



Sixth Form Entrance 2017

PHILOSOPHY

1 hour

Instructions for candidates:

This paper is intended to test how well you can think logically and construct arguments. You are not expected to have prior knowledge of the question topics.

Make sure that you think before you start writing. You will be assessed on the clarity and precision of your work.

- Answer all parts of section A.
- Choose one question from section B.
- Spend 30 minutes on each section.

Please use the writing paper provided and write your name and present school clearly on all sheets of paper used.

Section A

Read the extract below and then answer the questions. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Though experience be our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact; it must be acknowledged, that this guide is not altogether infallible¹, but in some cases is apt to lead us into errors. One, who in our climate, should expect better weather in any week of June than in one of December, would reason justly, and conformably to experience; but it is certain, that he may happen, in the event, to find himself mistaken.

All effects follow not with like certainty from their supposed causes. Some events are found, in all countries and all ages, to have been constantly conjoined together: Others are found to have been more variable, and sometimes to disappoint our expectations; so that, in our reasonings concerning matter of fact, there are all imaginable degrees of assurance, from the highest certainty to the lowest species of moral evidence.

A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full proof of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: He weighs the opposite experiments: He considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments: to that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgement, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability.

A hundred instances or experiments on one side, and fifty on another, afford a doubtful expectation of any event; though a hundred uniform experiments, with only one that is contradictory, reasonably beget a pretty strong degree of assurance. In all cases, we must balance the opposite experiments, where they are opposite, and deduct the smaller number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence.

A miracle is a violation² of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. Why is it more than probable, that all men must die; that lead cannot, of itself, remain suspended in the air; that fire consumes wood, and is extinguished by water; unless it be, that these events are found agreeable to the laws of nature, and there is required a violation of these laws, or in other words, a miracle to prevent them? Nothing is esteemed³ a miracle, if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man, seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden: because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country. There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation.

¹ Infallible = cannot be wrong

² Violation = breaking

³ Esteemed = judged to be

And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed, or the miracle rendered credible⁴, but by an opposite proof, which is superior.

The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim⁵ worthy of our attention), 'That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish; and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force, which remains, after deducting the inferior.' When anyone tells me, that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact, which he relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous, than the event which he relates; then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion.

(David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*)

Questions:

1. Set out, in your own words, the argument put forward by Hume in the extract above.
[10 marks]

2. In what ways can the argument above be criticised?
[5 marks]

⁴ Credible = believable

⁵ Maxim = principle

Section B:

Choose one question from this section. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

1. What makes you now the same person as you were when you were a new born baby and the same person that you will be when you are in your eighties?

[15 marks]

2. ‘In a world in which everyone was blind, colour would not exist.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim?

[15 marks]

3. ‘Nothing is really good or bad; moral values are just created by society.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim?

[15 marks]

End of Exam.



Sixth Form Entrance 2015

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1 hour

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Section A

Read the extract below and then answer the questions. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it? This question, which at first sight might not seem difficult, is really one of the most difficult that can be asked.

To make our difficulties plain, let us concentrate attention on the table. To the eye it is oblong, brown and shiny, to the touch it is smooth and cool and hard; when I tap it, it gives out a wooden sound. Any one else who sees and feels and hears the table will agree with this description, so that it might seem as if no difficulty would arise; but as soon as we try to be more precise our troubles begin. Although I believe that the table is 'really' of the same colour all over, the parts that reflect the light look much brighter than the other parts, and some parts look white because of reflected light. I know that, if I move, the parts that reflect the light will be different, so that the apparent distribution of colours on the table will change. It follows that if several people are looking at the table at the same moment, no two of them will see exactly the same distribution of colours, because no two can see it from exactly the same point of view, and any change in the point of view makes some change in the way the light is reflected.

It is evident from what we have found, that there is no colour which pre-eminently appears to be *the* colour of the table, or even of any one particular part of the table -- it appears to be of different colours from different points of view, and there is no reason for regarding some of these as more really its colour than others. And we know that even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or to a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be unchanged. This colour is not something which is inherent in the table, but something depending upon the table and the spectator and the way the light falls on the table. When, in ordinary life, we speak of *the* colour of the table, we only mean the sort of colour which it will seem to have to a normal spectator from an ordinary point of view under usual conditions of light. But the other colours which appear under other conditions have just as good a right to be considered real; and therefore, to avoid favouritism, we are compelled to deny that, in itself, the table has any one particular colour.

(Adapted from Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*)

Questions:

1. Set out, in your own words, the argument put forward by Russell in the extract above.
[5 marks]

2. Discuss whether you think that our senses can provide us with genuine knowledge about the nature of reality.
[10 marks]

Section B:

Choose one question from this section. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

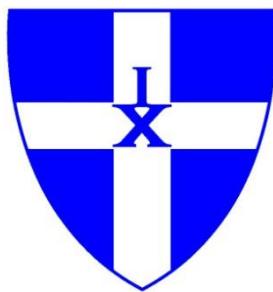
1. ‘It would not be possible for a God to be omniscient (all-knowing) without undermining free will.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim?
[15 marks]

2. ‘Artificial forms of intelligence, if sufficiently advanced, should be given the same rights as humans.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim?
[15 marks]

3. ‘Hedonism (the pursuit of pleasure) will never lead to true happiness.’ To what extent do you agree with this claim?
[15 marks]

End of Examination

THE KING'S SCHOOL, CANTERBURY



SIXTH FORM ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2014-2015

PHILOSOPHY

1 Hour

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Section A

Read the extract below and then answer the questions. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

The problem may be stated as follows. God's foreknowledge¹ appears to be incompatible with human freedom². It does not seem to be possible both that God should know what I shall do in the future, and that I shall do freely whatever it is that I shall do. For in order for me to be able to do an action freely, it is necessary that it should be within my power not to do that action. But if God knows what my action is going to be before I do it, then it does not seem to be within my power not to do it. For it cannot be the case both that God knows that I shall do such and such an action, and that I shall not do it. For what God knows must be true; and indeed what anyone knows must be true, since it is impossible to know what is false. But if what God knows is true, and God knows that I will do such and such an action then it must be true that I will do it, then it seems that nothing I can do myself can prevent it coming true... And if I cannot prevent myself doing a certain action, then that action cannot be free. Therefore, either God cannot know what I shall do tomorrow, or else what I shall do tomorrow will not be done freely.

Anthony Kenny, Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom.

Questions:

1. Set out Kenny's argument as fully and as logically as you can. Try not to miss any stages. You may use numbered bullet points.
[5 marks]
2. Identify one or more weaknesses in Kenny's argument and write an answer arguing that God's foreknowledge is **not** incompatible with human free will. You may not use bullet points.
[10 marks]

¹ Foreknowledge = knowing the future.

² Human freedom = free will.

Section B:

Choose one question from this section. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

1. ‘Our experience of reality is entirely subjective. Consequently, we cannot know whether anything we think we know is really true.’ To what extent do you agree with this argument?
[15 marks]

2. ‘We behave in a moral way because it benefits us to do so. This means that if we can gain more by breaking the law we should do so provided we can get away with it.’ To what extent do you agree with this argument?
[15 marks]

3. ‘I am not the same person I was fifteen years ago. Therefore, we should not punish criminals for things they did in the past.’ To what extent do you agree with this argument?
[15 marks]

End of Exam