficient to achieve Level 3 on the generic mark scheme. Some candidates got the issue of actions and 'willings' muddled. Actions are caused by willings (or choices, or decisions, or based on intentions, or reasons for actions, etc). A number of candidates described the same 'event' in two ways: on the one hand, as an action; on the other hand, as a bodily movement. So, having a drink of tea, as an action, might follow from a feeling of thirst, a desire to quench that thirst and a preference for tea as a beverage; then the same process would be described in (hazy) mechanical terms. This was not wholly without merit, but it missed the point that a bodily movement and an action can actually be distinctive types of events.

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- 10** Many candidates did not fully appreciate the argument for determinism, with many responses being of the 'I am determined to like cornflakes because of my genes' ilk. Similarly, some candidates blurred the more fundamental metaphysical issue of free will with the different social and political freedoms afforded to members of particular societies. From this limited grasp of determinism it was difficult for many candidates to engage in a serious evaluation of determinism, and many responses involved a simple juxtaposing of hard determinism with libertarianism (typically Descartes or Sartre). It has also been noted that several candidates had a muddled grasp of compatibilism and that even the best answers for this question tended to be overly descriptive rather than entering into a discussion of the specific question. Good responses to this question, of which there were some, grasped the idea behind determinism of 'could not have done otherwise', and then used this to demonstrate why freewill may be an illusion before moving on to discuss whether libertarianism or compatibilism provide a way out of the (apparent) illusion. Candidates that scored highly on the generic mark scheme went further than merely elucidating the unfortunate implications of determinism, which required detailed understanding of the arguments but forward by Descartes, Hume, Kant, or whoever.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.