

Caterham School

Philosophy, Ethics & Theology Department



**Summer A Level Preparation
2022**

Planning on starting A level Philosophy, Ethics & Theology next year?

Philosophy, Ethics and Theology is a great subject to help you build a wide range of skills, including improving your skills as a writer, speaker and thinker.

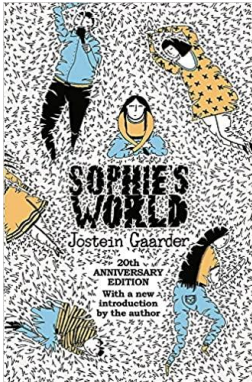
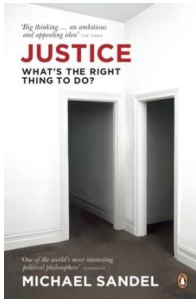
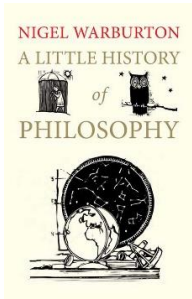
You can read, watch and listen to interesting ideas and think about the opinions expressed. How far do they match your own views? What might someone say if they had a very different opinion? Keep up your writing skills by putting your ideas down on paper – try, if you can, to handwrite, just to keep up the practice of handwriting so that your writing isn't completely illegible by the time you go back to school.

Reading good quality writing is the best way of improving your own writing. As you read a good writer, you will gain a better understanding of the meanings of new words and the ways in which carefully chosen words and punctuation can add real emphasis to someone's argument. Different writers express themselves in different ways, and by reading them you will develop your own 'voice'. Reading also helps with more basic skills such as spelling, because if you see a word written down often enough, you will know when it 'looks right' when you write the same word yourself.

Thinking skills can be developed if you try to take a questioning attitude to the things you watch, hear and read. Do you agree with what's being said? If you watch a film where people have different attitudes towards something, which do you agree with most, or least, and why?

Reading activities

You should read **one** of the following three books and write down some notes or thoughts about what you have read:

		
<p>Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder</p>	<p>Justice: What's the right thing to do? by Michael Sandel</p>	<p>A Little History of Philosophy by Nigel Warburton</p>
<p>This is a novel in which a young girl receives some mysterious postcards and is introduced to philosophical thinking and the history of philosophy.</p>	<p>This book invites readers on a journey of moral journey and shows how reasoned debate can illuminate our lives. Is it always wrong to lie? Is the free market fair? Should there be limits to personal freedom?</p>	<p>How do I know what's real? Is it ever right to lie? What does it mean to be free? Philosophy begins with questions about the nature of reality and how we should live. This engaging book introduces the great thinkers in Western philosophy and explores their most compelling ideas about the world and how best to live in it. In forty brief chapters, Nigel Warburton provides interesting and often quirky stories of the lives and deaths of thought-provoking philosophers - from the ancients, who debated freedom and the spirit, to Peter Singer, who asks the disquieting philosophical and ethical questions that haunt our own times.</p>

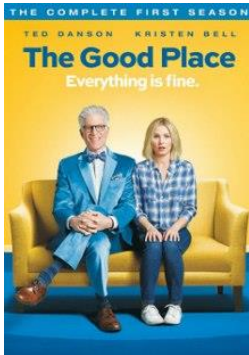
Book Choice:

Notes

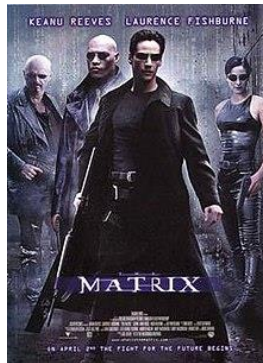
A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Some things to watch and think about. Pick **one of the following films to watch**

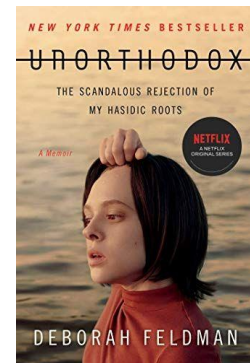
All kinds of films and series have philosophical and religious ideas in them, so follow your own interests! You could try these, or choose something else, but try and use them as a stimulus for thinking and writing, rather than just sitting in front of them:



The Good Place (Netflix) an introduction to ethics in the afterlife



The Matrix (Plato's cave analogy)



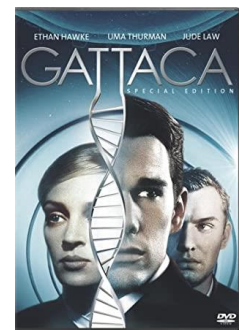
Unorthodox (Netflix) a drama about a young girl who leaves an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in New York



Twelve Angry Men (a film which explores justice, innocence and class)



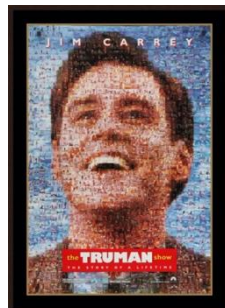
It's a wonderful life (what makes human life good?)



Gattaca (is there more to us than biology?)



Blade Runner (artificial intelligence & human nature)



The Truman Show (what is real?)



Never let me go (rights of the individual)

Philosophy & Ethics Workbook

Complete this introduction to Philosophy workbook

Philosophy

'the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment.'

(Cambridge Dictionary)

The word "philosophy" comes from the Ancient Greek (philosophia), which literally means "love of wisdom".

One important reason for studying philosophy is that it deals with fundamental questions about the meaning of our existence. Most of us at some time in our lives ask ourselves basic philosophical questions. Why are we here? Is there any proof that God exists? Is there any purpose to our lives? What makes anything right or wrong? Could we ever be justified in breaking the law? Could our lives be just a dream? Is mind different from body, or are we simply physical beings? How does science progress? What is art? And so on.

Most people who study philosophy believe that it is important that each of us examines such questions. Some even argue that an unexamined life is not worth living. To carry on a routine existence without ever examining the principles on which it is based may be like driving a car which has never been serviced. You may be justified in trusting the brakes, the steering, the engine, since they have always worked well enough up until now; but you may be completely unjustified in this trust: the brake pads may be faulty and fail you when you most need them. Similarly the principles on which your life is based may be entirely sound, but until you've examined them, you can't be certain of this.

(Philosophy: The Basics, fourth edition, Nigel Warbuton)

If we are going to begin examining life and studying some of the philosophical questions mentioned above, we are going to first have to get to grips with some key terminology. In the study of philosophy, there is no one single means to gaining knowledge or coming to conclusions.

Research these terms and fill in the table below. Each type of argument/reasoning needs an explanation and an example.

Type of argument/reasoning	Explanation	Example
Deductive		
Inductive		Every pigeon in my street is grey, therefore all pigeons are grey.
A priori		
A Posteriori		
Synthetic		
Analytic		
Valid		
Invalid	Premises are true, but the conclusion is false.	

Logical Fallacies

A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning or a false assumption that ultimately proves nothing. A logical fallacy in terms of philosophical reasoning therefore equates to a false or incorrect conclusion. In simple terms, it is a flaw in reasoning.

There are a vast number of different 'types' of logical fallacies. We will consider many in our study of philosophy of religion. However they are often prevalent in other disciplines too; namely in politics and the media.

Research these three fallacies and summarise in the table below:

Hasty Generalisation Fallacy	Slippery Slope Fallacy	Post Hoc Fallacy

What is wrong with the three following arguments?

1. You visit China and you see a white peacock. So you conclude that all Chinese peacocks are white.

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2. You catch a cold after getting wet in the rain. So you decide that getting wet can cause colds.

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3. If I let one student interrupt my lesson with a question, then I'll have to let others, and soon there won't be any time left for my lesson.

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Match up the below:

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|--|------------------------|
| • P happened just before Q. So P caused Q. | • Hasty Generalisation |
| • One/Some of the A's are like that. So all of the A's must be like that. | • Slippery Slope |
| • If A happens, then B will happen, then C, D...and eventually Z. We don't want Z to happen; so we don't want A to happen. | • Post Hoc |

Find an example of a logical fallacy that has been used in current media/advertising. Include it below, and explain why its reasoning is logically flawed.



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The word *ethics* is derived from the Greek *ethikos*, which relates to 'ethos' or character. We generally describe our own behaviour or conduct by using words such as 'good', 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', and these terms require close examination. How we decide which behaviour we consider to be 'good' or which actions are deemed to be the 'right' ones can be problematic. What do we mean when we 'giving to charity is good'? In the moral sense others and 'bad' if it does not? Or are there broken, and if so where do they come from?

Is it possible to come up with moral rules that can govern our ethical behaviour and guide us as to the correct way to behave? Are there any moral rules which should always be followed regardless of the consequences, or should we look at the consequences of our actions before deciding if it is right or wrong? These questions, among others, will have considerable bearing on the ethical issues to be studied in the coming weeks.



Try to describe in different words what 'good' means in each of these sentences.

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c) We gave it a good shot.

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d) They made us a good breakfast.

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Rules or Consequences?

For some, morality is a system of rules by which to live. Ethics then is concerned with discovering what these rules are and then prescribing them universally for everyone to live by – ‘You must never steal.’ ‘You must always tell the truth.’ etc. How we discover these rules may vary but if they are held to be binding then they are moral **absolutes** and must be followed in any situation. This is a **deontological** approach to ethics.

Alternatively, morality may be a set of goals rather than a system of rules. Instead of applying rules to different situations some claim that we should decide first on what we want to achieve, and then decide the best way to go about this. If you are starving to death and the only way to survive is to steal a loaf of bread, then this may be acceptable. It may be necessary to lie to prevent unhappiness, ‘No, you don’t look fat in that dress...’. Ethics then is about **consequences** – how best to achieve a desired goal of happiness, pleasure, or fulfilment. This is a **teleological** approach to ethics and is representative of utilitarianism which has happiness as its main goal when considering what is right and wrong.

The tension between deontological and teleological theories in ethics is central to all of the issues you will study later in the course. Are moral rules more important than consequences when making ethical decisions? Consider how this might apply to the issue of euthanasia for example. Is it always wrong to kill?

Task 2: Read the following examples and decide upon your response to the dilemmas:

1. The ruthless dictator

After a fair and legal election, a new president is elected in a central African state. After a few months he reveals himself to be a ruthless and mentally unbalanced tyrant, merciless in liquidating all who oppose him. You have the power to assassinate him. Should you?

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2. The thief

Your friend says, 'I have something important to tell you, but you must keep it secret'. You promise you will. Your friend then confesses that it was he who stole the money from the classroom. 'But this is terrible', you say. 'David has already been accused of this and is being expelled! You must tell the headmaster at once!' Your friend refuses. What should you do?

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3. The drowning men

Walking on day near the river, you hear frantic cries for help. Two men are struggling in the water and clearly drowning. With dismay you see that one is your father, whom you love dearly, and the other a famous scientist, whom the newspapers report is close to a cure for cancer.

Whom should you save?

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James

Wilson 'Real World Ethics' [20 minutes]

https://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/3/5/3/353a0393c3b08eed/James_Wilson_on_Real_World_Ethics.mp3?c_id=52696484&cs_id=52696484&expiration=1585134153&hwt=14fbe132999e47a16eadc71efd13f114

If the link doesn't work, google 'Philosophy Bites' and it is on the main home page.

Task 3: Listen to the podcast which deals with questions about what are the best ways to do practical ethics and work out how to behave? As you listen, write a list of possible answers to these questions:

- a) What are thought experiments? (Give an example). What is Wilson's view on the use of thought experiments?

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- b) What is meant by real world ethics?

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- c) How are real world problems different from thought experiments?

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d) Why does context matter when thinking about ethical issues (according to Wilson)?

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e) Aside from thought experiments, what other techniques or tools could be used to help make ethical decisions?

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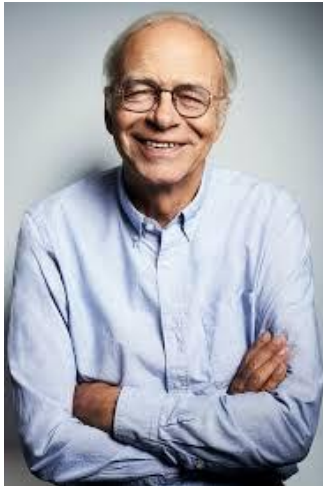
f) What does Wilson think about the use of principles in ethics? (strengths/weaknesses)

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Task 4: Peter Singer- the most dangerous man alive?

What are his key ideas?

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Why is he so controversial?

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Links to articles:

No-platformed in New Zealand February 2020:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/19/peter-singer-event-cancelled-in-new-zealand-after-outcry-over-disability-stance>

The most dangerous man in the world (1999)

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/1999/nov/06/weekend.kevintoolis>

Stretch and Challenge- pick one of the following additional videos/podcasts about Peter Singer's ethics and make some notes, we will have a discussion about your research in the lesson on Thursday.

Ted Talk: The why and how of effective altruism

https://www.ted.com/talks/peter_singer_the_why_and_how_of_effective_altruism/discussion

Crash Course Philosophy: Non-human animals

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3-BX-jN_Ac

Panpsycast Podcasts:

Episode 34 The Peter Singer Interview Part I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTfFmBCVXIw>

Part II

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBDnK4UJvT4>