



## General Certificate of Education

# Philosophy 5171/6171

### *PLY 1 Theory of Knowledge*

## Mark Scheme

### *2006 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.

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**

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| (a) Briefly explain why knowledge requires justification. <span style="float: right;">(6 marks)</span> |
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**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of why knowledge requires justification. The view of knowledge as justified true belief (with or without an extra ingredient) may be referred to and the question answered via an illustration of why true belief on its own is not knowledge. Knowing is not (purely) subjective but requires some objective criteria which justify or confer the right to claim knowledge, eg ‘x’ is known because ‘x’ is, or is derived from, foundational knowledge; or because ‘x’ coheres with accepted beliefs; or because ‘x’ results from a reliable process or source; or because ‘x’ has explanatory power; or because, on balance, the evidence is sufficiently strong to accept ‘x’, etc.

1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding by defining knowledge accurately but without further explanation, or by providing a partial and confused explanation of justification. Some understanding may be present in tangential evaluative approaches focused on a critique of justification.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

|   |
|---|
| (b) Explain and illustrate <b>one</b> criticism of the view that a belief is knowledge if it coheres with other accepted beliefs. <span style="float: right;">(15 marks)</span> |
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**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** criticism of coherentism. This might be drawn from the difficulty of explaining exactly what ‘coheres with’ means (‘fits’, ‘is consistent with’, ‘supports’, ‘is entailed by’, etc); the difficulty of whether a system of beliefs should be accepted solely on the grounds that the beliefs cohere or whether some belief(s) in the system requires some additional justification; the difficulty of adjudicating between two or more competing but coherent belief systems. Responses which list or blur a number of (accurate) criticisms together should be placed at the bottom of this band.

1–3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding probably through offering a confused account, eg the notion of coherence is not clear and/or only aspects of the critical point(s) may apply to coherence. Tangential responses focused on, eg reliability or on why justified true belief is not knowledge, but which display some understanding of a problem concerning coherence, should be rewarded at the bottom of this band.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

**Selection and Application (9 marks)**

Illustrations of at least one belief should be provided and related to a network or system of beliefs with which it coheres. This might include fairly minimalist belief networks such as beliefs which cohere with other beliefs because of the support of two or more senses *or* beliefs within more wide-ranging belief systems concerning any aspect of the physical or social world (eg beliefs held by a particular occupational community, religious sect, political group or social movement). Expect some reliance on examples provided in recently published texts. The point of any illustration provided should be to illuminate the selected criticism. 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 **one** criticism of coherentism. In this band the illustration(s) provided clarify the criticism selected.
- 4–6 Selects, or constructs, at least **one** point or example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail and precision, of **one** criticism of coherentism. In this band the illustrative example will only partially illuminate the point *either* because it is brief and undeveloped *or* because more than one point has been made. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition, explaining the selected criticism, and very brief illustration of one criticism of coherentism.
- 1–3 Selects at least **one** illustrative point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of **one** criticism of coherentism, eg it is not clear how the example provided is relevant to the criticism selected *or* to the question. Answers at the bottom of this band may consist of vague exposition only, no attempt is made to illustrate.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

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| (c) Assess the importance of <i>a priori</i> knowledge. | (24 marks) |
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**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

The concept of *a priori* knowledge can be defined in a number of ways as referring to a proposition or truth which is known prior to and/or independently of experience; or which can be rightfully asserted or confirmed without recourse to experiential or experimental evidence (or which cannot be refuted via experiential or experimental evidence); or which cannot be refuted without contradiction; or which is justly known through understanding one or more self-evident propositions. It is likely that examples will be employed to clarify the concept.

Some reference may also be made to necessary truths and/or to analytic and synthetic *a priori* propositions.

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of *a priori* knowledge.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding of *a priori* knowledge.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

### Selection and Application (9 marks)

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

- It is likely that some will root their discussions of the importance of *a priori* knowledge in certain texts. Thus, some candidates may refer to various aspects of Plato's treatment of knowledge, both of what can be known and how it is known, while others may refer to Descartes' aims, methodology and arguments.
- Both philosophers, but particularly Plato, may be used to introduce the concept of innate knowledge and/or this may be explored via Chomsky's approach to language.
- Both philosophers, particularly Descartes perhaps, may be used to link *a priori* knowledge to reason, necessity, certainty and/or immunity from error and, beyond this, there may be some attempt to characterise rationalism as (classically) the view that all knowledge is grounded in reason (or that knowledge grounded in reason is superior to any knowledge derived from the senses) and is achieved through intuitive understanding, deduction and the ability to reason and draw inferences.
- Kant's approach to the truths of reason may be used to further classify necessary propositions into analytic and synthetic *a priori* propositions. The importance of synthetic *a priori* propositions within rationalism may be explored through Kant's account of (some of) the categories we employ to filter our experiences.
- It is likely that classical or contemporary empiricism will be described as a concern to restore the importance of experience, experiment and *a posteriori* 'knowledge'. References to Locke and Hume are likely to appear in rejections of innate knowledge and claims that *a priori* truths are analytic, trivial and uninformative and/or scepticism about the abilities of reason to provide knowledge/the extent of *a priori* knowledge.
- Some may develop an account of knowledge in which some necessary truths are known *a posteriori* and/or some *a priori* truths are contingently true.

7–9 Selects or constructs relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, precise and detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about the importance of *a priori* knowledge.

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 the importance of *a priori* knowledge.

1–3 Selects and applies some relevant points to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about the importance of *a priori* knowledge **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a tangential approach to philosophical arguments about *a priori* knowledge.

0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

**Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)**

A range of argumentation is possible:

- That *a priori* knowledge is not important. A general criticism of the importance of *a priori* knowledge might concern the extent of such knowledge (eg whether there is any innate knowledge) and/or of its application (the extent to which truths of reason are informative). Some may argue that *a priori* knowledge is less important than establishing reasonable standards of evidence or grounds upon which we can justify propositions as knowledge. Some may argue the radical empiricist view that there is no *a priori* knowledge (that even analytic truths are known *a posteriori*).
- That *a priori* knowledge is important. This view may follow from a consideration of the contributions of Plato, Descartes and Kant or, alternatively, from an argument that empiricist treatments of the truths of reason lead to extreme scepticism (cf. Hume). Some may argue that reason, the ability to deduce and infer logical relationships, and the capacity for *a priori* understanding remain important as a basis for intuition, belief, justification and knowledge.
- That the context of debates about the importance of *a priori* knowledge has been one in which the emphasis on reason and experience as ways of knowing has exaggerated the differences between philosophers and schools of thought so that, in reality, it is possible for all to accept that some *a priori* knowledge is important. There may be some attempt to divorce *a priori* from necessary and argue that some *a posteriori* knowledge is necessarily true and that only some synthetic and necessarily true propositions are know *a priori*; conversely, some *a priori* knowledge is only contingently true.

- 7–9 Demonstrates a critical appreciation of arguments concerning the importance of *a priori* knowledge and advances a clear position.
- 4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning the importance of *a priori* knowledge but either the explicit evaluation of material is not used to advance a case or arguments given in support lack detail and precision. At the bottom of this band evaluation is implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches.
- 1–3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning the importance of *a priori* knowledge in which a view is merely described, or points are listed or asserted without justification, or the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insight is demonstrated.

2

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

(a) Briefly explain what philosophers mean by the primary qualities of an object. (6 marks)

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of primary qualities. Some of these may be listed (solidity, extension, shape, figure and mobility) but responses in this band will clarify the concept as referring to qualities that are inseparable from objects (bodies), and from their insensible constituent parts, and which endure through change; the qualities present in objects whether sensible or insensible and/or which our ideas resemble ('ideas of primary qualities are resemblances'). There may be some reference to 'the mechanical philosophy' or, more likely, to Locke or Descartes: similarly, there may be some reference to examples provided by Locke (snow, almonds) or Descartes (wax) or given in more recent texts. At the lower end of the mark band explanations may lack detail.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding either by identifying (some of) the primary qualities without further explanation or by providing an account of primary qualities which is confused or unclear.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

(b) Outline and illustrate how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge. (15 marks)

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge. This may be stated in a number of ways. For example, we cannot distinguish between a veridical state and an illusory state; in an illusory experience we have the same justification for believing falsely that something is the case as we do in a veridical experience where something actually is the case; because the two states are indistinguishable the general possibility exists that we can never be certain that an experience is veridical; because the two states are indistinguishable what we are aware of in both instances is identical (an 'appearance', representation, idea, sense datum, percept, etc); the difficulty of moving from appearance to reality. No marks are available for evaluative commentaries on attempts to resolve this problem or for claims that it cannot be resolved. At the lower end of the mark band explanations lack detail.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic knowledge and partial understanding by offering a confused or unclear account of how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge. At the bottom of this band responses may be tangential, eg about knowledge or scepticism generally.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

**Selection and Application (9 marks)**

The problem may be illustrated through an example or examples of any illusory or hallucinatory state, including dreams, involving perceptual error. Hopefully candidates will take the opportunity to construct reasonable examples of their own to make the point appropriately, but it is likely that familiar illustrations will be employed, eg distant objects, sticks in water, parallel lines, jugs of hot, cold and warm water, etc.

- 7–9 Selects, or constructs, at least **one** relevant point or example and applies this to provide a clear illustration of how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge. In this band, the illustration(s) provided will clarify the problem.
- 4–6 Selects, or constructs, at least **one** point or example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail and precision, of how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge. In this band the illustrative example will only partially illuminate the problem because it is brief and undeveloped. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition, explaining the selected criticism, and very brief illustration of how illusion creates a problem for perceptual knowledge.
- 1–3 Selects at least **one** illustrative point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of how illusion creates a problem concerning perceptual knowledge, eg it is not clear how the example provided is relevant to the problem **or** to the question. Answers at the bottom of this band may consist of vague exposition only, no attempt is made to illustrate.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

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| (c) | Assess representative realism. | <i>(24 marks)</i> |
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**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of representative realism: 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 (percept, sense-experience, idea); physical objects exist behind a veil of perception; the primary-secondary quality distinction, ideas of primary qualities are resemblances of patterns/structures which do really exist in objects whereas ideas of secondary qualities reflect (and do not resemble) the powers of objects to produce sensations in us. A representative theory of perception may be associated with Locke and/or (via arguments concerning the fallibility of the senses) Descartes. The theory may be presented as a response to sceptical arguments.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic knowledge of limited aspects of representative realism and/or partial understanding of representative realism through confusing the theory with other theories (eg idealism) or through a generalised account of the problems of perception.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is demonstrated.

### **Selection and Application (9 marks)**

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

- Representative realism is compatible with the existence of illusory or deceptive experience – with the view that in such cases what we directly perceive cannot be an object.
- It is compatible with what science tells us about the ‘real’ nature of physical objects – that they are constituted by separated particles with the primary properties of mass, charge, etc – which is not how we perceive them.
- It is compatible with the way we process information – the analogy with media representation.
- Subjective/internal representations (ideas, perceptions, sense-experiences) are the (infallible) foundation of our knowledge of mind-independent external reality.

Critical points are likely to focus on:

- Scepticism. How do we know that objects resemble our representation of them? How do we know there is anything there at all?
- Are the analogous arguments (eg the operator in the telephone exchange) used to illustrate representative realism coherent? Are they self-defeating?
- The fact that perceptual knowledge is based on appearances does not imply that in perception we are aware of something other than objects.
- The primary-secondary quality distinction is flawed.

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

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

0 No relevant philosophical points.



**Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)**

A range of argumentation is possible:

- A representative theory is a genuine attempt to resolve problems concerning perceptual knowledge (problems ignored by naïve realists). What we are directly aware of in perception is a representation: the hypothesis of an external world causing these representations is the best explanation and also allows a sophisticated treatment of perceptual error.
- What we are directly aware of in perception is an external world. 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. We can deal with perceptual error by constructing a perceiver-independent language of perception.
- What we are aware of in perception is an idea (sensation, sense-experience, impression, etc) and should restrict our comments on reality accordingly. The representative theory makes reality unknowable.

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

4–6 Evaluation is present within a clear exposition of arguments about representative realism but either the explicit evaluation of material is not used to advance a case, or arguments given in support lack detail and precision. At the bottom of this band evaluation is implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches.

1–3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning representative 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 are presented.