

Markscheme

May 2025

Philosophy

Higher level

Paper 3

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How to use the Diploma Programme Philosophy markscheme

The assessment markbands constitute the formal tool for marking examination scripts, and in these assessment markbands examiners can see the skills being assessed in the examinations. The markschemes are designed to assist examiners in possible routes taken by students in terms of the content of their answers when demonstrating their skills of doing philosophy through their responses. The points listed are not compulsory points, and not necessarily the best possible points. They are a framework to help examiners contextualize the requirements of the question, and to facilitate the application of marks according to the assessment markbands listed on page 4.

It is important that examiners understand that the main idea of the course is to promote *doing* philosophy, and this involves activity and engagement throughout a two-year programme, as opposed to emphasizing the chance to display knowledge in a terminal set of examination papers. Even in the examinations, responses should not be assessed on how much students *know* as much as how they are able to use their knowledge in support of an argument, using the skills referred to in the various assessment markbands published in the subject guide, reflecting an engagement with philosophical activity throughout the course. As a tool intended to help examiners in assessing responses, the following points should be kept in mind when using a markscheme:

- The Diploma Programme Philosophy course is designed to encourage the skills of *doing* philosophy in the students. These skills can be accessed through reading the assessment markbands in the subject guide
- The markscheme does not intend to outline a model/correct answer
- The markscheme has an introductory paragraph which contextualizes the emphasis of the question being asked
- The bullet points below the paragraph are suggested possible points of development that should *not* be considered a prescriptive list but rather an indicative list where they might appear in the answer
- If there are names of philosophers and references to their work incorporated into the markscheme, this should help to give context for the examiners and does *not* reflect a requirement that such philosophers and references should appear in an answer: They are possible lines of development.
- Students can legitimately select from a wide range of ideas, arguments and concepts in service of the question they are answering, and it is possible that students will use material effectively that is *not* mentioned in the markscheme
- Examiners should be aware of the command terms for Philosophy as published in the Philosophy subject guide when assessing responses
- In markschemes for Paper 3, there are suggested pertinent points found in the text extract relating to philosophical activity. The markschemes include suggested questions that might stimulate analysis of those points. It is not intended that all possible points raised by the text are to be covered by the students. The markbands direct examiners to rewarding the responses accordingly
- The markscheme bullet points cannot and are not intended to predict how a student will relate his or her personal experience of the DP HL Philosophy course to the text extract, so the examiner must be aware that much of the response of the student will *not* be covered by material in the markscheme; but the student's response must relate to the text extract
- Responses for part A and part B should be assessed using the distinct assessment markbands.

Paper 3 part A markbands

This task requires students to answer a two-part question based on an unseen text. The text will be of a philosophical nature and in each examination session it will focus on either philosophy and technology or philosophy and the environment. Students must answer both part A and part B of the question. Part A requires students to explain a specified concept, issue or argument from the unseen text. It is expected that students will include explicit references to the text to support their explanation.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is not used, or is consistently used inappropriately. • The explanation is minimal. Points made are superficial and frequently unclear. There are few, if any, references to the unseen text.
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, but often inappropriately. • The explanation is basic and underdeveloped. Points are often imprecise or vague, and it is often unclear what the response is trying to convey. There are occasional references to the unseen text.
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, sometimes appropriately. • There is a satisfactory explanation, although this explanation lacks clarity and development in places. Relevant points are made but lack accuracy and detail. Specific references to the unseen text are made, although these are sometimes ineffective.
7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. Philosophical vocabulary is used, mostly appropriately. • The explanation is clear, although may be in need of further development. Points made are relevant and accurate but lack detail. There are specific references to the unseen text.
9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good understanding of the specified concept/issue/argument from the unseen text is demonstrated. There is accurate and precise use of philosophical vocabulary. • The explanation is clear and well developed. Points are relevant, accurate and detailed. There are specific and effective references to the unseen text.

Paper 3 part B markbands

Part B picks out a feature of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy highlighted by the unseen text, and asks students to engage in a critical discussion of how this feature impacts the usefulness of philosophy in helping us to engage with pressing issues. Students are required to respond to this question making reference to the text and also to their own experience of doing philosophy in the philosophy course.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There is limited reference to the student’s personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are few, if any, references to the unseen text. • The response is descriptive. Any analysis present is superficial or incoherent. Examples are not included or are irrelevant. There is little or no discussion of different points of view. Where a conclusion is included, this is very superficial or is not consistent with the rest of the response.
4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There is some reference to the student’s personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. References are made to the unseen text, but these are more implicit than explicit and/or lack relevance to the question. • The response contains limited analysis and overall is more descriptive than analytical. Examples are included but are ineffective. There is limited discussion of different points of view. A simplistic conclusion is included.
7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are specific references to the student’s personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. Specific references to the unseen text are made, although these sometimes lack relevance to the question or are more implicit than explicit. • The response contains analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Examples are included. There is some discussion of different points of view. A conclusion is included.
10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are explicit references to the student’s personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are specific references to the unseen text. • The response contains critical analysis, although this analysis lacks development. Examples are used to support the discussion. There is some discussion of different points of view. The response argues to a conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.
13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good understanding of the nature, function, meaning or methodology of philosophy is demonstrated. There are explicit references to the student’s personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity. There are specific and explicit references to the unseen text. • The response contains well-developed critical analysis. Relevant examples are used effectively to support the discussion. Different points of view are identified and evaluated. The response argues to a reasoned and clearly stated conclusion that is consistent with the arguments presented.

Unseen text – philosophy and contemporary issues

- (a) With reference to the text and your own knowledge, explain how new technologies could affect how human brains function and how accessing information may change. [10]**

This unseen text focuses on the impact of technologies on individuals and societies, which is one of the areas of prescribed content within the Technology topic. It should be noted that in this 10-mark part A question, students are only required to explain how new technologies could affect how human brains function and how accessing information may change; they are not required to engage in critical discussion and evaluation. This is signalled by the use of the “explain” command term.

Responses should include specific and explicit references to the text. For example, students could make reference to:

- The varying contexts in which personal technologies can be used
- The social implications of isolation and the need for humans to make personal contacts by using the new technologies
- The current impact of BCIs and the future potential of such technological advances
- The implications of brain hacking from a social or political perspective
- The wider implications of being able to read and interact directly with people’s brains.

Responses should also include explicit reference to students’ own wider knowledge of technology and its impact on individuals and society; specifically, how human brains function and how accessing information may change. For example, students might include reference to:

- The medical advances that might come about with greater understanding of the workings of the human brain and may result in new treatments or interventions
- The social and political controls that could come about through brain interference, including manipulation, oppression, and more sophisticated brainwashing or brain hacking
- Privacy issues may be discussed: privacy of actions, thoughts and decision making
- More complex communication between individuals and groups
- The implications of technology changing from an aid to development to technologies that control human development.

- (b) With reference to the text and your own experience of doing philosophy, discuss the claim that philosophy is interested in the development of humanity. [15]**

This question invites discussion of the claim that philosophy has some particular interest in the development of humanity and may raise issues with or investigate how technology could advance or hinder that development. Students are required to make explicit reference to both the unseen text and also to their own experience of doing philosophy in the DP philosophy course. It should be noted that in this 15-mark part B question, students are required to engage in critical discussion and evaluation, signalled by the use of the “discuss” command term.

Students may explore:

- How moral issues of privacy and freedom can be impacted by technology—the relationship between privacy and freedom and the idea of the greater good; extensive use of CCTV, predictive algorithms, profiling technologies, facial recognition, and anonymity online.
- The positive impact of improved life outcomes resulting from technology.
- The political issues that arise because of who is controlling the new technologies
- The philosophical issues that arise from attempts to improve the human condition, issues of how betterment and progress might be defined
- Whether human free will can be manipulated or altered if brains are invasively interfered with
- The existential issues that arise from observation, surveillance, and living our lives online
- Dewey’s views on technology and its impact on cultural development
- Pickering’s views on cybernetics and human relationships
- Feenberg’s views contrasted with Frankfurt school perspectives of the nature of the future, mind and body (brain), and issues for neurological sciences
- Putnam’s ‘Brain in the vat’ thought experiment and the consequences on scepticism
- The impact of BCIs on the development and evolution of one’s personality
- The social and psychological impact of AI on humans.

Responses should also include explicit references to the text. For example, students could make reference to:

- The potential changes in human interactions and relationships that BCIs might bring about: commentary on Schneider’s and Roemmele’s futuristic views might be made
- The commercialization of the varying ways BCIs can be developed
- The implications of varying ways of accessing brain function through BCIs
- The positive and negative effects of new technologies and the use or abuse of AI technologies.

Responses should also include explicit references to students’ own experience of doing philosophy. For example, students might reflect on:

- The implications of technology on human entertainment and education; interaction of social media and humans; manipulation of human intelligence; the degree to which all technological advances produce progress
 - Medical ethics issues: prolonging or curtailing life; AI in medical investigation and decision making;
 - Social and political inequalities brought about by the application of technologies, e.g. Marcuse’s views on the impact of technologies on inequality.
 - Ways in which technology can augment our reality, e.g. reconstructing the past, visiting distant places, interacting with people at a distance, enhancing leisure and entertainment activities, aiding in manufacturing, art and design
 - Descartes’ views on mind and body
 - The status of personal data and the consequences of agencies having access to one’s data and experiences
 - Students’ own experience of completing the Internal Assessment activity and the application of philosophy to non-philosophical aspects of the world
 - Whether people, both in the political and commercial environment, should consider wider philosophical implications before implementing technological changes: mention might be made of the development of nuclear weapons, chemical applications to increase crop yields, or the application of the wider use of AI.
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