

Philosophy Induction Tasks Summer 2023

Task 1:

Watch [What is Philosophy?: Crash Course Philosophy #1 - YouTube](#) (10 mins) and answer the following questions:

1. What is philosophy?
2. What sort of questions might philosophers ask? (Jot down some examples that you find interesting)
3. What are the 3 main branches of philosophy?
4. What is logic?
5. Give some examples of philosophy in our daily lives.
6. What is the two-step method?
7. What is success in philosophy? What is the goal?

Task 2:

There are two elements to studying philosophy – the history of ideas and critical thinking. This task relates to developing your understanding of this history of ideas. Most of the philosophy in the A-level course, can trace its origins back to the thinkers of Ancient Greece. Watch this 11-minute video [Philosophy: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle \(video\) | Khan Academy](#) and make notes on “the big 3” ancient Greek philosophers:

- Socrates
- Plato
- Aristotle

Task 3:

Philosophy involves reading some of the most thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial, things that have ever been written. Michael Russo in *Reading a Philosophical Text* provides some useful guidance for philosophy students:

“Because philosophical reading is by its very nature deep reading, in your attempt to derive some understanding of a philosophical text, you are probably going to have to put aside some of the lazy reading habits that you’ve developed over the years.”

He goes on to say:

1. You need enjoy the challenge – it’s hard, but very satisfying!
2. You need to slow down our reading and often read the same passage a few times
3. You need to use a dictionary to look up the “wacky words” that you don’t understand, because often philosophers use words that we don’t use today
4. As you read, you need to mark the text:
 - Underline/highlight important words and phrases
 - Use * to emphasize important sections
 - Make brief notes in the margin to sum up the main points
 - Put ? beside sections that are unclear or problematic
5. Don’t worry if you don’t understand it, or don’t understand every word. Often it becomes clearer the more you read, but if not we will go over it together. Try to get the general gist
6. It’s OK to ask for help – normally we will do this in class or you can request a 1:1 tutorial. For help over the summer holiday, just email me at pomfret@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Now, have a practice using Russo's 6 steps with this passage by John Stuart Mill:

No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead. Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think. Not that it is solely, or chiefly, to form great thinkers, that freedom of thinking is required. On the contrary, it is as much and even more indispensable to enable average human beings to attain the mental stature which they are capable of. There have been, and may again be, great individual thinkers in a general atmosphere of mental slavery. But there never has been, nor ever will be, in that atmosphere an intellectually active people. (p. 33)

Task 4:

After reading and reflecting on the work of great thinkers, we then need to **evaluate** (judge) their arguments. This involves considering the strengths and weaknesses of their argument and deciding whether their position is tenable (rational and supported by evidence) or untenable (weak and unsupported by evidence). Evaluate the views of Socrates and Mill by answering the following questions:

1. Mill infers there are barriers to people truly thinking for themselves. What do you think these are and how can we overcome them?
2. Socrates famously said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." To what extent do you agree?

Each answer should be no more than one side of A4.

Ethics Induction Tasks Summer 2023

Task 1:

Watch: [What is Ethics?](#) & make notes

Include and explain the following terms: ethics, morality, decision, ethical theory, ethikos, choice, philosophy, issues, practical/applied ethics.

Task 2:

Read Chapter 1 An introduction to Ethics by Robert Bowie. Add to your notes from Task 1 to explain “What is Ethics?” and complete the tasks on p3-5.

Task 3:

Reflect on the “Health and Wealth?” activity that you completed in the induction lesson with Mrs Crosley. This activity is about medical ethics (the moral principles that underpin medical treatment and medical care).

What issues did this activity raise? With limited resources and funding, how should the NHS decide who to prioritize for treatment? Write your answer (no more than 1 side of A4).

Task 4:

- a) Complete The M.O.R.A.L. questionnaire.
- b) Annotate your questionnaire to show which actions are:

Moral actions (caused by humans/moral agents, is intended and affects others in a harmful or beneficial way– NB: these can be either good acts or bad acts)?

Morally neutral actions (caused by animals/nature, or is accidental and doesn’t affect others at all)?

Task 5:

Choose 2 of the following questions and write your answers (no more than 1 side of A4 per question):

1. If I do a good thing for a bad reason does it matter?
2. Do ends justify means?
3. Do the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one?
4. Is what’s wrong for you necessarily wrong for me?
5. Is an action right or wrong depending on the situation?
6. Is being moral about following rules?
7. Should we use our heads or our hearts when deciding what’s moral?
8. Should we follow our conscience?