



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2011**

**Philosophy 1171**

**PHIL2      An Introduction to Philosophy 2**

***Report on the Examination***

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# PHIL2

## Question 01

Many candidates were able to identify at least two characteristics of sense-data. There was a tendency to blur some of the characteristics, such as subjectivity and privacy, and candidates could have avoided this problem with clearer illustrations. Some of the responses were overly focussed on the primary/secondary quality distinction, which was often presented erroneously. For example, quite a few candidates seemed to think that sense-data only consists of secondary qualities. There was a tendency at times to engage in unnecessary evaluation.

## Question 02

Good responses presented a balanced argument by discussing various strengths of representative realism contra direct realism, such as issues related to hallucinations, time-lag, etc. This would then be contrasted with weaknesses such as the problem of scepticism and the collapse of the primary/secondary quality distinction. Stronger responses attempted to critically engage in these issues rather than list them. There was a tendency to be overly focussed on scepticism in the critical evaluation. Responses at the lower end of the mark range failed to clearly identify the key aspects of representative realism. As a result these responses tended to produce a muddled critical discussion of the issues.

## Question 03

Several candidates had no idea about the idea of repressive desublimation, even though it is clearly stated in the specification. Some had a rough idea that it was related to how liberal markets develop 'false needs'. Better answers focussed on a range of ideas presented by Marcuse to undermine the notion of tolerance, usually drawing upon examples related to pornography and the desublimation of love. The best responses explained what was meant by the ideas 'sublime', 'desublimation' and 'repressive'. Few candidates did this.

## Question 04

The best responses unpacked the idea of tolerance both in terms of the concept of tolerance and the various conceptions of tolerance. Candidates that used this framework effectively showed how different putative cases of tolerance might constitute different applications of the various conceptions on offer, and then discussed whether this could really be considered an instance of tolerance. Some responses would state Forst's concept of tolerance and then move into a discussion about whether tolerance is a good thing, rather than what tolerance requires. This would typically involve a discussion on Mill. This was not without merit, but it was not always directly applied to the rubric. Lower in the mark range candidates tended to list their own pre-philosophical intuitions about what should and should not be tolerated without directly tackling the demands of the question.

## Question 05

There were good responses to this question. Many of the candidates were able to produce two clear reasons why art should not be valued for its imitative qualities. However, there was a tendency at times to either blur the two reasons together, or there was a failure to produce clear and convincing illustrations relating to the points raised. Although some candidates made good

use of Plato, there was, at times, a tendency to muddle how Plato should be applied to the question.

### **Question 06**

The better responses to this question drew upon their knowledge of a range of philosophical positions, typically those advanced by Croce, Collingwood and Tolstoy. When combined with pertinent illustrations some of these responses were most impressive. Mid-range responses did not always appropriately grasp some of the subtleties in the literature. A typical example of this would be blurring the expressivist view that relates to the intentions of the artist with the view related to the audience responses. Some candidates tended to juxtapose this approach with formalism and representational accounts of art without actually picking up on any salient reasons why we may want to adopt these theories over expressivism. On the whole, responses to this question were well illustrated, but sometimes the candidate seemed to pick on examples of artwork that did not necessarily suit the point they were trying to illustrate. For example, sometimes candidates would pick out work that is clearly valued for its representational qualities, such as landscape art, on the basis that it evokes strong emotions in the audience.

### **Question 07**

There many good responses to this question, and they were often well illustrated. Candidates that selected material from Hume tended to be able to apply the material readily the question and scored well. Candidates that selected examples that drew on cases of 'apparent' design, such as Darwinism or the Epicurean hypothesis were also rewarded. However, these were not always well illustrated. Some candidates failed to spot the demands of the question and responded by using material from Paley or Aquinas to show that design does imply God's existence.

### **Question 08**

Responses to this were varied. Some candidates were well informed about the nuances of the soul making theodicy and were able to bring out two or three of the key features related to this theodicy. However, some candidates only had a basic grasp of the theodicy and could do little more than point out that evil exists in order to help us improve as people. Stronger candidates understood that the problem can be effectively evaluated when considering both the amount and the distribution of evil, and by considering issues relating to both moral and natural evil. Candidates that knew little about the theodicy tended to slide into discussing other theodicies, particularly the free will defence. This was not without merit providing that it was firmly anchored to the rubric. This was not always the case.

### **Question 09**

The candidates that responded to the question as 'causal' produced some good answers. The stronger responses could clearly demarcate between a reason and a cause, often by noting that a reason can be characterised in normative terms. There was some confusion regarding the idea that reasons are forward looking and causes are backward looking. Reasons can also be retrospective. Weaker responses tended to characterise the distinction purely in terms of the debate between the libertarian and the determinist. This was not without merit, but it did not directly tackle the needs of the question. Those who approached the question as 'casual' produced some inventive answers that were duly rewarded with respect to the difficult situation that the candidate had been placed in. All centres affected were contacted in writing post-award to inform them of the action taken by AQA to ensure that their candidates were not disadvantaged.

### **Question 10**

The stronger responses to this question focussed on the key idea of 'being able to act on my decision'. The question invites the candidate to explore whether this is sufficient to ascribe freedom to the decision. Good responses identified how a hard determinist may respond to this decision and how a compatibilist may reply to this response. On occasion candidates were able to apply a libertarian account of free will to the question. Weaker candidates tended to ignore the demands of the question and simply list the different kinds of determinism with which they were vaguely familiar, e.g. 'biological', 'economic', and 'psychological' determinism. It was not clear how this putative taxonomy of different kinds of determinism was supposed to answer the question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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