



88125601



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

**PHILOSOPHY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 1**

Monday 5 November 2012 (afternoon)

2 hours 30 minutes

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer one question.
- Section B: answer two questions, each chosen from a different Optional Theme.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[90 marks]*.

*In your answers you are expected to:*

- *present an argument in an organized way*
- *use clear, precise and appropriate language*
- *identify any assumptions in the question*
- *develop a clear and focused argument*
- *identify the strengths and weaknesses of your response*
- *identify counter-arguments to your response, and address them if possible*
- *provide relevant supporting material, illustrations and/or examples where appropriate*
- *develop a critical evaluation of ideas and arguments*
- *conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.*

## SECTION A

*Answer **one** question from this section. Each question in this section is worth [30 marks].*

### **Core Theme: What is a human being?**

1. Read the following passage and develop your response as indicated below.

God made some men of mud, but they were very soft and limp and couldn't see. They could speak, but what they said didn't make sense. When they got wet they couldn't even stand up. God saw that they were of no use so he broke them up and said "I will try again".

Then he made men out of wood. The wooden men were better; they could walk and talk. But he said "These men will not do either. I must destroy them also." And he sent a great flood and the houses of the wooden men fell down.

And God wanted to make real men ... He took ears of yellow corn and of white corn and ground them into meal. With the corn meal he made nine kinds of liquor and these became man's strength and energies. With the dough of the meal he shaped the body and he made four men, very strong and handsome. They were gifted with intelligence and they managed to know everything there is in the world. While the men slept, he made four women very carefully, and when the men woke, each found at his side a beautiful wife.

Then the Creator was troubled, for he realized that these men could see too much and too far, so that they would not really be men, but gods. He saw that he had to change them so that they could be what he needed. So he leaned down and blew mist in their eyes and clouded their vision, like breathing on a mirror, and from then on nothing was clear to their sight except what was close to them.

[Source: adapted from the *Popul-Vuh* of the Quiche Maya, <http://www.indigenouspeople.net/legend.htm>]

*Write a response (of approximately 800 words) in which you:*

- identify a central philosophical concept or philosophical issue in this passage that addresses the question, "what is a human being?"
- investigate **two** different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified
- explain and evaluate the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified.

2. Look at the following picture and develop your response as indicated below.



[Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Southwest\\_corner\\_of\\_Central\\_Park,\\_looking\\_east,\\_NYC.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Southwest_corner_of_Central_Park,_looking_east,_NYC.jpg)]

*Write a response (of approximately 800 words) in which you:*

- identify a central philosophical concept or philosophical issue in this picture that addresses the question, “what is a human being?”
- investigate **two** different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified
- explain and evaluate the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified.

## SECTION B

*Answer two questions from this section, each chosen from a different Optional Theme. Each question in this section is worth [30 marks].*

### **Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology**

3. Evaluate the claim that reason is the only reliable source of knowledge.
4. Evaluate the claim that we reliably encounter the physical world as it really is.

### **Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics**

5. Evaluate the claim that humans have moral obligations towards non-humans.
6. Evaluate the claim that moral progress is possible.

### **Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion**

7. To what extent is the distinction between moral evil and natural evil justifiable?
8. To what extent might atheism be justified by rational argumentation?

### **Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art**

9. Evaluate the claim that the fundamental criterion by which works of art should be judged is the contribution they make to society.
10. To what extent is the imitation of reality the essential function of visual art?

### **Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy**

11. Evaluate the claim that the citizen has a duty to obey the state.
12. “Sovereignty entails taking decisions and settling disputes within a political system independent from external powers and with final authority over all citizens.” Discuss and evaluate.

**Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives**

13. With reference to one or more of the non-Western traditions and perspectives you have studied, explain and discuss the philosophical understanding of the individual.
14. With reference to one or more of the non-Western traditions and perspectives you have studied, explain and discuss teachings about the transmigration of the soul.

**Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues**

15. “We get the media we deserve.” Discuss and evaluate.
16. To what extent should any human be concerned about the state of the environment his or her society passes on to its successors?

**Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures**

17. Evaluate the claim that culture is not only the materials a people create, and what they do with them, but is also about their ideas, feelings and expectations about themselves, others and the world in which they live.
  18. Evaluate the claim that nationalism and national character constitute the foundations of personal and social identity.
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