

Philosophy A Level: Pre-Course Task

Specification:

We follow the AQA Philosophy specification. You can have a look at what is on the course here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/philosophy>

Task 1:

(all videos are on YouTube –

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNgK6MZucdYldNkMybYIHKR&index=2

Use the link or search for the name)

Watch the following video: What is Philosophy?: Crash Course Philosophy #1

a) Define the following words:

i) Philosophy ii) Metaphysics iii) Epistemology iv) Ethics v) Aesthetics

b) For each of the words in part (a) give an example of a philosophical question that falls under that category

c) What is the two-step method for thinking philosophically?

d) What is the marker of success in philosophy?

Task 2: Now watch: How to Argue – Philosophical Reasoning: Crash Course Philosophy #2

e) Write a paragraph answering the following: What is Plato's tripartite soul? Describe each of the three parts. Do you agree with these three categories? Why or why not? Do you agree with Plato's view of which part should be in control? What would a person be like if they let either of the other parts take control?

f) Explain Bertrand Russell's barber paradox – why does it lead to contradiction?

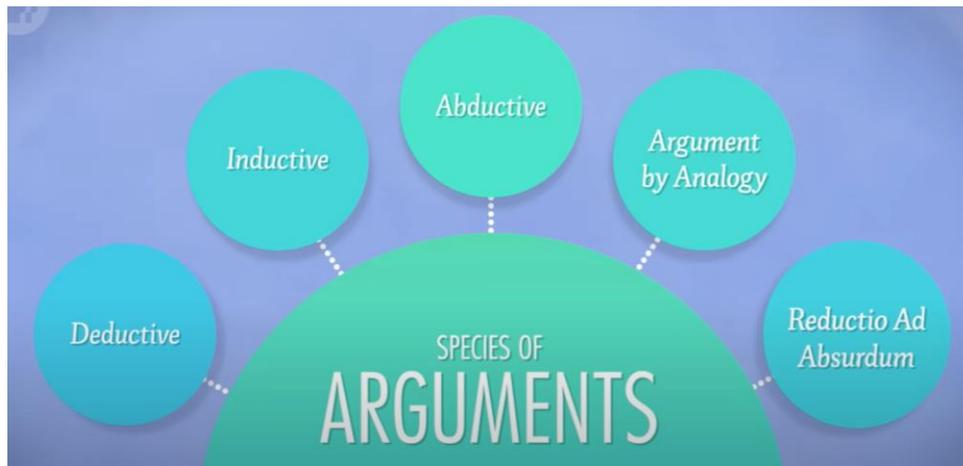
g) What is a deductive argument? Come up with an argument that is both true and valid.

h) Come up with an argument that is invalid, but with a true conclusion; and an argument that is valid but leads to a false conclusion.

Task 3: Finally, watch: How to Argue – Induction and Abduction: Crash Course Philosophy #3

- i) What is induction? Can you give an example of how you've used induction recently? What is the key difference between an inductive argument and a deductive one?
- j) Could you give an example of when you used induction and it didn't work?
- k) What is abduction? Can you come up with an example of an abductive argument?
- l) What is the Socratic method? What is the goal of a Socratic exchange?

You might want to keep watching this series – if you do then make a summary of the key points in any video that you watch. You might also want to research the other two forms of formal argument not explained in the video.



Task 4:

1) Choose a book, podcast, film or TV show. Write a paragraph on the philosophical ideas you encountered. The lists below are merely examples, philosophical concepts are found in many narratives and discussions.

Films and TV to Watch:

- Blade Runner (1982) – Can a machine/robot ever be considered human?
- The Matrix (1999) – Descartes' [Cartesian] Dualism – is there a difference between our body and our mind?
- The Truman Show (1998) – Plato's cave, is it possible that we experience a "shadow" of reality?
- Minority Report (2002) – Do we have free will or are our actions determined?

TV:

- The Good Place – What does it mean to be "good"? What is the right way to act?
- Rick and Morty– Existentialism/nihilism - can we find meaning in an apparently meaningless universe?
- Westworld – Explores the nature of consciousness and free will
- Mr Robot– Does our personal identity extend to the online world? Moral issues of good vs evil.

Books to Read:

Introductions to Philosophy:	Classic Philosophical works:	Fiction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “How to teach Philosophy to your dog” – Anthony McGowan - “A Little History of Philosophy” – Nigel Warburton - “Big Questions: Philosophy” – Simon Blackburn - “Modern Philosophy” – Roger Scruton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Meditations on First Philosophy” – Rene Descartes - “Problems of Philosophy” – Bertrand Russell - “The Last Days of Socrates” – Plato - “Nicomachean Ethics” – Aristotle - “The Republic” – Plato - “Meditations” – Marcus Aurelius - “Being and Nothingness” – Jean-Paul Sartre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The Stranger” – Albert Camus - “Sophie’s World” – Jostein Gaardner - “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” – Robert Pirsig - “Candide” – Voltaire

Podcasts:

- <https://www.philosophizethis.org/>
- <https://thepanpsycast.com/>
- <https://philosophybites.com/>
- <https://onbeing.org/series/podcast/>
- <https://historyofphilosophy.net/>

Websites for Further Research and Reading:

- [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](https://www.encyclopedia.com) <https://iep.utm.edu/>
- <https://philosophynow.org/>
- <https://www.reddit.com/r/philosophy>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/philosophy>
- <https://plato.stanford.edu>
- <https://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk>
- <https://philosophyalevel.com>

“The great virtue of philosophy is that it teaches not what to think, but how to think ... Philosophy is, in commercial jargon, the ultimate ‘transferable work skill’” (The Times).

We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.