



## Higher Philosophy

<b>Course code:</b>	C854 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X854 76
<b>SCQF:</b>	level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Valid from:</b>	session 2018–19

This document provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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This edition: September 2018 (version 2.0)

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# Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for candidates to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper 1	60	2 hours and 15 minutes
Component 2: question paper 2	50	1 hour and 45 minutes

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the National 5 Philosophy course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ further study, employment and/or training in a number of areas including the media, politics, social policy, health professions and law</li></ul>

## Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

## Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide time for learning, focus on skills and applying learning, and provide scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

This course builds on candidates' existing knowledge and curiosity about philosophy. Candidates explore questions related to knowledge and morality and they become more aware of the complexity of everyday and philosophical arguments. The course encourages candidates to develop their own ideas and viewpoints and teaches them to analyse and evaluate the philosophical positions of others.

Studying philosophy develops candidates' ability to think logically, to evaluate arguments critically, and to challenge their own ideas and those of other people. Candidates study central philosophical principles, concepts, problems, texts and key figures.

## Purpose and aims

The course develops candidates' reasoning skills by focusing on complex abstract concepts and philosophical problems.

Candidates learn to challenge assumptions and to apply their knowledge and understanding of different positions and theories in philosophy. They develop critical thinking and analytical and evaluative skills, which are important in education and employment.

The broad aims of the course are to develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of some key philosophical concepts and questions concerning arguments in action, epistemology and moral philosophy
- ◆ critical thinking, analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to philosophy
- ◆ the ability to engage with abstract ideas
- ◆ the ability to develop and express reasoned arguments and conclusions
- ◆ skills of analysis, evaluation and expressing a coherent line of argument

## Who is this course for?

The course is suitable for all candidates with the appropriate qualifications who have an interest in exploring philosophy.

For candidates progressing from National 5 Philosophy, the course provides opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of philosophy.

# Course content

The course has three areas of study.

**Arguments in action** develops candidates' ability to analyse and evaluate arguments. Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical techniques and errors in reasoning.

**Knowledge and doubt** develops candidates' ability to explain, analyse and evaluate two theories of knowledge.

**Moral philosophy** develops candidates' ability to explain, analyse and evaluate two moral theories.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

### Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ developing knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical fallacies, philosophical techniques, and other factors relevant to evaluating arguments
- ◆ developing knowledge and understanding of key theories of knowledge
- ◆ developing knowledge and understanding of key moral philosophical theories
- ◆ understanding and explaining the implications and consequences of arguments and theories
- ◆ analysing and evaluating arguments, theories of knowledge and moral theories
- ◆ expressing reasoned views and a coherent line of argument

### Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

This section provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment:

The question papers sample from all three areas of study. Details of the areas sampled in each question paper are in the 'Course assessment structure' section of this document.

## Arguments in action

Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of arguments by:

- ◆ distinguishing statements from questions, commands, exclamations and arguments
- ◆ distinguishing arguments from other types of writing (for example, descriptions, explanations and summaries)
- ◆ identifying and describing the components of an argument:
  - premises/reasons and conclusions
  - inference indicators for premises and conclusions
- ◆ describing what makes the premises in an argument acceptable, that is, the premise:
  - is known *a priori* to be true
  - is known to be true or can be accepted as true (teachers and lecturers must make candidates aware that while a premise may be considered true and therefore acceptable, aspects of the premise, such as gratuitous references to a person's race, may render it unacceptable in another sense)
  - is a matter of common knowledge
  - is plausible, that is, it is reasonable to take it to be true
  - is unambiguous
  - appeals to an appropriate authority
  - properly represents the facts pertaining to the conclusion
- ◆ describing what makes the premises in an argument relevant to the conclusion, that is, the premise:
  - provides some justification to support the conclusion
  - gives support to another relevant premise
  - contains an appropriate analogy
  - attacks the claim rather than the person putting forward the claim
- ◆ describing what makes the premises in an argument sufficient to draw the conclusion, that is, the premises
  - are acceptable and relevant
  - are enough to engender a well-founded confidence in the conclusion

Candidates analyse arguments by:

- ◆ presenting an argument in standard form
- ◆ recognising, explaining and constructing diagrams that represent:
  - linked arguments, that is, where the premises are dependent
  - convergent arguments, that is, where the premises give independent support to the conclusion
  - serial arguments, that is, where there is at least one intermediate conclusion
- ◆ identifying whether an argument is using inductive or deductive reasoning
- ◆ identifying different methods of argumentation:
  - analogical arguments, including distinguishing analogical arguments from analogical explanations
  - the use of counter-examples to show that a universal statement is false

Candidates evaluate arguments by identifying, explaining and giving examples of the following issues. Although issues are grouped under the headings of acceptability, relevance and sufficiency, there may be occasions when an issue might be legitimately discussed in relation to a different heading.

**Issues primarily relating to acceptability:**

- ◆ two types of ambiguity: lexical ambiguity (equivocation) and syntactic ambiguity (amphiboly)
- ◆ appropriate appeals to authority, including recognising the criteria that might be used to distinguish legitimate appeals to authority from fallacious appeals to authority
- ◆ slippery slopes, including:
  - what is meant by a 'slippery slope'
  - what is meant by a 'slippery slope argument'
  - the main features of slippery slope arguments
  - what would distinguish an admissible slippery slope argument from a fallacious slippery slope argument
- ◆ confirmation bias in the construction and evaluation of arguments, that is, the tendency to notice or seek out information that confirms existing opinions and to avoid or reject information that suggests our opinions are wrong

**Issues primarily relating to relevance:**

- ◆ *ad hominem*s, including *ad hominem* abusive, *ad hominem* circumstantial and *ad hominem tu quoque*, and discussion of when an 'attack on the person' is not fallacious
- ◆ fallacious appeals to emotion, including recognising the criteria that might be used to distinguish legitimate appeals to emotion from fallacious appeals to emotion
- ◆ inappropriate, poor analogies: explaining how pertinent differences between the things used in the analogy serve to undermine the analogical reasoning

### Issues primarily relating to sufficiency:

- ◆ deductive validity, that is, an argument is valid when it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false
- ◆ inductive strength, including being aware that, unlike deductive validity, inductive strength is a matter of degree and, however strong the argument, the conclusion is never guaranteed in the same way that it is with deductive reasoning
- ◆ conductive strength, including being aware that in a conductive argument, although the premises are assessed individually with regard to acceptability and relevance, they are considered together with regard to sufficiency and that the addition of premises strengthens an argument and the removal of premises weakens an argument
- ◆ *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, including being able to discuss whether it is ever appropriate to take temporal order as a basis for having increased confidence in a causal link
- ◆ formal fallacies, including being able to explain the distinction between formal and informal fallacies:
  - denying the antecedent, that is, any argument that has the form:  
If P, then Q  
Not P.  
Therefore, not Q  
that is, the error of mistaking a sufficient condition for a necessary condition
  - affirming the consequent, that is, any argument that has the form:  
If P, then Q  
Q.  
Therefore, P  
that is, the error of mistaking a necessary condition for a sufficient condition

In all 'arguments in action' cases, teachers and lecturers must make candidates aware of the distinction between artificial examples designed to illustrate a topic and realistic examples that might genuinely affect an argument. For example, an instance of ambiguity may effectively illustrate syntactic ambiguity and may also be used for comic effect, but the context or common sense might mean that no real confusion will occur.

## Knowledge and doubt

This area of study is based on two philosophical texts. Candidates gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the following rationalist and empiricist works: René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Candidates analyse the arguments of Descartes and Hume. They evaluate the arguments by commenting on their strengths and weaknesses. There are details of the recommended editions of texts in the 'Further information' section.

The following information clarifies those aspects of the texts that need to be studied in detail:

### Descartes' rationalism: *Meditations on First Philosophy*

#### Meditation 1

**The method of doubt:** Descartes' presentation of his philosophy through the voice of first-person narrator, a meditator, who is re-evaluating his beliefs and starting again right from the foundations.

The method of doubt as a way of freeing us from pre-conceived opinions, leading the mind away from the senses and providing a foundation for knowledge that is immune to further doubts.

**The unreliability of the senses:** the observation that the senses sometimes deceive and the claim that it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once. The recognition that some information from the senses is harder to doubt.

**The dream argument:** the claim that that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep, thus bringing into doubt information gained from an apparently reliable use of the senses. Descartes recognises that, even if everything is a dream, some simple and universal things are still real as are the truths of mathematics.

**The deceiving God argument:** the suggestion that an omnipotent God might have arranged things such that everything about the external world is an illusion and that the truths of mathematics are not what they seem to be; the dismissal of the objection that a supremely good God wouldn't allow the meditator to be deceived in such a way; and the claim that the non-existence of God would make it even more likely that he is deceived all of the time.

The conclusion that there is not one of his former beliefs about which a doubt may not be raised.

**The malicious demon hypothesis:** despite having arrived at a conclusion that is 'well thought-out', his habitual opinions keep returning. To counter the 'weight of pre-conceived opinion' and the 'distorting influence of habit', he proposes 'to deceive' himself by pretending for a while that his previous beliefs are not just dubitable but actually false. To achieve this, he suggests the possible existence of a malicious demon that has employed all its energies in order to deceive him.

## **The foundation of knowledge**

### **Meditation 2**

**The Cogito:** this is the search for certainty, particularly the search for certainty about something existing. Even if Descartes believes that 'there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies', it does not follow that he does not exist, for if he convinced himself of something, then he certainly existed. Even the malicious demon cannot deceive him on that for if he is being deceived he undoubtedly exists. His conclusion that 'this proposition, I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind'.

### **Meditation 3**

**Clear and distinct perception:** his certainty that he is a thinking thing. Clear and distinct perception as a requirement for certainty. The establishment of a general rule that 'whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true'.

**The Trademark argument:** importance of proving that God must exist: 'I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver. For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else.' The fact that I have an idea of God is enough to show that there must be a God — 'it must be concluded that the mere fact that I exist and have within me an idea of a most perfect being, that is, God, provides a very clear proof that God indeed exists.'

The causal adequacy principle: 'there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause ... It follows from this both that something cannot arise from nothing, and also that what is more perfect — that is, contains in itself more reality — cannot arise from what is less perfect.'

Depends on there being degrees of reality — an infinite substance has more reality than a finite substance which in turn has more reality than a mode.

Depends on degrees of objective reality having the same degrees of reality as formal reality — 'although this cause does not transfer any of its actual or formal reality to my idea, it should not on that account be supposed that it must be less real.'

Descartes' examples of stones and heat.

According to Descartes, the idea of God (an infinite substance) cannot have come from me (a finite substance); it was not acquired through the senses or invented by me and therefore must be innate. His conclusion that God 'cannot be a deceiver, since it is manifest by the natural light that all fraud and deception depend on some defect'.

## Hume's empiricism: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

### Section II — the origin of ideas

**Perceptions — impressions and ideas:** the 'perceptions of the mind' are divided into two classes, based on their different degrees of 'force and liveliness'. The examples of heat, anger and love. Impressions are associated with our sensations, both outward and inward; ideas are associated with memory and imagination and the activity of reflecting on our impressions.

**Simple and complex ideas:** although we seem to be able to imagine things we have never experienced, this is because of our ability to combine (compound), transpose, enlarge (augment) and shrink (diminish) the materials provided to us by the senses and experience. Hume's examples of the golden mountain and the virtuous horse.

**The copy principle:** all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones. Complex thoughts are made up of simple ideas, copied from earlier feelings or sensations. Hume's two arguments to support the copy principle:

- 1 the idea of God
- 2 when the relevant impression has been denied through malfunctioning senses or the absence of relevant experiences or absence due to species limitations

**The missing shade of blue:** presented as a counter-example to the copy principle. Hume's claim and 'proof' that each shade produces a distinct idea. Hume's claim that, if all the shades of blue, for instance, were arranged in a particular way, it would be possible for someone to be aware of a missing shade and to 'fill the blank from his own imagination, calling up in his mind the idea of that particular shade, even though it has never been conveyed to him by his senses'. Hume's claim that this counter-example is insufficient reason to amend the general principle behind the copy principle.

### Section IV — sceptical doubts concerning the operations of the understanding

#### Section IV Part 1 — how we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect

The distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact. The claim that all reasonings about matters of fact are based on the relation of cause and effect. Hume's examples of believing a friend to be in France, finding a watch on a desert island and hearing the sounds of someone speaking rationally in the dark.

The claim that knowledge about causes is never known *a priori* but always comes from our experience of finding that particular objects are constantly associated with one other. Hume's example of Adam. Examples of where people would intuitively agree and disagree with the claim and the assertion that the principle that causes and effects cannot be discovered by reason also applies in the less obvious cases. Hume's examples of billiard balls and stones to support the claim that an effect cannot be determined *a priori*.

The claim that even after the effect has been suggested the necessity of it being that particular effect cannot be determined *a priori*.

Hume's rejection of science and applied mathematics as possible counter-examples to his position.

## **Section IV Part 2 — the foundation of conclusions from experience**

Hume's claim that 'even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, the conclusions we draw from that experience are not based on reasoning or on any process of the understanding'. The examples of bread and coal to support the claim that we do not use reason to generalise from past experience. Hume's argument that such generalisation cannot be based on reasoning; namely, reasoning is of two kinds, that concerning relations of ideas and that concerning matters of fact; it cannot be based on the former for there is no contradiction in assuming things might behave differently and it cannot be based on the latter for that would result in a circular argument. 'All inferences from experience are based on the assumption that the future will resemble the past ... so no arguments from experience can support this resemblance of the past to the future, because all such arguments are based on the assumption of that resemblance.'

The fact that such inferences are not based on reason is supported by the fact that those with limited reasoning ability are still able to draw such inferences.

## **Moral philosophy**

Candidates demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics and their application to given situations or issues, and respond to quotations. Candidates analyse and evaluate the following:

### **Classical utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory**

- ◆ the greatest happiness principle
- ◆ Jeremy Bentham's hedonic calculus and **all** its component parts
- ◆ John Stuart Mill's higher and lower pleasures
- ◆ Mill's competent judges
- ◆ the distinction between act and rule utilitarianism
- ◆ the adequacy of classical utilitarianism as a moral theory

### **Immanuel Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory**

- ◆ the sovereignty of reason
- ◆ the good will
- ◆ duty versus inclination
- ◆ the categorical imperative: formulations
- ◆ universalisability: 'Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.'
- ◆ human beings as ends in themselves, never only as means to an end: 'So act as to treat humanity, both in your own person, and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means.'

- ◆ the categorical imperative:
  - the process of universalising the maxim
  - distinction between treating someone as ‘an end’ and treating someone as ‘a means only’
  - contradiction in conception and contradiction in the will
  - distinction between perfect duties and imperfect duties
- ◆ the adequacy of Kantian ethics as a moral theory

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level, and can be found on the SCQF website.

## **Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work**

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

### **1 Literacy**

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing
- 1.3 Listening and talking

### **5 Thinking skills**

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Teachers and lecturers must build these skills into the course at an appropriate level, where there are suitable opportunities.

# Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

- ◆ draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course. This is assessed by two question papers. There is broad parity between the assessment of skills and the assessment of knowledge and understanding across both question papers.
- ◆ demonstrate breadth and application of skills, knowledge and understanding in the question papers. The question papers sample knowledge and understanding from across the course and also require candidates to demonstrate the skills of analysis and evaluation.

## Course assessment structure: question papers

The question papers give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate:

- ◆ analysing and evaluating arguments, theories of knowledge and moral theories
- ◆ understanding and explaining the implications and consequences of arguments and theories
- ◆ expressing reasoned views and a coherent line of argument
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical fallacies, methods of reasoning and other factors relevant to evaluating arguments
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of key theories of knowledge
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of key moral philosophical theories

### Question paper 1

**60 marks**

Question paper 1 has two sections that sample from the following two areas of study: knowledge and doubt; moral philosophy.

The questions in each section relate to the relevant content listed in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section.

### **Section 1: knowledge and doubt — 30 marks**

Candidates produce an essay on Descartes or Hume. Candidates do not have a choice of question in this section.

### **Section 2: moral philosophy — 30 marks**

Candidates produce an essay in which they apply a moral theory to a given situation, or respond to a quotation.

Candidates have a choice of two questions in this section.

This question paper has 60 marks out of a total of 110 marks for the course assessment.

### **Setting, conducting and marking question paper 1**

This question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA.

Candidates have 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete this question paper.

## **Question paper 2**

**50 marks**

Question paper 2 has three sections. Each section samples from one of the three areas of study. The questions in each section relate to the content listed in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section.

### **Section 1: arguments in action — 30 marks**

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks.

### **Section 2: knowledge and doubt — 10 marks**

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks, and focus on the fine detail of the prescribed texts.

### **Section 3: moral philosophy — 10 marks**

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks, and focus on the fine detail of this area of study.

This question paper has 50 marks out of a total of 110 marks for the course assessment.

### **Setting, conducting and marking question paper 2**

This question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA.

Candidates have 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete this question paper.

Specimen question papers for Higher courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

## **Grading**

Candidates' overall grades are determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

### **Grade description for C**

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

### **Grade description for A**

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

# Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

# Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [Higher Philosophy subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

The SCQF framework, level descriptors and handbook are available on the SCQF website.

Knowledge and doubt — recommended editions:

- ◆ John Cottingham (ed), *René Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy*. With Selections from the Objections and Replies, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2017
- ◆ Hume, D. and Bennett, J. (2017). *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Available at: [www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1748.pdf](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1748.pdf)

# Appendix 1: course support notes

## Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. You should read these in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper (paper 1 and paper 2).

## Approaches to learning and teaching

The Higher Philosophy course has three areas of study:

- ◆ arguments in action
- ◆ knowledge and doubt
- ◆ moral philosophy

There is no recommended teaching order for this course — the three areas of study can be covered in any order.

# Preparing for course assessment

Each course has additional time built in that teachers and lecturers can use at their discretion to help candidates to prepare for course assessment.

The following table provides information that teachers and lecturers could use to support the development of skills, knowledge and understanding required for the Higher Philosophy course assessment. Please read this in conjunction with the course specification and the specimen question paper.

<b>Question papers</b>	
Structure of the question papers	The basic structure of the two papers is detailed in the course specification and illustrated in the specimen question paper. Examples of typical questions are also given in this document. The way in which questions are asked may vary. For example, some questions are designed to test candidates' understanding of argument diagrams, not just their ability to answer a particular style of question.
Marking the essays	The essays are marked holistically and given a mark out of 30. To get the higher marks, candidates must engage in discussion and evaluation and not give a purely descriptive response.
Choice of essay titles in paper 1	There is no choice in the knowledge and doubt section. There is a choice in the moral philosophy section: candidates choose from two types of essay — they either produce an essay in which they apply a moral theory to a given situation, or respond to a quotation in the context of a moral theory. Sometimes the essays are on Kant. Sometimes the essays are on utilitarianism.
Marking questions in paper 2	Candidates gain 1 mark for each relevant substantive point up to the total number of marks available for that question. The number of marks available is an indication of how much candidates should write in their responses.
<b>Arguments in action</b>	
Using terms such as 'acceptable', 'relevant' and 'sufficient' when answering questions about fallacies	Where a question requires candidates to use these terms, the wording of the question makes that clear. If it asks them to say what is wrong with a particular argument, it may be appropriate to use these terms, in which case candidates must explain why it is an issue of acceptability, relevance or sufficiency. If the question asks candidates to identify a particular fallacy, there is no requirement to use these terms: in this case, candidates only have to identify the particular fallacy.

Style of argument diagram	If a question requires candidates to produce an argument diagram, the diagram can either have numbers and a key, or have the appropriate statements written in boxes.
Information for teaching argument diagrams	SQA published details of acceptable argument diagrams in 2015. This information appears in the marking instructions for all question papers, in the specimen question paper and in this document. Please see Appendix 3 for a list of helpful textbooks.
<b>Knowledge and doubt</b>	
Requirement to study both Descartes and Hume	Both texts are part of the mandatory content and candidates should be prepared to answer questions on both philosophers every year.
Candidates' knowledge of the Descartes and Hume primary texts	Candidates should have an in-depth knowledge of the specified portions of the texts. They should know the arguments and illustrations that Descartes and Hume use, understand how the arguments unfold and why they are presented in the way that they are. Teachers and lecturers should read and discuss the texts with their candidates and ensure that candidates are able to make appropriate analytical and evaluative observations. It is not enough to rely on secondary sources, or for the content to be taught in a thematic way with just occasional references to the texts.
The text extracts	The relevant extracts are available in Appendix 5 of this document. These are the versions of the texts used if a quotation is included in a question. The Hume version uses updated language in order to make it more accessible to Higher candidates. The original Hume version is also included. The Descartes and Hume extracts have been annotated with additional headings; candidates should understand that these annotations and headings are not part of the original text.
Marks for 'scene-setting' in knowledge and doubt essay — for example an essay on the Trademark argument	An essay about the Trademark argument should focus on the Trademark argument. Candidates should demonstrate their understanding of the area of the text referred to in the essay question. They do not need to describe the background to the question or summarise other areas of the text. A typical 'A' grade essay limits scene-setting to a few brief comments.

<p>Specific criticisms of the ideas and arguments of Descartes and Hume</p>	<p>The mandatory content does not list any specific criticisms of the ideas and arguments of Descartes and Hume. However, candidates are expected to analyse and evaluate all the listed aspects of the ideas and arguments of Descartes and Hume. Candidates should be able to discuss how damaging these criticisms are to the ideas and arguments of Descartes and Hume.</p>
<p>Going beyond the prescribed texts</p>	<p>Candidates should have an in-depth knowledge of the prescribed text extracts and can only be asked questions on these extracts. However, being able to discuss what is said in these extracts sometimes requires knowledge drawn from elsewhere. Teachers and lecturers can advise candidates where to find relevant information. For example, teachers and lecturers may point out that the version of the <i>Cogito</i> in the <i>Meditations</i> differs from versions found elsewhere, and discuss the extent to which this difference is relevant.</p> <p>Candidates should know what is meant by clear and distinct ideas. Teachers and lecturers can best explain this by drawing on Descartes' explanation in the <i>Principles</i>.</p> <p>Similarly, candidates should know what Hume means by impressions and ideas. Teachers and lecturers can draw on what Hume says in the <i>Treatise</i> when explaining these concepts.</p> <p>Extracts from Descartes' <i>Discourse</i> and <i>Principles</i> and Hume's <i>Treatise</i> are in Appendix 5 of this document.</p>
<p><b>Moral philosophy</b></p>	
<p>The scenario question</p>	<p>Scenarios are usually devised to highlight particular issues or problems with a theory. With utilitarianism, this might be the difficulty of predicting consequences, or the extent to which the theory accommodates concern for family and other relationships.</p> <p>With Kantian ethics, it might be conflicting duties, or the difficulty in identifying the maxim. Candidates should discuss the theory in the light of the scenario rather than trying to resolve the dilemma the scenario presents. With Kantian ethics, the scenario will not be obviously resolvable using the principles of Kantian ethics. With a utilitarianism question, the scenario will probably not contain enough background information to be certain of the final decision.</p>

	<p>The scenario is a way of guiding candidates on what aspects of the theory to discuss. If an aspect of the theory is not relevant to the scenario, candidates do not need to describe or discuss that aspect of the theory. For example, if higher and lower pleasures are not relevant to a utilitarianism scenario, candidates should not mention them.</p>
Requirement to study the moral philosophy of Bentham, Mill and Kant	<p>The moral philosophy of Bentham, Mill and Kant is part of the mandatory content and candidates should be prepared to answer questions on all three philosophers every year.</p>
Prescribed text extracts for moral philosophy	<p>There are no prescribed text extracts for moral philosophy. However, it would be beneficial for teachers to look at extracts from the relevant texts with their candidates. Seeing what Bentham writes on the hedonic calculus, or what Mill writes on higher and lower pleasures, can deepen candidates' understanding of these topics and help them avoid some of the more common misunderstandings. Relevant text extracts from Bentham, Mill and Kant are in Appendix 5.</p>
Act and rule utilitarianism and Bentham and Mill	<p>Candidates should be aware that the distinction between act and rule utilitarianism was not made until the middle of the 20th century and so it may be anachronistic to apply these terms to Bentham and Mill. While it may be uncontroversial to retrospectively categorise Bentham as an act utilitarian, there is considerable academic debate as to whether it is appropriate to call Mill a rule utilitarian. This debate is involved and goes beyond the requirements of this course.</p> <p>When these terms have been applied to Bentham and Mill it has often led to candidate confusion. For example, it has often resulted in candidates claiming that Bentham was not interested in rules, which is obviously false in that he was clearly interested in reforming legislation, and has often led candidates to think that Mill's higher and lower pleasures have something to do with rule utilitarianism. For these reasons the advice is to not relate these terms to Bentham and Mill.</p> <p>Given the academic debate, candidates are not rewarded or penalised for simply saying that Mill was a rule utilitarian.</p>

<p>Higher and lower pleasures and rule utilitarianism</p>	<p>Some candidates think that Mill's concept of higher and lower pleasures is part of rule utilitarianism. This is not the case. It is essential that candidates understand that there is no connection between Mill's higher and lower pleasures and/or competent judges and rule utilitarianism. Reading Mill's original extract helps candidates to appreciate that Mill was addressing the accusation that utilitarianism was simply encouraging people to pander to their 'animal appetites', and that the pursuit of pleasure and happiness was 'a doctrine worthy only of swine'.</p>
<p>Knowing the seven criteria of the hedonic calculus and the two main formulations of the categorical imperative</p>	<p>Candidates may be asked to demonstrate that they have this basic knowledge. However, they must also be able to demonstrate that they can go beyond mere memorisation to analyse, explain and discuss these concepts.</p>
<p>Specific criticisms of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics</p>	<p>The course specification does not list any specific criticisms of these two approaches to ethics. However, candidates should be able to analyse and evaluate all the listed aspects of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics, and be able to discuss how damaging these criticisms are to the respective theories.</p>

# Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Teachers and lecturers should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Some examples of potential opportunities to practise or improve these skills are provided in the following table.

Skills	Examples of opportunities to develop these skills within philosophy
<b>1 Literacy</b>	
1.1 Reading	<p>Reading in philosophy involves the ability to understand and interpret ideas and information presented in sources, for a purpose and within a context. It includes handling information to make reasoned and informed decisions.</p> <p>Candidates encounter a range of written sources during the course. This may include engagement with primary and secondary philosophical texts. This develops their ability to read and comprehend texts and to read between the lines to identify hidden assumptions.</p> <p>These sources could include philosophers' primary texts, websites, textbooks, class notes and newspapers, which could be used to identify a range of arguments relating to a variety of issues.</p>
1.2 Writing	<p>Writing in philosophy involves the ability to communicate ideas and information, to meet a purpose and within a context. Teachers and lecturers should give candidates the opportunity to respond in written form to examples and problems they encounter during the course.</p> <p>Teachers and lecturers should emphasise the importance in philosophy of communicating clearly in writing, and the need for precise use of language. The careful study of arguments should help instil an awareness of the importance and impact of the written word.</p>

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Examples of opportunities to develop these skills within philosophy</b>
1.3 Listening and talking	Listening in philosophy involves the ability to understand and interpret ideas, opinions and information presented orally for a purpose and within a context, drawing on non-verbal communication as appropriate. Talking means the ability to communicate ideas and information for a purpose and within a context.
<b>5 Thinking skills</b>	
5.3 Applying	Applying in philosophy involves the ability to use existing information to solve a problem in a different context, and to plan, organise and complete a task. Teachers and lecturers should give candidates the opportunity to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have developed to novel examples and scenarios. This should become routine as candidates acquire philosophical techniques and a technical vocabulary. They practise their application to problems and arguments that have either been supplied for them, or that they have identified themselves.
5.4 Analysing and evaluating	<p>Analysing and evaluating in philosophy involve the ability to identify and weigh up the features of a situation, argument, question, claim or issue and to come to an appropriate conclusion. This includes reviewing and considering any potential solutions. The ability to analyse and evaluate philosophical positions, theories and arguments is the chief objective of the areas of study.</p> <p>In the arguments in action area of study, teachers and lecturers should give candidates opportunities to assess real-world arguments using the concepts they have learned. In the other two areas of study, candidates explore analysis and evaluation of epistemological and moral philosophers' claims, both by learning about well-known criticisms of these and by considering them for themselves.</p>

# Appendix 2: types of questions

## Question paper 1: typical questions

Question paper 1 has two sections that sample from two areas of study: knowledge and doubt; moral philosophy.

### Section 1: knowledge and doubt — 30 marks

Candidates produce an essay on Descartes or Hume. Candidates do not have a choice of question in this section.

### Section 2: moral philosophy — 30 marks

Candidates have a choice in this section. They can either produce an essay in which they apply a moral theory to a given situation, or respond to a quotation.

The following list of typical essay questions is **not** exhaustive. Each question is worth 30 marks.

Question paper 1: typical questions	
Area	Example questions
Knowledge and doubt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Critically examine Descartes' use of doubt in his search for a certain foundation for knowledge.</li> <li>◆ Analyse and evaluate Descartes' Trademark argument.</li> <li>◆ Analyse and evaluate Hume's theory of impressions and ideas.</li> <li>◆ Read the following extract from Hume's <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> Section IV Part 1 and answer the question which follows.</li> </ul> <p><i>Suppose for example that I see one billiard ball moving in a straight line towards another: even if the contact between them should happen to suggest to me the idea of motion in the second ball, aren't there a hundred different events that I can conceive might follow from that cause? May not both balls remain still? May not the first bounce straight back the way it came, or bounce off in some other direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we prefer just one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? Our a priori reasonings will never reveal any basis for this preference.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Analyse and evaluate Hume's theory of causation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Moral philosophy essay response to a situation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Read the following situation and answer the question that follows. <i>You find you have the opportunity to cheat in an exam that will win you a place to study medicine at university.</i></li> <p>Analyse and evaluate how Kantians might respond to this situation.</p> <li>◆ Read the following situation and answer the question that follows. <i>You are on a boat trip with your 70-year-old grandfather and the young owner of the boat. An unexpected wave causes both your companions to fall overboard. You are a strong swimmer but you only have time to save one.</i></li> <p>Evaluate the responses that utilitarians might have to this situation.</p> </ul>
<p><b>Moral philosophy essay response to a quotation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Read the following quotation and answer the question that follows. <i>A major problem for utilitarianism is that it doesn't account for justice and fairness.</i></li> <p>To what extent is the above comment a fair criticism of utilitarianism? In your answer you should consider how a utilitarian might respond to this accusation.</p> <li>◆ Read the following quotation and answer the question that follows. <i>Kant's moral theory makes a lot of sense because most people accept that we shouldn't act on our desires when making moral decisions.</i></li> <p>Discuss.</p> </ul>

## Question paper 2: typical questions

Question paper 2 has three sections. Each section samples from one of the three areas of study.

### Section 1: arguments in action — 30 marks

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks.

### Section 2: knowledge and doubt — 10 marks

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks, and focus on the fine detail of the prescribed texts.

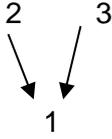
### Section 3: moral philosophy — 10 marks

The questions have a mark range of 1–6 marks, and focus on the fine detail of this area of study.

The following list of typical questions is not exhaustive.

Question paper 2: typical questions		
Section 1: arguments in action		
Type of question	Example question	Marks
Knowledge and understanding	What is meant by describing an argument as ‘valid’?	1
Knowledge and understanding	Explain what is meant by affirming the consequent. Give an example to support your answer.	2
Knowledge and understanding	Explain the difference between an analogy used as part of an argument and an analogy used as an explanation.	2
Knowledge and understanding	In your Higher Philosophy course you have studied what makes premises in an argument acceptable. State any two examples of what might make premises in an argument unacceptable.	2
Analysis and/or evaluation	Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.  <i>If I exercise regularly then I will live a long and healthy life. But since I am not going to exercise regularly then I will not live a long and healthy life.</i>  Explain what is wrong with this type of argument.  In your answer you should focus on identifying and explaining a fallacy.	2

<p>Analysis and/or evaluation</p>	<p>Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.</p> <p><i>Surely you know that we have a duty to pay our taxes. It's because we get a health service and other benefits from government activities. We have a duty to do our share to finance these activities. And taxes are the way we do that. Stop moaning! Pay your taxes!</i></p> <p>Write the argument in the above passage in standard form.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Analysis and/or evaluation</p>	<p>Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.</p> <p><i>Think again about what you've said. The Santa lie is morally justified. For a start, the lie is not permanent. You give kids the myth about Santa now but you tell them the truth when they're older. It's a mild deception. When kids grow up they accept that Santa isn't real and remember the years of pleasure. Believing in Santa makes Christmas magical and perfect. Get a life!</i></p> <p>Present the argument in the above passage in an argument diagram. You should provide a suitable key to your diagram.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Analysis and/or evaluation</p>	<p>Give an example of an argument which fits the following diagram.</p> $\begin{array}{c} 1+2 \\ \downarrow \\ 3 \end{array}$	<p>1</p>
<p>Analysis and/or evaluation</p>	<p>Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.</p> <p><i>It's understandable I suppose to want to kill murderers who kill others. But is it right? After careful thought, we see that capital punishment has no place in our justice system, because capital punishment is disproportionately applied to poor people and punishments that are disproportionately applied to poor people have no place in our justice system.</i></p> <p>Which of the following argument diagrams most accurately represents the argument in the above</p>	<p>4</p>

	<p>passage? In each case the numbers represent statements in the passage.</p> <p> <math>2+3</math>   </p> <p>  </p> <p>  </p> <p>Your answer should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ include a list showing which statements the four numbers represent</li> <li>◆ include the reasons for your choice and the reasons you rejected the other two diagrams</li> </ul>	
Analysis and/or evaluation	<p>Arguments are often evaluated in terms of acceptability, relevance and sufficiency.</p> <p>To what extent are the premises in the following argument acceptable, relevant and sufficient to draw the conclusion?</p> <p><i>Swimming is the safest exercise for people who have joint problems such as arthritis, because the water supports the swimmer. Furthermore, there is no stress on painful joints such as the ankle and knee.</i></p>	3
Analysis and/or evaluation	<p>Evaluate the following argument. You should refer to acceptability, relevance and sufficiency in your answer.</p> <p><i>The class notes for the geology course were difficult to read. The assignments for the class were hard to complete. Many pupils don't enjoy geology. Therefore, the lecturer in the geology course was not competent in his knowledge of geology.</i></p>	3
Knowledge and understanding	(a) What is a fallacious appeal to emotion?	1
Analysis and/or evaluation	(b) Why might a fallacious appeal to emotion affect the relevance of premises in an argument?	1
Analysis and/or evaluation	Identify and explain the fallacy in the following argument. You should refer to this argument in your answer.	3

	Very soon after the politician made his speech at the museum, a devastating explosion happened. For the safety of the people who live and work in that area of Edinburgh, it is essential that the politician makes no more speeches there.	
<b>Section 2: knowledge and doubt</b>		
Type of question	Example question	Marks
Knowledge and understanding	State three purposes of Descartes' method of doubt.	3
Knowledge and understanding	Outline Descartes' dream argument.	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	Why does Descartes think the Cogito is a certain truth?	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain the purpose of Descartes' examples of stones and heat in Meditation III.	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	With reference to Descartes, what is meant by the 'causal adequacy principle'?	6
Knowledge and understanding	How does Hume use the idea of God to support the copy principle?	2
Analysis and/or evaluation	Why is the distinction between simple and complex ideas an important one for Hume?	3
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain Hume's distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact.	2
Knowledge and understanding	Hume claims that knowledge about causes is never known <i>a priori</i> . According to him, how do we acquire knowledge about causes?	1
Analysis and/or evaluation	How does Hume use his examples of billiard balls and stones to support his claim that an effect cannot be determined <i>a priori</i> ?	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain two problems with Hume's account of causation.	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain two problems with Descartes' Trademark argument.	4

Multiple-choice questions	<p>Which one of the following statements accurately represents Hume’s own view of his missing shade of blue?</p> <p>1 He wishes he’d chosen a different colour to illustrate his point.</p> <p>2 Hume is trying to show that his theory of impressions and ideas is a ‘work in progress’ and that it is necessary to criticise your own work as well as that of others.</p> <p>3 He thinks that it would be best moved to his section on causation because it fits with his views on ‘constant conjunction’.</p> <p>4 His counter-example is insufficient reason to amend the general principle behind the copy principle.</p> <p>5 There is a problem with his imagination which he should have recognised earlier.</p>	1
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**Section 3: moral philosophy**

<b>Type of question</b>	<b>Example question</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Knowledge and understanding	With reference to Kant, what do you understand by ‘sovereignty of reason’?	3
Knowledge and understanding	What did Kant mean by the ‘good will’?	3
Knowledge and understanding	Describe what Kant said about duty versus inclination.	3
Knowledge and understanding	What does Kant mean by saying that we should never treat a human being simply as a means? Give examples to support your answer.	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	With reference to Kant, explain the two ways that contradictions can arise through the process of universalising the maxim?	6
Knowledge and understanding	What is meant by a ‘deontological’ theory of ethics?	1
Knowledge and understanding	Describe two components of Bentham’s hedonic calculus.	2

Knowledge and understanding	Why did Mill develop the concept of higher and lower pleasures?	2
Knowledge and understanding	Describe the key features of classical utilitarianism.	6
Questions that ask for the recall of key points of knowledge	What is the essential difference between act and rule utilitarianism?	2
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain two criticisms of rule utilitarianism.	4
Analysis and/or evaluation	Explain two criticisms of Bentham's hedonic calculus.	4

# Appendix 3: helpful textbooks

Teachers and lecturers may find the following books useful when preparing to deliver the course. None of these books are specifically aimed at Higher candidates, so teachers and lecturers should focus on preparing candidates for the course as laid out in the course specification.

## Arguments in action

- ◆ Tracy Bowell and Gary Kemp, *Critical Thinking: A Concise Guide*, Routledge, 2010
- ◆ Trudy Govier, *A Practical Study of Argument*, Cengage Learning, 2014

## Knowledge and doubt: Descartes

- ◆ Christopher Hamilton, *Understanding Philosophy for AS Level*, Nelson Thornes, 2003
- ◆ John Cottingham, *Descartes, (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)* Oxford University Press, 1998
- ◆ Gary Hatfield, *Descartes and the Meditations*, Routledge, 2003
- ◆ John Cottingham, *Descartes*, Blackwell Publishing, 2007 (reprint)
- ◆ John Cottingham, *How to Read Descartes*, Granta Books, 2008
- ◆ John Cottingham, René Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*. With Selections from the Objections and Replies, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2017

## Knowledge and doubt: Hume

- ◆ Christopher Hamilton, *Understanding Philosophy for AS Level*, Nelson Thornes, 2003
- ◆ Harold Noonan, *The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hume on Knowledge*, Routledge, 1999
- ◆ Alan Bailey and Dan O'Brien, *Hume's 'Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding'*, Bloomsbury, 2006
- ◆ Simon Blackburn, *How to Read Hume*, Granta Books, 2008
- ◆ David Mills Daniel, *Briefly: Hume's Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (SCM Briefly series), SCM Press, 2007

## Moral philosophy: Kant

- ◆ Christopher Hamilton, *Understanding Philosophy for AS Level*, Nelson Thornes, 2003
- ◆ H. LaFollette (ed), *Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, Blackwell, 2000
- ◆ Julia Driver, *Ethics: The Fundamentals*, John Wiley and Sons, 2013
- ◆ H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press, 1948
- ◆ Jens Timmerman, *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Commentary*, Cambridge University Press, 2010

## Moral philosophy: utilitarianism

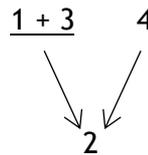
- ◆ Christopher Hamilton, *Understanding Philosophy for AS Level*, Nelson Thornes, 2003
- ◆ Roger Crisp, *Routledge Philosophy Guide to Mill on Utilitarianism*, Routledge, 1997
- ◆ Henry West (ed), *The Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*, 1st Edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 2006
- ◆ H. LaFollette (ed), *Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory*, Blackwell, 2000
- ◆ Julia Driver, *Ethics: The Fundamentals*, John Wiley and Sons, 2013

# Appendix 4: argument diagrams

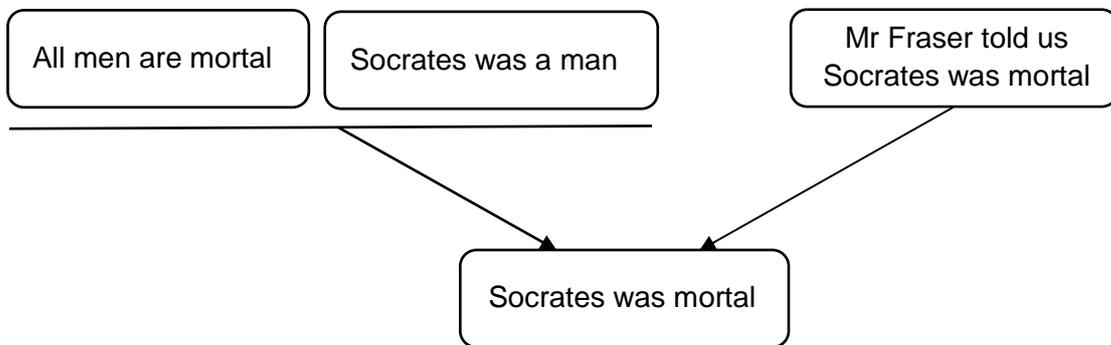
There is more than one way of constructing an argument diagram. Candidates should be familiar with those using numbers and an accompanying legend, for example:

All men are mortal so Socrates was mortal. After all, Socrates was a man. Anyway, Mr Fraser told us he was mortal, although quite why he thought we would be interested in that, I'm not sure.

- 1 All men are mortal.
- 2 Socrates was mortal.
- 3 Socrates was a man.
- 4 Mr Fraser told us Socrates was mortal.



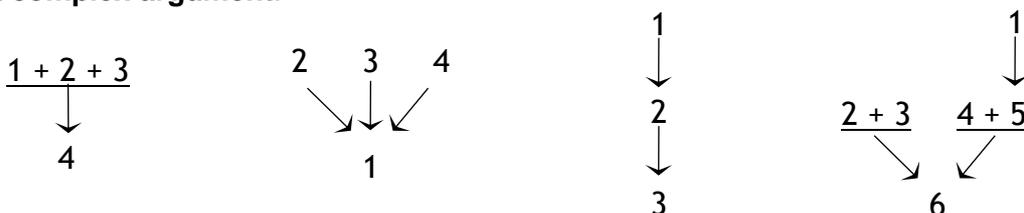
and those where the statements are written directly into boxes, for example:



Those with numbers are usually written with the final conclusion at the bottom of the diagram; those with boxes are usually written with the final conclusion at the top of the diagram. Diagrams of either type and written in either direction are acceptable. The statements in the legend are usually arranged in standard form with the final conclusion at the end, rather than having the statements listed in the order in which they occur in the passage. Either option is acceptable.

If a candidate includes an unstated premise or conclusion in their diagram this should be clearly indicated. It is acceptable to use either letters or numbers to indicate unstated premises or conclusions in legends.

It is expected that candidates will be able to recognise, explain and construct diagrams that represent **linked arguments** where the premises are **dependent**; **convergent arguments** where the premises give **independent** support to the conclusion; and **serial arguments** where there is at least one **intermediate conclusion**. These may also be combined to form a **complex argument**.



In dealing with a source, candidates should be able to recognise and appropriately interpret **inference indicators**, such as **premise indicators** (for example: since, because) and **conclusion indicators** (for example: therefore, so). Candidates should distinguish the substance of an argument from any additional material that might be in the source such as:

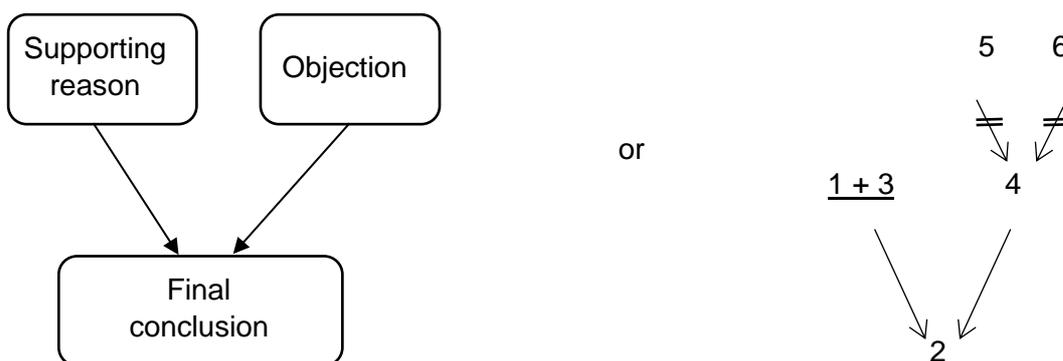
- ◆ repetitions
- ◆ discounts — words or phrases that indicate a possible objection has been considered and rejected, for example ‘While it may be true that...’
- ◆ assurances — words or phrases that indicate the confidence of the person presenting the argument, for example ‘Everyone will readily allow that...’
- ◆ hedges — words that indicate that the argument is being put forward tentatively, for example ‘It is reasonable to suppose that...’

When writing the legend or placing the argument into boxes, candidates should ‘tidy up’ the wording of the argument so that each part of the argument can be read as a stand-alone statement. For example:

- ◆ rewrite rhetorical questions as statements
- ◆ consider interpreting some commands as ‘ought’
- ◆ replace pronouns with the person or object to which they refer

When reading a diagram to check an answer each arrow can be read as ‘therefore’ or ‘lends support to’.

Argument diagrams sometimes include objections and counter-objections. This is not a requirement of the course but if a candidate includes an objection it must be diagrammed in such a way that the objection can be clearly distinguished from a supporting reason, for example:



# Appendix 5: primary texts — extracts

Use the key below when reading this appendix.

<b><u>Red underlined text</u></b>	headings to break up very complex text — neither part of the original text nor part of the updated text
<b>Yellow highlighted text within a border</b>	emphasises key, notable or significant points
<b>Green highlighted text</b>	highlights examples
<b>Grey highlighted text within a text box</b>	important comment — not part of Hume's text
[Brackets]	enclose editorial explanations
Small ·dots·	enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text
•Bullets and indented passages that are not quotations	aid understanding of the structure of a sentence or a thought
Ellipsis ...	indicates a brief passage has been omitted

The following text extracts from Descartes are prescribed. The course specification lists aspects of the text which candidates must study in detail.

## Descartes' Meditation 1 — the text

### Meditations on First Philosophy<sup>1</sup>

in which are demonstrated the existence of God and the distinction between the human soul and the body

#### First meditation

##### What can be called into doubt

##### Why this process is necessary

Some years ago I was struck by the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood, and by the highly doubtful nature of the whole edifice that I had subsequently based on them.

reservation to the general demolition of my opinions.]

##### The proposed strategy

I realised that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations

##### The stated purpose

if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last.

##### Just part of the literary style

But the task looked an enormous one, and I began to wait until I should reach a mature enough age to ensure that no subsequent time of life would be more suitable for tackling such inquiries. This led me to put the project off for so long that I would now be to blame if by pondering over it any further I wasted the time still left for carrying it out. So today I have expressly rid my mind of all worries and arranged for myself a clear stretch of free time. I am here quite alone, and at last I will devote myself sincerely and without

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<sup>1</sup> The text (not the headings and other annotations) is from René Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*. With Selections from the Objections and Replies, edited and translated by John Cottingham, 2nd Edition, © Cambridge University Press 2017, reproduced with permission.

### **First part of the process**

But to accomplish this, it will not be necessary for me to show that all my opinions are false, which is something I could perhaps never manage. Reason now leads me to think that I should **hold back my assent from opinions which are not completely certain and indubitable** just as carefully as I do from those which are patently false. So, for the purpose of rejecting all my opinions, it will be enough if I find in each of them at least some reason for doubt.

### **Proposed method**

And to do this **I will not need to run through them all individually**, which would be an endless task. Once the foundations of a building are undermined, anything built on them collapses of its own accord; so **I will go straight for the basic principles on which all my former beliefs rested.**

### **1. The unreliability of the senses**

Whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses. But from time to time I have found that the senses deceive, and it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once.

### **The difficulty of doubting some sense information**

Yet although the senses occasionally deceive us with respect to objects which are very small or in the distance, there are many other beliefs about which doubt is quite impossible, even though they are derived from the senses — for example, that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands, and so on. Again, how could it be denied that these hands or this whole body are mine? Unless perhaps I were to liken myself to madmen, whose brains are so damaged by the persistent vapours of melancholia that they firmly maintain they are kings when they are paupers, or say they are dressed in purple when they are naked, or that their heads are made of earthenware, or that they are pumpkins, or made of glass. But such people are insane, and I would be thought equally mad if I took anything from them as a model for myself.

## **2. The dreaming argument**

### **No sure signs of distinguishing dreaming from non-dreaming**

A brilliant piece of reasoning! As if I were not a man who sleeps at night, and regularly has all the same experiences while asleep as madmen do when awake — indeed sometimes even more improbable ones. How often, asleep at night, am I convinced of just such familiar events — that I am here in my dressing-gown, sitting by the fire — when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! Yet at the moment my eyes are certainly wide awake when I look at this piece of paper; I shake my head and it is not asleep; as I stretch out and feel my hand I do so deliberately, and I know what I am doing. All this would not happen with such distinctness to someone

asleep. Indeed! As if I did not remember other occasions when I have been tricked by exactly similar thoughts while asleep! As I think about this more carefully, I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep. The result is that I begin to feel dazed, this very feeling only reinforces the notion that may be asleep.

### **Even dreams have content and seem to be constructed from resources that are real**

Suppose then that I am dreaming, and that these particulars — that my eyes are open, that I moving my head and stretching out my hands are not true. Perhaps, indeed, I do not even have such hands or such a body at all. Nonetheless, it must surely be admitted that the visions which come in sleep are like paintings, which must have been fashioned in the likeness of things that are real, and hence that at least these general kinds of things — eyes, head, hands and the body as a whole — are things which are not imaginary but are real and exist. For even when painters try to create sirens and satyrs with the most extraordinary bodies, they cannot give them natures which are new in all respects; they simply jumble up the limbs of different animals. Or if perhaps they manage to think up something so new that nothing remotely similar has ever been seen before — something which is therefore completely fictitious and unreal — at least the colours used in the composition must be real. By similar reasoning, although these general kinds of things — eyes, head, hands and so on — could be imaginary, it must at least be admitted that certain other even simpler and more universal things are real. These are as it were the real colours from which we form all the images of things, whether true or false, that occur in our thought.

### Things that might survive the dream argument

This class appears to include corporeal nature in general, and its extension; the shape of extended things; the quantity, or size and number of these things; the place in which they may exist, the time through which they may endure, and so on.

### Provisional conclusion

So a reasonable conclusion from this might be that physics, astronomy, medicine, and all other disciplines which depend on the study of composite things, are doubtful; while arithmetic, geometry and other subjects of this kind, which deal only with the simplest and most general things, regardless of whether they really exist in nature or not, contain something certain and indubitable. For whether I am awake or asleep, two and three added together are five, and a square has no more than four sides. It seems impossible that such transparent truths should incur any suspicion of being false.

### 3. The deceiving God argument

And yet firmly rooted in my mind is the long-standing opinion that there is an omnipotent God who made me the kind of creature that I am. How do I know that he has not brought it about that there is no earth, no sky, no extended thing, no shape, no size, no place, while at the same time ensuring that all these things appear to me to exist just as they do now? What is more, just as I consider that others sometimes go astray in cases where they think they have the most perfect knowledge, how do I know that God has not brought it about that I too go wrong every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square, or in some even simpler matter, if that is imaginable?

### Problems with the counter-objection that God wouldn't do that

But perhaps God would not have allowed me to be deceived in this way, since he is said to be supremely good. But if it were inconsistent with his goodness to have created me such that I am deceived all the time, it would seem equally foreign to his goodness to allow me to be deceived even occasionally; yet this last assertion cannot be made.

### Even saying there is no God doesn't solve the problem.

Perhaps there may be some who would prefer to deny the existence of so powerful a God rather than believe that everything else is uncertain. Let us not argue with them, but grant them that everything said about God is a fiction.

According to their supposition, then, I have arrived at my present state by fate or chance or a continuous chain of events, or by some other means; yet since deception and error seem to be imperfections, the less powerful they make my original cause, the more likely it is that I am so imperfect as to be deceived all the time.

### Final conclusion

I have no answer to these arguments, but am finally compelled to admit that there is not one of my former beliefs about which a doubt may not properly be raised; and this is not a flippant or ill-considered conclusion, but is based on powerful and well thought-out reasons. So in future I must withhold my assent from these former beliefs just as carefully as I would from obvious falsehoods, if I want to discover any certainty.

## **Second part of the process**

### **Why the first part isn't enough**

But it is not enough merely to have noticed this; I must make an effort to remember it. My habitual opinions keep coming back, and, despite my wishes, they capture my belief, which is as it were bound over to them as a result of long occupation and the law of custom. I shall never get out of the habit of confidently assenting to these opinions, so long as I suppose them to be what in fact they are, namely highly probable opinions — opinions which, despite the fact that they are in a sense doubtful, as has just been shown, it is still much more reasonable to believe than to deny.

### **Assume the former beliefs to be false not just dubitable**

In view of this, I think it will be a good plan to turn my will in completely the opposite direction and deceive myself, by pretending for a time that these former opinions are utterly false and imaginary.

### **The reasons for doing so**

I shall do this until the weight of preconceived opinion is counter-balanced and the distorting influence of habit no longer prevents my judgement from perceiving things correctly. In the meantime, I know that no danger or error will result from my plan, and that I cannot possibly go too far in my distrustful attitude. This is because the task now in hand does not involve action but merely the acquisition of knowledge.

### **How to do so — the malicious demon**

I will suppose therefore that not God, who is supremely good and the source of truth, but rather some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me.

## **[Note the emphasis on the demon deceiving about external things]**

I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare my judgement. I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or senses, but as falsely believing that I have all these things. I shall stubbornly and firmly persist in this meditation; and, even if it is not in my power to know any truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, that is, resolutely guard against assenting to any falsehoods, so that the deceiver, however powerful and cunning he may be, will be unable to impose on me in the slightest degree.

### **[Just part of the literary style**

But this is an arduous undertaking, and a kind of laziness brings me back to normal life. I am like a prisoner who is enjoying an imaginary freedom while asleep; as he begins to suspect that he is asleep, he dreads being woken up, and goes along with the pleasant illusion as long as he can. In the same way, I happily slide back into my old opinions and dread being shaken out of them, for fear that my peaceful sleep may be followed by hard labour when I wake, and that I shall have to toil not in the light, but amid the inextricable darkness of the problems I have now raised.

## **Second meditation**

### **The nature of the human mind, and how it is better known than the body**

So serious are the doubts into which I have been thrown as a result of yesterday's meditation that I can neither put them out of my mind nor see any way of resolving them. It feels as if I have fallen unexpectedly into a deep whirlpool which tumbles

me around so that I can neither stand on the bottom nor swim up to the top. Nevertheless I will make an effort and once more attempt the same path which I started on yesterday.]

### Restatement of method

Anything which admits of the slightest doubt I will set aside just as if I had found it to be wholly false; and

### Restatement of purpose

I will proceed in this way until I recognise something certain, or, if nothing else, until I at least recognise for certain that there is no certainty. Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth; so I too can hope for great things if I manage to find just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshakeable. [Please note: certainty is not an end in itself]

### Summary of progress so far

I will suppose then, that everything I see is spurious. I will believe that my memory tells me lies, and that none of the things that it reports ever happened. I have no senses. Body, shape, extension, movement and place are chimeras. So what remains true? Perhaps just the one fact that nothing is certain.

### The search for certainty (certain existence?) continues.

Yet apart from everything I have just listed, how do I know that there is not something else which does not allow even the slightest occasion for doubt?

### God's existence not yet certain

Is there not a God, or whatever I may call him, who puts into me the thoughts I am now having? But why do I think this, since I myself may perhaps be the author of these thoughts?

### First suggestion that I must exist questionable because the existence of the body already doubted

In that case am not I, at least, something? But I have just said that I have no senses and no body. This is the sticking point: what follows from this? Am I not so bound up with a body and with senses that I cannot exist without them? But I have convinced myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies. Does it now follow that I too do not exist? No:

### My existence is certain

if I convinced myself of something then I certainly existed. But there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me. In that case I too undoubtedly exist, if he is deceiving me; and let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something.

So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must finally conclude that this proposition, I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind.

[Descartes goes on to argue that the mind is separate from the body and that in essence he is 'A thing that thinks']

But I do not yet have a sufficient understanding of what this 'I' is, that now necessarily exists. So I must be on my guard against carelessly taking something else to be this 'I', and so making a mistake in the very item of knowledge that I maintain is the most certain and evident of all. I will therefore go back and meditate on what I originally believed myself to be, before I embarked on this present train of thought. I will then subtract anything capable of being weakened, even minimally, by the

arguments now introduced, so that what is left at the end may be exactly

and only what is certain and unshakeable...

## Descartes' Meditation 3 — the text

### Third meditation

#### What can be called into doubt

##### Review of progress so far

I will now shut my eyes, stop my ears, and withdraw all my senses.

I will eliminate from my thoughts all images of bodily things, or rather, since this is hardly possible, I will regard all such images as vacuous, false and worthless.

I will converse with myself and scrutinize myself more deeply; and in this way I will attempt to achieve, little by little, a more intimate knowledge of myself.

I am a thing that thinks: that is, a thing that doubts, affirms, denies, understands a few things, is ignorant of many things, is willing, is unwilling, and also which imagines and has sensory perceptions;

for as I have noted before, even though the objects of my sensory experience and imagination may have no existence outside me, nonetheless the modes of thinking which I refer to as cases of sensory perception and imagination, in so far as they are simply modes of thinking, do exist within me — of that I am certain.

##### Clear and distinct ideas

In this brief list I have gone through everything I truly know, or at least everything I have so far discovered that I know. Now I will cast around more carefully to see whether there may be other things within me which I have not yet noticed. I am certain that I am a thinking thing. Do I not therefore also know what is required for my being certain about anything? In this first item of knowledge there is simply a clear and distinct perception of what I am asserting; this would not be enough to make

me certain of the truth of the matter if it could ever turn out that something which I perceived with such clarity and distinctness was false. So I now seem to be able to lay it down as a general rule that whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true.

##### Reasons for questioning the clear and distinct principle

##### 1. Previous mistakes about clarity and distinctness

Yet I previously accepted as wholly certain and evident many things which I afterwards realised were doubtful. What were these? The earth, sky, stars, and everything else that I apprehended with the senses. But what was it about them that I perceived clearly? Just that the ideas, or thoughts, of such things appeared before my mind. Yet even now I am not denying that these ideas occur within me. But there was something else which I used to assert, and which through habitual belief I thought I perceived clearly, although I did not in fact do so. This was that there were things outside me which were the sources of my ideas and which resembled them in all respects. Here was my mistake; or at any rate, if my judgement was true, it was not thanks to the strength of my perception.

##### 2. The possibility of a deceiving God

But what about when I was considering something very simple and straightforward in arithmetic or geometry, for example that two and

three added together make five, and so on? Did I not see at least these things clearly enough to affirm their truth? Indeed, the only reason for my later judgement that they were open to doubt was that it occurred to me that perhaps some God could have given me a nature such that I was deceived even in matters which seemed most evident. But

### The ability to doubt depends on my focus

1. whenever my preconceived belief in the supreme power of God comes to mind, I cannot but admit that it would be easy for him, if he so desired, to bring it about that I go wrong even in those matters which I think I see utterly clearly with my mind's eye.
2. Yet when I turn to the things themselves which I think I perceive very clearly, I am so convinced by them that I spontaneously declare: let whoever can do so deceive me, he will never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I continue to think I am something; or make it true at some future time that I have never existed, since it is now true that I exist; or bring it about that two and three added together are more or less than five, or anything of this kind in which I see a manifest contradiction.

### The need to prove the existence of God

And since I have no cause to think that there is a deceiving God, and I do not yet even know for sure whether there is a God at all, **any reason for doubt which depends simply on this supposition is a very slight and, so to speak, metaphysical one. But in order to remove even this slight reason for doubt, as soon as the opportunity arises I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver.** For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else.

### The classification of thoughts

First, however, considerations of order appear to dictate that I now classify my thoughts into definite kinds, and ask which of them can properly be said to be the bearers of truth and falsity. Some of my thoughts are as it were the images of things, and it is only in these cases that the term 'idea' is strictly appropriate — for example, when I think of a man, or a chimera, or the sky, or an angel, or God. Other thoughts have various additional forms: thus when I will, or am afraid, or affirm, or deny, there is always a particular thing which I take as the object of my thought, but my thought includes something more than the likeness of that thing. Some thoughts in this category are called volitions or emotions, while others are called judgements.

Now as far as ideas are concerned, provided they are considered solely in themselves and I do not refer them to anything else, they cannot strictly speaking be false; for whether it is a goat or a chimera that I am imagining, it is just as true that I imagine the former as the latter. As for the will and the emotions, here too one need not worry about falsity; for even if the things which I may desire are wicked or even non-existent, that does not make it any less true that I desire them. Thus the only remaining thoughts where I must be on my guard against making a mistake are judgements. And the chief and most common mistake which is to be found here consists in my judging that the ideas which are in me resemble, or conform to, things located outside me. Of course, if I considered just the ideas themselves simply as modes of my thought, without referring them to anything else, they could scarcely give me any material for error.

Among my ideas, some appear to be innate, some to be adventitious, and others to have been invented by me. My understanding of what a thing is,

what truth is, and what thought is, seems to derive simply from my own nature. But my hearing a noise, as I do now, or seeing the sun, or feeling the fire, comes from things which are located outside me, or so I have hitherto judged. Lastly, sirens, hippogriffs and the like are my own invention. But perhaps all my ideas may be thought of as adventitious, or they may all be innate, or all made up; for as yet I have not clearly perceived their true origin.

But the chief question at this point concerns the ideas which I take to be derived from things existing outside me: what is my reason for thinking that they resemble these things? Nature has apparently taught me to think this. But in addition I know by experience that these ideas do not depend on my will, and hence that they do not depend simply on me. Frequently I notice them even when I do not want to: now, for example, I feel the heat whether I want to or not, and this is why I think that this sensation or idea of heat comes to me from something other than myself, namely the heat of the fire by which I am sitting. And the most obvious judgement for me to make is that the thing in question transmits to me its own likeness rather than something else.

### **The difference between a natural impulse and natural light**

I will now see if these arguments are strong enough. When I say 'Nature taught me to think this', all I mean is that a spontaneous impulse leads me to believe it, not that its truth has been revealed to me by some natural light. There is a big difference here. Whatever is revealed to me by the natural light — for example that from the fact that I am doubting it follows that I exist, and so on — cannot in any way be open to doubt. This is because there cannot be another faculty both as trustworthy as the natural light and also capable of showing me that

such things are not true. But as for my natural impulses, I have often judged in the past that they were pushing me in the wrong direction when it was a question of choosing the good, and I do not see why I should place any greater confidence in them in other matters.

Then again, although these ideas do not depend on my will, it does not follow that they must come from things located outside me. Just as the impulses which I was speaking of a moment ago seem opposed to my will even though they are within me, so there may be some other faculty not yet fully known to me, which produces these ideas without any assistance from external things; this is, after all, just how I have always thought ideas are produced in me when I am dreaming.

And finally, even if these ideas did come from things other than myself, it would not follow that they must resemble those things. Indeed, I think I have often discovered a great disparity <between an object and its idea> in many cases. For example, there are two different ideas of the sun which I find within me. One of them, which is acquired as it were from the senses and which is a prime example of an idea which I reckon to come from an external source, makes the sun appear very small. The other idea is based on astronomical reasoning, that is, it is derived from certain notions which are innate in me (or else it is constructed by me in some other way), and this idea shows the sun to be several times larger than the earth. Obviously both these ideas cannot resemble the sun which exists outside me; and reason persuades me that the idea which seems to have emanated most directly from the sun itself has in fact no resemblance to it at all.

All these considerations are enough to establish that it is not reliable judgement but merely some blind impulse that has made me believe up till now that there exist things distinct

from myself which transmit to me ideas or images of themselves through the sense organs or in some other way.

But it now occurs to me that there is another way of investigating whether some of the things of which I possess ideas exist outside me. In so far as the ideas are <considered> simply <as> modes of thought, there is no recognisable inequality among them: they all appear to come from within me in the same fashion. But in so far as different ideas <are considered as images which> represent different things, it is clear that they differ widely. Undoubtedly, the ideas which represent substances to me amount to something more and, so to speak, contain within themselves more objective reality than the ideas which merely represent modes or accidents. Again, the idea that gives me my understanding of a supreme God, eternal, infinite, <immutable,> omniscient, omnipotent and the creator of all things that exist apart from him, certainly has in it more objective reality than the ideas that represent finite substances.

### **Degrees of reality — the causal principle**

Now it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much <reality> in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause. For where, I ask, could the effect get its reality from, if not from the cause? And how could the cause give it to the effect unless it possessed it? It follows from this both that something cannot arise from nothing, and also that what is more perfect — that is, contains in itself more reality — cannot arise from what is less perfect. And this is transparently true not only in the case of effects which possess <what the philosophers call> actual or formal reality, but also in the case of ideas, where one is considering only <what they call> objective reality. A stone, for example, which previously did not

exist, cannot begin to exist unless it is produced by something which contains, either formally or eminently everything to be found in the stone; similarly, heat cannot be produced in an object which was not previously hot, except by something of at least the same order <degree or kind> of perfection as heat, and so on. But it is also true that the idea of heat, or of a stone, cannot exist in me unless it is put there by some cause which contains at least as much reality as I conceive to be in the heat or in the stone. For although this cause does not transfer any of its actual or formal reality to my idea, it should not on that account be supposed that it must be less real. The nature of an idea is such that of itself it requires no formal reality except what it derives from my thought, of which it is a mode. But in order for a given idea to contain such and such objective reality, it must surely derive it from some cause which contains at least as much formal reality as there is objective reality in the idea. For if we suppose that an idea contains something which was not in its cause, it must have got this from nothing; yet the mode of being by which a thing exists objectively <or representatively> in the intellect by way of an idea, imperfect though it may be, is certainly not nothing, and so it cannot come from nothing.

And although the reality which I am considering in my ideas is merely objective reality, I must not on that account suppose that the same reality need not exist formally in the causes of my ideas, but that it is enough for it to be present in them objectively. For just as the objective mode of being belongs to ideas by their very nature, so the formal mode of being belongs to the causes of ideas — or at least the first and most important ones — by their very nature. And although one idea may perhaps originate from another, there cannot be an infinite regress here; eventually one must reach a

primary idea, the cause of which will be like an archetype which contains formally <and in fact> all the reality <or perfection> which is present only objectively <or representatively> in the idea. So it is clear to me, by the natural light, that the ideas in me are like <pictures, or> images which can easily fall short of the perfection of the things from which they are taken, but which cannot contain anything greater or more perfect.

### **First proof for the existence of God — the idea of God proves the existence of God**

The longer and more carefully I examine all these points, the more clearly and distinctly I recognise their truth. But what is my conclusion to be? If the objective reality of any of my ideas turns out to be so great that I am sure the same reality does not reside in me, either formally or eminently, and hence that I myself cannot be its cause, it will necessarily follow that I am not alone in the world, but that some other thing which is the cause of this idea also exists. But if no such idea is to be found in me, I shall have no argument to convince me of the existence of anything apart from myself. For despite a most careful and comprehensive survey, this is the only argument I have so far been able to find.

Among my ideas, apart from the idea which gives me a representation of myself, which cannot present any difficulty in this context, there are ideas which variously represent God, corporeal and inanimate things, angels, animals, and finally other men like myself.

### **• Some ideas could easily come from me**

As far as concerns the ideas which represent other men, or animals, or angels, I have no difficulty in understanding that they could be put together from the ideas I have of

myself, of corporeal things and of God, even if the world contained no men besides me, no animals and no angels.

As to my ideas of corporeal things, I can see nothing in them which is so great <or excellent> as to make it seem impossible that it originated in myself. For if I scrutinize them thoroughly and examine them one by one, in the way in which I examined the idea of the wax yesterday, I notice that the things which I perceive clearly and distinctly in them are very few in number. The list comprises size, or extension in length, breadth and depth; shape, which is a function of the boundaries of this extension; position, which is a relation between various items possessing shape; and motion, or change in position; to these may be added substance, duration and number. But as for all the rest, including light and colours, sounds, smells, tastes, heat and cold and the other tactile qualities, I think of these only in a very confused and obscure way, to the extent that I do not even know whether they are true or false, that is, whether the ideas I have of them are ideas of real things or of non-things. For although, as I have noted before, falsity in the strict sense, or formal falsity, can occur only in judgements, there is another kind of falsity, material falsity, which occurs in ideas, when they represent non-things as things. For example, the ideas which I have of heat and cold contain so little clarity and distinctness that they do not enable me to tell whether cold is merely the absence of heat or vice versa, or whether both of them are real qualities, or neither is. And since there can be no ideas which are not as it were of things, if it is true that cold is nothing but the absence of heat, the idea which represents it to me as something real and positive deserves to be called false; and the same goes for other ideas of this kind.

Such ideas obviously do not require me to posit a source distinct from myself. For on the one hand, if they are false, that is, represent non-things, I know by the natural light that they arise from nothing — that is, they are in me only because of a deficiency and lack of perfection in my nature. If on the other hand they are true, then since the reality which they represent is so extremely slight that I cannot even distinguish it from a non-thing, I do not see why they cannot originate from myself.

With regard to the clear and distinct elements in my ideas of corporeal things, it appears that I could have borrowed some of these from my idea of myself, namely substance, duration, number and anything else of this kind. For example, I think that a stone is a substance, or is a thing capable of existing independently, and I also think that I am a substance. Admittedly I conceive of myself as a thing that thinks and is not extended, whereas I conceive of the stone as a thing that is extended and does not think, so that the two conceptions differ enormously; but they seem to agree with respect to the classification 'substance'. Again, I perceive that I now exist, and remember that I have existed for some time; moreover, I have various thoughts which I can count; it is in these ways that I acquire the ideas of duration and number which I can then transfer to other things. As for all the other elements which make up the ideas of corporeal things, namely extension, shape, position and movement, these are not formally contained in me, since I am nothing but a thinking thing; but since they are merely modes of a substance, and I am a substance, it seems possible that they are contained in me eminently.

**• The idea of God could not have come from inside me**

So there remains only the idea of God; and I must consider whether

there is anything in the idea which could not have originated in myself. By the word 'God' I understand a substance that is infinite, <eternal, immutable,> independent, supremely intelligent, supremely powerful, and which created both myself and everything else (if anything else there be) that exists. All these attributes are such that, the more carefully I concentrate on them, the less possible it seems that they could have originated from me alone. So from what has been said it must be concluded that God necessarily exists.

It is true that I have the idea of substance in me in virtue of the fact that I am a substance; but this would not account for my having the idea of an infinite substance, when I am finite, unless this idea proceeded from some substance which really was infinite.

And I must not think that, just as my conceptions of rest and darkness are arrived at by negating movement and light, so my perception of the infinite is arrived at not by means of a true idea but merely by negating the finite. On the contrary, I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and hence that my perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself. For how could I understand that I doubted or desired — that is, lacked something — and that I was not wholly perfect, unless there were in me some idea of a more perfect being which enabled me to recognise my own defects by comparison?

Nor can it be said that this idea of God is perhaps materially false and so could have come from nothing, which is what I observed just a moment ago in the case of the ideas of heat and cold, and so on. On the contrary, it is utterly clear and

distinct, and contains in itself more objective reality than any other idea; hence there is no idea which is in itself truer or less liable to be suspected of falsehood.

This idea of a supremely perfect and infinite being is, I say, true in the highest degree; for although perhaps one may imagine that such a being does not exist, it cannot be supposed that the idea of such a being represents something unreal, as I said with regard to the idea of cold. The idea is, moreover, utterly clear and distinct; for whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive as being real and true, and implying any perfection, is wholly contained in it. It does not matter that I do not grasp the infinite, or that there are countless additional attributes of God which I cannot in any way grasp, and perhaps cannot even reach in my thought; for it is in the nature of the infinite not to be grasped by a finite being like myself. It is enough that I understand the infinite, and that I judge that all the attributes which I clearly perceive and know to imply some perfection — and perhaps countless others of which I am ignorant — are present in God either formally or eminently. This is enough to make the idea that I have of God the truest and most clear and distinct of all my ideas.

#### **• Perhaps the perfections are in me potentially**

But perhaps I am something greater than I myself understand, and all the perfections which I attribute to God are somehow in me potentially, though not yet emerging or actualized. For I am now experiencing a gradual increase in my knowledge, and I see nothing to prevent its increasing more and more to infinity. Further, I see no reason why I should not be able to use this increased knowledge to acquire all the other perfections of God. And finally, if the potentiality for these perfections is already within me, why should not this be enough

to generate the idea of such perfections?

#### **• Increasing knowledge, however great, cannot reach perfect knowledge which is incapable of increase**

But all this is impossible. First, though it is true that there is a gradual increase in my knowledge, and that I have many potentialities which are not yet actual, this is all quite irrelevant to the idea of God, which contains absolutely nothing that is potential; indeed, this gradual increase in knowledge is itself the surest sign of imperfection. What is more, even if my knowledge always increases more and more, I recognise that it will never actually be infinite, since it will never reach the point where it is not capable of a further increase; God, on the other hand, I take to be actually infinite, so that nothing can be added to his perfection. And finally, I perceive that the objective being of an idea cannot be produced merely by potential being, which strictly speaking is nothing, but only by actual or formal being.

If one concentrates carefully, all this is quite evident by the natural light. But when I relax my concentration, and my mental vision is blinded by the images of things perceived by the senses, it is not so easy for me to remember why the idea of a being more perfect than myself must necessarily proceed from some being which is in reality more perfect. I should therefore like to go further and inquire whether I myself, who have this idea, could exist if no such being existed.

#### **Second proof for the existence of God — my existence requires the existence of God**

From whom, in that case, would I derive my existence? From myself presumably, or from my parents, or from some other beings less perfect than God; for nothing more perfect

than God, or even as perfect, can be thought of or imagined.

**• I didn't originate from myself**

Yet if I derived my existence from myself, then I should neither doubt nor want, nor lack anything at all; for I should have given myself all the perfections of which I have any idea, and thus I should myself be God. I must not suppose that the items I lack would be more difficult to acquire than those I now have. On the contrary, it is clear that, since I am a thinking thing or substance, it would have been far more difficult for me to emerge out of nothing than merely to acquire knowledge of the many things of which I am ignorant — such knowledge being merely an accident of that substance. And if I had derived my existence from myself, which is a greater achievement, I should certainly not have denied myself the knowledge in question, which is something much easier to acquire, or indeed any of the attributes which I perceive to be contained in the idea of God; for none of them seem any harder to achieve. And if any of them were harder to achieve, they would certainly appear so to me, if I had indeed got all my other attributes from myself, since I should experience a limitation of my power in this respect.

**• I haven't always existed**

I do not escape the force of these arguments by supposing that I have always existed as I do now, as if it followed from this that there was no need to look for any author of my existence. For a lifespan can be divided into countless parts, each completely independent of the others, so that it does not follow from the fact that I existed a little while ago that I must exist now, unless there is some cause which as it were creates me afresh at this moment — that is, which preserves me. For it is quite clear to anyone who attentively considers the nature of time that the

same power and action are needed to preserve anything at each individual moment of its duration as would be required to create that thing anew if it were not yet in existence. Hence the distinction between preservation and creation is only a conceptual one, and this is one of the things that are evident by the natural light.

I must therefore now ask myself whether I possess some power enabling me to bring it about that I who now exist will still exist a little while from now. For since I am nothing but a thinking thing — or at least since I am now concerned only and precisely with that part of me which is a thinking thing — if there were such a power in me, I should undoubtedly be aware of it. But I experience no such power, and this very fact makes me recognise most clearly that I depend on some being distinct from myself.

**• My cause must be of the kind that gives me the idea of God**

But perhaps this being is not God, and perhaps I was produced either by my parents or by other causes less perfect than God. No; for as I have said before, it is quite clear that there must be at least as much in the cause as in the effect. And therefore whatever kind of cause is eventually proposed, since I am a thinking thing and have within me some idea of God, it must be admitted that what caused me is itself a thinking thing and possesses the idea of all the perfections which I attribute to God. In respect of this cause one may again inquire whether it derives its existence from itself or from another cause. If from itself, then it is clear from what has been said that it is itself God, since if it has the power of existing through its own might, then undoubtedly it also has the power of actually possessing all the perfections of which it has an idea — that is, all the perfections which I conceive to be in God. If, on the

other hand, it derives its existence from another cause, then the same question may be repeated concerning this further cause, namely whether it derives its existence from itself or from another cause, until eventually the ultimate cause is reached, and this will be God.

#### **• An infinite regress of causes doesn't help**

It is clear enough that an infinite regress is impossible here, especially since I am dealing not just with the cause that produced me in the past, but also and most importantly with the cause that preserves me at the present moment.

#### **• Multiple causes ignores the unity of God**

Nor can it be supposed that several partial causes contributed to my creation, or that I received the idea of one of the perfections which I attribute to God from one cause and the idea of another from another — the supposition here being that all the perfections are to be found somewhere in the universe but not joined together in a single being, God. On the contrary, the unity, the simplicity, or the inseparability of all the attributes of God is one of the most important of the perfections which I understand him to have. And surely the idea of the unity of all his perfections could not have been placed in me by any cause which did not also provide me with the ideas of the other perfections; for no cause could have made me understand the interconnection and inseparability of the perfections without at the same time making me recognise what they were.

#### **• Parents certainly not the sustaining cause or the cause of me as a thinking thing**

Lastly, as regards my parents, even if everything I have ever believed

about them is true, it is certainly not they who preserve me; and in so far as I am a thinking thing, they did not even make me; they merely placed certain dispositions in the matter which I have always regarded as containing me, or rather my mind, for that is all I now take myself to be. So there can be no difficulty regarding my parents in this context.

#### **So God must exist**

Altogether then, **it must be concluded that the mere fact that I exist and have within me an idea of a most perfect being, that is, God, provides a very clear proof that God indeed exists.**

#### **The idea of God is innate**

**It only remains for me to examine how I received this idea from God. For I did not acquire it from the senses;** it has never come to me unexpectedly, as usually happens with the ideas of things that are perceivable by the senses, when these things present themselves to the external sense organs — or seem to do so. And **it was not invented by me either;** for I am plainly unable either to take away anything from it or to add anything to it. **The only remaining alternative is that it is innate in me, just as the idea of myself is innate in me.**

And indeed **it is no surprise that God, in creating me, should have placed this idea in me to be, as it were, the mark of the craftsman stamped on his work** — not that the mark need be anything distinct from the work itself. But the mere fact that God created me is a very strong basis for believing that I am somehow made in his image and likeness, and that I perceive that likeness, which includes the idea of God, by the same faculty which enables me to perceive myself. That is, when I turn my mind's eye upon myself, I understand that I am a thing which is incomplete and

dependent on another and which aspires without limit to ever greater and better things; but I also understand at the same time that he on whom I depend has within him all those greater things, not just indefinitely and potentially but actually and infinitely, and hence that he is God. **The whole force of the argument lies in this: I recognise that it would be impossible for me to exist with the kind of nature I have — that is, having within me the idea of God — were it not the case that God really existed.**

### **God is not a deceiver**

By 'God' I mean the very being the idea of whom is within me, that is, the possessor of all the perfections which I cannot grasp, but can somehow reach in my thought, who is subject to no defects whatsoever. It is clear enough from this that he

cannot be a deceiver, since it is manifest by the natural light that all fraud and deception depend on some defect.

But before examining this point more carefully and investigating other truths which may be derived from it, I should like to pause here and spend some time in the contemplation of God; to reflect on his attributes, and to gaze with wonder and adoration on the beauty of this immense light, so far as the eye of my darkened intellect can bear it. For just as we believe through faith that the supreme happiness of the next life consists solely in the contemplation of the divine majesty, so experience tells us that this same contemplation, albeit much less perfect, enables us to know the greatest joy of which we are capable in this life.

The following text extracts from Hume are prescribed. This course specification gives details of those aspects of the text which candidates are required to study in detail.

## Hume's Enquiries section 2 — the text

### Section 2: The origin of ideas

#### The distinction between impressions and ideas is introduced — the example of heat

Everyone will freely admit that the perceptions of the mind when a man •feels the pain of excessive **heat** or the pleasure of moderate warmth are considerably unlike what he feels when he later •remembers this sensation or earlier •looks forward to it in his imagination. **Memory and imagination may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses, but they can't create a perception that has as much force and liveliness as the one they are copying.** Even when they operate with greatest vigour, the most we will say is that they represent their object so vividly that we could almost say we feel or see it. Except when the mind is out of order because of disease or madness, memory and imagination can never be so lively as to create perceptions that are indistinguishable from the ones we have in seeing or feeling. **The most lively thought is still dimmer than the dullest sensation.**

#### There are also inward impressions — the example of emotions

A similar distinction runs through all the other perceptions of the mind. A real fit of •**anger** is very different from merely thinking of that emotion. If you tell me that someone is in •**love**, I understand your meaning and form a correct conception of the state he is in; but I would never mistake that conception for the turmoil of actually being in love! When we think back on our past sensations and feelings,

our thought is a faithful mirror that copies its objects truly; but it does so in colours that are fainter and more washed-out than those in which our original perceptions were clothed. To tell one from the other you don't need careful thought or philosophical ability.

#### Impressions and ideas defined

So we can divide the mind's perceptions into two classes, **on the basis of their different degrees of force and liveliness.** The less forcible and lively are commonly called 'thoughts' or 'ideas'. The others have no name in our language or in most others, presumably because we don't need a general label for them except when we are doing philosophy. Let us, then, take the liberty of calling them 'impressions', using that word in a slightly unusual sense. **By the term 'impression', then, I mean all our more lively perceptions when we hear or see or feel or love or hate or desire or will. These are to be distinguished from ideas, which are the fainter perceptions of which we are conscious when we reflect on [= 'look inwards at'] our impressions.**

#### Despite what we might first think, all ideas are based on impressions

It may seem at first sight that human thought is utterly unbounded: it not only escapes all human power and authority—as when a poor man thinks of becoming wealthy overnight, or when an ordinary citizen thinks of being a king—, but is not even confined within the limits of nature

and reality. It is as easy for the imagination to form monsters and to join incongruous shapes and appearances as it is to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body must creep laboriously over the surface of one planet, thought can instantly transport us to the most distant regions of the universe — and even further. What never was seen or heard of may still be conceived; nothing is beyond the power of thought except what implies an absolute contradiction.

### Complex ideas

But although our thought seems to be so free, when we look more carefully we'll find that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts merely to the ability to **combine**, **transpose**, **enlarge**, or **shrink** the materials that the senses and experience provide us with.

In the original Hume says:  
'all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of **compounding**, **transposing**, **augmenting**, or **diminishing** the materials afforded us by the senses and experience.'

### One example from outward senses and one from inward feelings

When we think of a **golden mountain**, we only join two consistent ideas — gold and mountain — with which we were already familiar. We can conceive a **virtuous horse** because our own feelings enable us to conceive virtue, and we can join this with the shape of a horse, which is an animal we know. In short, **all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward senses or from our inward feelings**: all that the mind and will

do is to mix and combine these materials. Put in philosophical terminology: **all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones**.

Here are two arguments that I hope will suffice to prove this.

### First argument — an inductive argument and the example of God

When we analyse our thoughts or ideas — however complex or elevated they are — we always find them to be made up of simple ideas that were copied from earlier feelings or sensations. Even ideas that at first glance seem to be the furthest removed from that origin are found on closer examination to be derived from it. **The idea of God** — meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being — comes from extending beyond all limits the qualities of goodness and wisdom that we find in our own minds. However far we push this enquiry, we shall find that every idea that we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who maintain that this isn't universally true and that there are exceptions to it have only one way of refuting it — but it should be easy for them, if they are right. They need merely to produce an idea that they think isn't derived from this source. It will then be up to me, if I am to maintain my doctrine, to point to the impression or lively perception that corresponds to the idea they have produced.

### Second argument — when the relevant impression has been denied

#### a. malfunctioning senses

If a man can't have some kind of sensation because there is something wrong with his eyes, ears etc., he will never be found to have corresponding ideas. A **blind** man can't form a notion of colours, or a **deaf** man a notion of sounds. If

either is cured of his deafness or blindness, so that the sensations can get through to him, the ideas can then get through as well; and then he will find it easy to conceive these objects.

### **b. absence of relevant experience whether outward or inward**

The same is true for someone who has never experienced an object that will give a certain kind of sensation: a Laplander or Negro has no notion of **the taste of wine** because he has never had the sensation of tasting wine. Similarly with inward feelings. It seldom if ever happens that a person has never felt or is wholly incapable of some human feeling or emotion, but the phenomenon I am describing does occur with feelings as well, though in lesser degree. A gentle person can't form any idea of **determined revenge or cruelty**; nor can a selfish one easily conceive the heights of **friendship and generosity**.

### **c. absence due to species limitations**

Everyone agrees that non-human beings may have many senses of which we can have no conception, because the ideas of them have never been introduced to us in the only way in which an idea can get into the mind, namely through actual feeling and sensation.

#### **The missing shade of blue**

(There is, however, one counter-example that may prove that it is not absolutely impossible for an idea to occur without a corresponding impression. I think it will be granted that the various distinct ideas of colour that enter the mind through the eye **(or those of sound, which come in through the ear)** really are different from each other, though they resemble one another in certain respects. If that holds for different colours, it must hold equally for the

different shades of a single colour; so each shade produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest.

### **Reductio ad absurdum 'proof' that each shade produces a distinct idea**

(We can create a continuous gradation of shades, running from red at one end to green at the other, with each member of the series shading imperceptibly into its neighbour. If the immediate neighbours in the sequence are not different from one another, then red is not different from green, which is absurd.)

In the original Hume doesn't mention specific colours. He says: 'if this should be denied, it is possible, by the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it; and if you will not allow any of the means to be different, you cannot, without absurdity, deny the extremes to be the same.'

### **The thought experiment described**

Now, suppose that a sighted person has become perfectly familiar with colours of all kinds, except for one particular shade of blue (for instance), which he happens never to have met with. Let all the other shades of blue be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest:

#### **Claim 1**

it is obvious that he will notice a blank in the place where the missing shade should go. That is, he will be aware that there is a greater quality-distance between that pair of neighbouring shades than between any other neighbour-pair in the series.

## Claim 2

Can he fill the blank from his own imagination, calling up in his mind the idea of that particular shade, even though it has never been conveyed to him by his senses? Most people, I think, will agree that he can.

## Conclusion

This seems to show that simple ideas are not always, in every instance, derived from corresponding impressions.

## It fails to undermine the general claim

Still, the example is so singular that it is hardly worth noticing, and on its own it isn't a good enough reason for us to alter our general maxim.

## Hume's microscope — the philosophical application of the copy principle

So here is a proposition that not only seems to be simple and intelligible in itself, but could if properly used make every dispute equally intelligible by banishing all that nonsensical jargon that has so long dominated metaphysical reasonings. Those reasonings are beset by three

troubles. (1) All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure, so that the mind has only a weak hold on them. (2) Ideas are apt to be mixed up with other ideas that resemble them. (3) We tend to assume that a given word is associated with a determinate idea just because we have used it so often, even if in using it we have not had any distinct meaning for it. In contrast with this, (1) all our impressions — that is, all our outward or inward sensations — are strong and vivid. (2) The boundaries between them are more exactly placed, and (3) it is harder to make mistakes about them.

## The empiricist criteria of meaning

So when we come to suspect that a philosophical term is being used without any meaning or idea (as happens all too often), we need only to ask: From what impression is that supposed idea derived? If none can be pointed out, that will confirm our suspicion that the term is meaningless, that is, has no associated idea. By bringing ideas into this clear light we may reasonably hope to settle any disputes that arise about whether they exist and what they are like.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Philosophers who have denied that there are any innate ideas probably meant only that all ideas were copies of our impressions; though I have to admit that the terms in which they expressed this were not chosen with enough care, or defined with enough precision, to prevent all mistakes about their doctrine. For what is meant by 'innate'? If 'innate' is equivalent to 'natural', then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be granted to be innate or natural, in whatever sense we take the latter word, whether in opposition to what is uncommon, what is artificial, or what is miraculous. If innate means 'contemporary with our birth', the dispute seems to be frivolous — there is no point in enquiring when thinking begins, whether before, at, or after our birth. Again, the word 'idea' seems commonly to be taken in a very loose sense by Locke and others, who use it to stand for any of our

perceptions, sensations and passions, as well as thoughts. I would like to know what it can mean to assert that self-love, or resentment of injuries, or the passion between the sexes, is not innate!

But admitting the words 'impressions' and 'ideas' in the sense explained above, and understanding by 'innate' what is original or not copied from any previous perception, then we can assert that all our impressions are innate and none of our ideas are innate.

Frankly, I think that Mr. Locke was tricked into this question by the schoolmen [= mediaeval Aristotelians], who have used undefined terms to drag out their disputes to a tedious length without ever touching the point at issue. A similar ambiguity and circumlocution seem to run through all that great philosopher's reasonings on this as well as on most other subjects.

# Hume's Enquiries section 4 — the text

## Section 4: Sceptical doubts about the operations of the understanding

### Part 1

#### The distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact

All the objects of human reason or enquiry fall naturally into two kinds, namely relations of ideas and matters of fact. The first kind includes geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and indeed every statement that is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. That the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides expresses a relation between those figures. That three times five equals half of 30 expresses a relation between those numbers.

Propositions of this kind can be discovered purely by thinking, with no need to attend to anything that actually exists anywhere in the universe. The truths that Euclid demonstrated would still be certain and self-evident even if there never were a circle or triangle in nature.

Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not established in the same way; and we cannot have such strong grounds for thinking them true. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it doesn't imply a contradiction and is conceived by the mind as easily and clearly as if it conformed perfectly to reality. That the sun will not rise tomorrow is just as intelligible as — and no more contradictory than — the proposition that the sun will rise tomorrow. It would therefore be a waste of time to try to demonstrate [= 'prove absolutely rigorously'] its falsehood. If it were demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction and so could never be clearly conceived by the mind.

So it may be worth our time and trouble to try to answer this: What sorts of grounds do we have for being sure of matters of fact — propositions about what exists and what is the case — that are not attested by our present senses or the records of our memory? It is a notable fact that neither ancient philosophers nor modern ones have attended much to this important question; so in investigating it I shall be marching through difficult terrain with no guides or signposts; and that may help to excuse any errors I commit or doubts that I raise. Those errors and doubts may even be useful: they may make people curious and eager to learn, and may destroy that ungrounded and unexamined confidence that people have in their opinions — a confidence that is the curse of all reasoning and free enquiry. If we find things wrong with commonly accepted philosophical views, that needn't discourage us, but rather can spur us on to try for something more full and satisfactory than has yet been published.

#### Why it is necessary to study the relation of cause and effect

All reasonings about matters of fact seem to be based on the relation of cause and effect, which is the only relation that can take us beyond the evidence of our memory and senses.

**Example 1:** If you ask someone why he believes some matter of fact which is not now present to him — for instance that his friend is now in France — he will give you a reason; and this reason will be some other fact, such as that he has received a

letter from his friend or that his friend had planned to go to France.

**Example 2:** Someone who finds a watch or other machine on a desert island will conclude that there have been men on that island. All our reasonings concerning fact are like this. When we reason in this way, we suppose that the present fact is connected with the one that we infer from it. If there were nothing to bind the two facts together, the inference of one from the other would be utterly shaky.

**Example 3:** Hearing the sounds of someone talking rationally in the dark assures us of the presence of some person. Why? Because such sounds are the effects of the human constitution, and are closely connected with it. All our other reasonings of this sort, when examined in detail, turn out to be based on the relation of cause and effect.

The causal chain from the evidence to the 'matter of fact' conclusion may be short or long. And it may be that the causal connection between them isn't direct but collateral — as when one sees light and infers heat, not because either causes the other but because the two are collateral effects of a single cause, namely fire.

So if we want to understand the basis of our confidence about matters of fact, we must find out how we come to know about cause and effect.

### The claim Hume is going to defend

I venture to assert, as true without exception, that knowledge about causes is never acquired through a *priori* reasoning, and always comes from our experience of finding that particular objects are constantly associated with one other. [When Hume is discussing cause and effect, his word 'object' often covers events as well as things.] Present an object to a man whose skill and

intelligence are as great as you like; if the object is of a kind that is entirely new to him, no amount of studying of its perceptible qualities will enable him to discover any of its causes or effects.

### Adam — a practical application of the claim

Adam, even if his reasoning abilities were perfect from the start, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water that it could drown him, or from the light and warmth of fire that it could burn him.

**First supporting reason:** The qualities of an object that appear to the senses never reveal the causes that produced the object or the effects that it will have; nor can our reason, unaided by experience, ever draw any conclusion about real existence and matters of fact.

### Three examples of where people would agree with the claim

The proposition that causes and effects are discoverable not by reason but by experience will be freely granted (1) with regard to objects that we remember having once been altogether unknown to us; for in those cases we remember the time when we were quite unable to tell what would arise from those objects. Present two smooth pieces of marble to a man who has no knowledge of physics — he will not be able to work out that they will stick together in such a way that it takes great force to separate them by pulling them directly away from one another, while it will be easy to slide them apart. (2) Events that are not much like the common course of nature are also readily agreed to be known only by experience; and nobody thinks that the explosion of gunpowder, or the attraction of a magnet, could ever be discovered by arguments *a priori* — that is, by simply thinking about the matter, without bringing in anything known from experience. (3) Similarly, when

an effect is thought to depend on an intricate machinery or secret structure of parts we don't hesitate to attribute all our knowledge of it to experience. No-one would assert that he can give the ultimate reason why milk or bread is nourishing for a man but not for a lion or a tiger.

### **Three examples of where people find the claim difficult to accept**

But this same proposition — that causes and effects cannot be discovered by reason — may seem less obvious when it is applied to events of kinds (1) that we have been familiar with all our lives, (2) that are very like the whole course of nature, and (3) that are supposed to depend on the simple perceptible-qualities of objects and not on any secret structure of parts. We are apt to imagine that we could discover these effects purely through reason, without experience. We fancy that if we had been suddenly brought into this world, we could have known straight off that when one billiard ball strikes another it will make it move — knowing this for certain, without having to try it out on billiard balls. Custom has such a great influence! At its strongest it not only hides our natural ignorance but even conceals itself: just because custom is so strongly at work, we are not aware of its being at work at all.

### **The first supporting reason expanded — we cannot discover the effect *a priori***

If you are not yet convinced that absolutely all the laws of nature and operations of bodies can be known only by experience, consider the following. If we are asked to say what the effects will be of some object, without consulting past experience of it, how can the mind go about doing this? It must invent or imagine some event as being the object's effect; and clearly this invention must be entirely arbitrary.

The mind can't possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, however carefully we examine it, for the effect is totally different from the cause and therefore can never be discovered in it. Motion in the second billiard ball is a distinct event from motion in the first, and nothing in the first ball's motion even hints at motion in the second. A stone raised into the air and left without any support immediately falls; but if we consider this situation *a priori* we shall find nothing that generates the idea of a downward rather than an upward or some other motion in the stone.

**The first supporting reason expanded — we cannot discover the necessity of the effect a priori**

Just as the first imagining or inventing of a particular effect is arbitrary if it isn't based on experience, the same holds for the supposed tie or connection between cause and effect — the tie that binds them together and makes it impossible for that cause to have any effect but that one. Suppose for example that I see one billiard ball moving in a straight line towards another: even if the contact between them should happen to suggest to me the idea of motion in the second ball, aren't there a hundred different events that I can conceive might follow from that cause? May not both balls remain still? May not the first bounce straight back the way it came, or bounce off in some other direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we prefer just one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? Our *a priori* reasonings will never reveal any basis for this preference.

**A summary of the position so far**

In short, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. So it can't be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it *a priori* must be wholly arbitrary. Furthermore, even after it has been suggested, the linking of it with the cause must still appear as arbitrary, because plenty of other possible effects must seem just as consistent and natural from reason's point of view. So there isn't the slightest hope of reaching any conclusions about causes and effects without the help of experience.

**An explanation as to why science and applied mathematics is not a successful counter-argument to this claim**

That is why no reasonable scientist has ever claimed to know the ultimate cause of any natural process, or to show clearly and in detail what goes into the causing of any single effect in the universe. It is agreed that the most human reason can achieve is to make the principles that govern natural phenomena simpler, bringing many particular effects together under a few general causes by reasoning from analogy, experience and observation. But if we try to discover the causes of these general causes, we shall be wasting our labour. These ultimate sources and principles are totally hidden from human enquiry. Probably the deepest causes and principles that we shall ever discover in nature are these four: •elasticity, •gravity, •cohesion of parts ·which makes the difference between a pebble and a pile of dust·, and •communication of motion by impact ·as when one billiard ball hits another·. We shall be lucky if by careful work we can explain particular phenomena in terms of these four, or something close to them. The perfect philosophy of the natural kind [= 'the perfect physics'] only staves off our ignorance a little longer; just as, perhaps, the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind [= 'the most perfect philosophy', in the 21st century sense of the word] serves only to show us more of how ignorant we are. So both kinds of philosophy eventually lead us to a view of human blindness and weakness — a view that confronts us at every turn despite our attempts to get away from it.

Although geometry is rightly famous for the accuracy of its reasoning, when it is brought to the aid of physics it can't lead us to knowledge

of ultimate causes, thereby curing the ignorance I have been discussing. Every part of applied mathematics works on the assumption that nature operates according to certain established laws; and abstract reasonings are used either to help experience to discover these laws or to work out how the laws apply in particular cases where exactness of measurement is relevant. Here is an example. It is a law of motion, discovered by experience, that the force of any moving body is proportional to its mass and to its velocity; so we can get a small force to overcome the greatest obstacle if we can devise a machine that will increase the velocity of the force so that it overwhelms its antagonist. Geometry helps us to apply this law by showing us how to work out the sizes and shapes of all the parts of the machine that we make for this purpose; but the law itself is something we know purely from experience, and no amount of abstract reasoning could lead us one step towards the knowledge of it. When we reason *a priori*, considering some object or cause merely as it appears to the mind and independently of any observation of its behaviour, it could never prompt us to think of any other item, such as its effect. Much less could it show us the unbreakable connection between them. It would take a very clever person to discover by reasoning that heat makes crystals and cold makes ice without having had experience of the effects of heat and cold!

## Section 4: Part 2

### It is not enough to say our reasonings about matters of fact are based on experience

But we haven't yet found an acceptable answer to the question that I initially asked. Each solution raises new questions that are as hard to answer as the first one was,

and that lead us on to further enquiries. To the question 'What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact?', the proper answer seems to be that they are based on the relation of cause and effect. When it is further asked, 'What is the foundation of all our reasonings about cause and effect?', we can answer in one word, experience. But if we persist with questions, and ask, 'What are inferences from experience based on?', this raises a new question that may be harder still. Philosophers — for all their air of superior wisdom — are given a hard time by people who persist with questions, pushing them from every corner into which they retreat, finally bringing them to some dangerous dilemma [= 'a choice between two alternatives which both seem wrong']. The best way for us to avoid such an embarrassment is not to claim too much in the first place, and even to find the difficulty for ourselves before it is brought against us as an objection. In this way we can make a kind of merit even of our ignorance!

### Hume is going to argue that inferences from experience are not based on reasoning

In this section I shall settle for something easy, offering only a negative answer to the question I have raised about what inferences from experience are based on. It is this: even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, the conclusions we draw from that experience are not based on reasoning or on any process of the understanding. I shall try to explain and defend this answer.

It must be granted that nature has kept us at a distance from all its secrets, and has allowed us to know only a few superficial qualities of objects, concealing from us the powers and energies on which the influence of the objects entirely

depends. Our senses tell us about the colour, weight and consistency of bread; but neither the senses nor reason can ever tell us about the qualities that enable bread to nourish a human body. Sight or touch gives us an idea of the motion of bodies; but as for the amazing force that keeps a body moving forever unless it collides with other bodies — we cannot have the remotest conception of that. (The fact is we do conclude from past experience to future events) Despite this ignorance of natural powers<sup>3</sup> and principles, however, we always assume that the same sensible qualities [= ‘qualities that can be seen or felt or heard, etc.’] will have the same secret powers, and we expect them to have the same effects that we have found them to have in our past experience. (The example of bread) If we are given some stuff with the colour and consistency of bread that we have eaten in the past, we don’t hesitate to repeat the experiment of eating it, confidently expecting it to nourish and support us. That is what we do every morning at the breakfast table: confidently experimenting with bread-like stuff by eating it! I would like to know what the basis is for this process of thought. Everyone agrees that a thing’s sensible qualities are not connected with its secret powers in any way that we know about, so that the mind isn’t led to a conclusion about their constant and regular conjunction through anything it knows of their nature. All that past experience can tell us, directly and for sure, concerns the behaviour of the particular objects we observed, at the particular time when we observed them. (The example of coal) •My experience directly and certainly informs me that that fire consumed coal then; but it is silent

about the behaviour of the same fire a few minutes later, and about other fires at any time.

Why should this experience be extended to future times and to other objects, which for all we know may only seem similar? — that is what I want to know.

The bread that I formerly ate nourished me; that is, a body with such and such sensible qualities did at that time have such and such secret powers. But does it follow that other bread must also nourish me at other times, and that the same perceptible qualities must always be accompanied by the same secret powers? It does not seem to follow necessarily. (Once again, the fact is we do conclude from past experience to future events. This is now spelled out in more detail) Anyway, it must be admitted that in such a case as this the mind draws a conclusion; it takes a certain step, goes through a process of thought or inference, which needs to be explained. These two propositions are far from being the same:

- I have found that such and such an object has always had such and such an effect.
- I foresee that other objects which appear similar will have similar effects.

### Moving from the first proposition to the second is not done by reasoning

The second proposition is always inferred from the first; and if you wish I shall grant that it is rightly inferred. But if you insist that the inference is made by a chain of reasoning, I challenge you to produce the reasoning. (Firstly,) The connection between these propositions is not intuitive [that is, the second does not self-evidently and immediately follow from the first]. (And secondly,) If the

<sup>3</sup> The word ‘powers’ is used here in a loose and popular sense. Using it more accurately

would add strength to this argument. See Section 7 of Hume’s Enquiry.

inference is to be conducted through reason alone, it must be with help from some intermediate step. But when I try to think what that intermediate step might be, I am defeated. Those who assert that it really exists and is the origin of all our conclusions about matters of fact owe us an account of what it is.

•They haven't given any account of this, which I take to be evidence that none can be given. If many penetrating and able philosophers try and fail to discover a connecting proposition or intermediate step through which the understanding can perform this inference from past effects to future ones, my negative line of thought about this will eventually be found entirely convincing. But as the question is still new, the reader may not trust his own abilities enough to conclude that because he can't find a certain argument it doesn't exist. In that case I need to tackle a harder task than I have so far undertaken — namely, going through all the branches of human knowledge one by one, trying to show that none can give us such an argument.

**A more detailed account of why it cannot be based on reasoning. Firstly, it cannot be a relation of ideas, something that is necessary...**

All reasonings fall into two kinds: (1) demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and (2) factual reasoning, or that concerning matters of fact and existence. That no demonstrative arguments are involved in (2) seems evident; **since there is no outright contradiction in supposing that the course of nature will change so that an object that seems like ones we have experienced will have different or contrary effects from theirs.** Can't I clearly and distinctly conceive that snowy stuff falling from the clouds might taste salty or feel hot? Is there anything unintelligible about

supposing that all the trees will flourish in December and lose their leaves in June? Now, if something is intelligible and can be distinctly conceived, it implies no contradiction and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract *a priori* reasoning.

**But, secondly, if it were a matter of fact then our reasoning would be circular...**

So if there are arguments to justify us in trusting past experience and making it the standard of our future judgement, these arguments can only be probable; that is, they must be of the kind (2) that concern matters of fact and real existence, to put it in terms of the classification I have given. But probable reasoning, if I have described it accurately, can't provide us with the argument we are looking for. **According to my account, all arguments about existence are based on the relation of cause and effect; our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience; and in drawing conclusions from experience we assume that the future will be like the past. So if we try to prove this assumption by probable arguments, that is, arguments regarding existence, we shall obviously be going in a circle, taking for granted the very point that is in question.**

**From causes that appear similar we expect similar effects — but this isn't based on reason. A restatement of the position**

In reality, all arguments from experience are based on the similarities that we find among natural objects — which lead us to expect that the effects of the objects will also be similar. Although only a fool or a madman would ever challenge the authority of experience or reject it as a guide to human life, still perhaps a philosopher may be allowed to ask what it is about

human nature that gives this mighty authority to experience and leads us to profit from the similarities that nature has established among different objects. Our inferences from experience all boil down to this: From causes that appear similar we expect similar effects. If this were based on reason, we could draw the conclusion as well after a single instance as after a long course of experience. But that isn't in fact how things stand. Nothing so similar as eggs; yet no-one expects them all to taste the same! When we become sure of what will result from a particular event, it is only because we have experienced many events of that kind, all with the same effects. Now, where is that process of reasoning that infers from one instance a conclusion that was not inferred from a hundred previous instances just like this single one? I ask this for the sake of information as much as with the intention of raising difficulties. I can't find — I can't imagine — any such reasoning. But I am willing to learn, if anyone can teach me.

It may be said that from a number of uniform experiences we infer a connection between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; but this seems to raise the same difficulty in different words. We still have to ask what process of argument this inference is based on. Where is the intermediate step, the interposing ideas, which join propositions that are so different from one another? It is agreed that the colour, consistency and other sensible qualities of bread don't appear to be inherently connected with the secret powers of nourishment and life-support. If they were, we could infer these secret powers from a first encounter with those qualities, without the aid of long previous experience; and this contradicts what all philosophers believe and contradicts plain matters of fact. Start by thinking of us in our natural state of ignorance, in which

we know nothing about the powers and influence of anything. How does experience cure this ignorance? All it does is to show us that certain similar objects had similar effects; it teaches us that those particular objects had such and such powers and forces at those particular times. When a new object with similar perceptible qualities is produced, we expect similar powers and forces and look for a similar effect. We expect for instance that stuff with the colour and consistency of bread will nourish us. But this surely is a movement of the mind that needs to be explained. When a man says

'I have found in all past instances such and such sensible qualities conjoined with such and such secret powers',

and then goes on to say

'Similar sensible qualities will always be combined with similar secret powers',

he isn't guilty of merely repeating himself; these propositions are in no way the same. 'The second proposition is inferred from the first', you may say; but you must admit that the inference isn't intuitive [= 'can't be seen at a glance to be valid'], and it isn't demonstrative either [= 'can't be carried through by a series of steps each of which can be seen at a glance to be valid']. What kind of inference is it, then? To call it 'experiential' is to assume the point that is in question. For all inferences from experience are based on the assumption that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be combined with similar sensible qualities. As

soon as the suspicion is planted that the course of nature may change, so that the past stops being a guide to the future, all experience becomes useless and can't support any inference or conclusion. So no arguments from experience can support this resemblance of the past

to the future, because all such arguments are based on the assumption of that resemblance.

However regular the course of things has been, that fact on its own doesn't prove that the future will also be regular. It's no use your claiming to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience. Their secret nature, and consequently all their effects and influence, may change without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens •sometimes with regard to •some objects: Why couldn't it happen •always with regard to •all? What logic, what process of argument, secures you against this? You may say that I don't behave as though I had doubts about this; but that would reflect a misunderstanding of why I am raising these questions. When I am considering how to act, I am quite satisfied that the future will be like the past; but as a philosopher with an enquiring — I won't say sceptical — turn of mind, I want to know what this confidence is based on. Nothing I have read, no research I have done, has yet been able to remove my difficulty. Can I do better than to put the difficulty before the public, even though I may not have much hope of being given a solution? In this way we shall at least be aware of our ignorance, even if we don't increase our knowledge.

**Hume admits the theoretical possibility that he has simply not spotted the relevant argument...**

It would be inexcusably arrogant to conclude that because I haven't discovered a certain argument it doesn't really exist. Even if learned men down the centuries have searched for something without finding it, perhaps it would still be rash to conclude with confidence that the subject must surpass human understanding. Even though we examine all the sources of our knowledge and conclude that they are unfit for a given subject, we may still suspect that the list of sources is

not complete or our examination of them not accurate. With regard to our present subject, however, there are reasons to think that my conclusion is certainly right and that I am not arrogant in thinking so.

**...but this is unlikely since those with little or no learning also draw conclusions from experience so if it was going to be a process of reasoning it should be simple and easy to identify.**

It is certain that the most ignorant and stupid peasants, even infants, indeed even brute beasts, improve by experience and learn the qualities of natural objects by observing their effects. When a child has felt pain from touching the flame of a candle, he will be careful not to put his hand near any candle, and will expect a similar effect from any cause that is similar in its appearance. If you assert that the child's understanding comes to this conclusion through a process of argument, it is fair for me to demand that you produce that argument, and you have no excuse for refusing to comply. You can't say that the argument has eluded you because it is so difficult and complex, because you have just said that a mere infant finds it easy! So if you hesitate for a moment, or if after reflection you produce any intricate or profound argument, you have in effect given up your side in this dispute: you have as good as admitted that it is not through reasoning that we are led to suppose the future to resemble the past and to expect similar effects from apparently similar causes. This is the proposition that I intended to establish in the present section. If I am right about it, I don't claim it as any great discovery. If I am wrong, then there is an argument from past to future- which was perfectly familiar to me long before I was out of my cradle, yet now I can't discover it. What a backward scholar I must be!

## Primary text: Hume — original version

The original version of Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* is also included here.

### SECTION II Of the ORIGIN of IDEAS

Every one will readily allow, that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind, when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth, and when he afterwards recalls to his memory this sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination. These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment. The utmost we say of them, even when they operate with greatest vigour, is, that they represent their object in so lively a manner, that we could *almost* say we feel or see it: But, except the mind be disordered by disease or madness, they never can arrive at such a pitch of vivacity, as to render these perceptions altogether undistinguishable. All the colours of poetry, however splendid, can never paint natural objects in such a manner as to make the description be taken for a real landskip. The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation.

(2) We may observe a like distinction to run through all the other perceptions of the mind. A man in a fit of anger, is actuated in a very different manner from one who only thinks of that emotion. If you tell me, that any person is in love, I easily understand your meaning, and form a just conception of his situation; but never can mistake that conception for the real disorders and agitations of the passion. When we reflect on our past sentiments and affections, our thought is a faithful mirror, and copies its objects truly; but the colours which it employs are faint and dull, in comparison of those in which our original perceptions were clothed. It requires no nice discernment or metaphysical head to mark the distinction between them.

(3) Here therefore we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated THOUGHTS or IDEAS. The other species want a name in our language, and in most others; I suppose, because it was not requisite for any, but philosophical purposes, to rank them under a general term or appellation. Let us, therefore, use a little freedom, and call them IMPRESSIONS; employing that word in a sense somewhat different from the usual. By the term *impression*, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.

(4) Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters, and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty; the thought can in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe; or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen, or heard of, may yet be conceived; nor is any thing beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

(5) But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, *gold*, and *mountain*, with which

we were formerly acquainted. A virtuous horse we can conceive; because, from our own feeling, we can conceive virtue; and this we may unite to the figure and shape of a horse, which is an animal familiar to us. In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: The mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will. Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.

(6) To prove this, the two following arguments will, I hope, be sufficient. First, when we analyse our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find, that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas, which, at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this enquiry to what length we please; where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who would assert, that this position is not universally true nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression or lively perception, which corresponds to it.

(7) Secondly. If it happen, from a defect of the organ, that a man is not susceptible of any species of sensation, we always find, that he is as little susceptible of the correspondent ideas. A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense, in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet for the ideas; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects. The case is the same, if the object, proper for exciting any sensation, has never been applied to the organ. A LAPLANDER or NEGRO has no notion of the relish of wine. And though there are few or no instances of a like deficiency in the mind, where a person has never felt or is wholly incapable of a sentiment or passion, that belongs to his species; yet we find the same observation to take place in a less degree. A man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate revenge or cruelty; nor can a selfish heart easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity. It is readily allowed, that other beings may possess many senses of which we can have no conception; because the ideas of them have never been introduced to us, in the only manner, by which an idea can have access to the mind, to wit, by the actual feeling and sensation.

(8) There is, however, one contradictory phenomenon, which may prove, that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to arise, independent of their correspondent impressions. I believe it will readily be allowed, that the several distinct ideas of colour, which enter by the eye, or those of sound, which are conveyed by the ear, are really different from each other; though, at the same time, resembling. Now if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of the different shades of the same colour; and each shade produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest. For if this should be denied, it is possible, by the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it; and if you will not allow any of the means to be different, you cannot, without absurdity, deny the extremes to be the same. Suppose, therefore, a person to have enjoyed his sight for thirty years, and to have become perfectly acquainted with colours of all kinds, except one particular shade of blue, for instance, which it never has been his fortune to meet with. Let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one, be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest; it is plain, that he will perceive a blank, where that shade is wanting, and will be sensible, that there is a greater distance in that place between the contiguous colours than in any other. Now I ask, whether it be possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, though it had never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that

he can: And this may serve as a proof, that the simple ideas are not always, in every instance, derived from the correspondent impressions; though this instance is so singular, that it is scarcely worth our observing, and does not merit, that for it alone we should alter our general maxim.

(9) Here, therefore, is a proposition, which not only seems, in itself, simple and intelligible; but, if a proper use were made of it, might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon, which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them. All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure: The mind has but a slender hold of them: They are apt to be confounded with other resembling ideas; and when we have often employed any term, though without a distinct meaning, we are apt to imagine it has a determinate idea annexed to it. On the contrary, all impressions, that is, all sensations, either outward or inward, are strong and vivid: The limits between them are more exactly determined: Nor is it easy to fall into any error or mistake with regard to them. When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion, that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion. By bringing ideas into so clear a light we may reasonably hope to remove all dispute, which may arise, concerning their nature and reality.

#### **SECTION IV SCEPTICAL DOUBTS concerning the OPERATIONS of the UNDERSTANDING PART I**

ALL the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relations of Ideas*, and *Matters of Fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation, which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. *That the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides*, is a proposition, which expresses a relation between these figures. *That three times five is equal to the half of thirty*, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths, demonstrated by EUCLID, would for ever retain their certainty and evidence.

(2) Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise tomorrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, *that it will rise*. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.

(3) It may, therefore, be a subject worthy of curiosity, to enquire what is the nature of that evidence, which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory. This part of philosophy, it is observable, has been little cultivated, either by the ancients or moderns; and therefore our doubts and errors, in the prosecution of so important an enquiry, may be the more excusable; while we march through such difficult paths, without any guide or direction. They may even prove useful, by exciting curiosity, and destroying that implicit faith and security, which is the bane of all reasoning and free enquiry. The discovery of defects in the common philosophy, if any such there be, will not, I presume, be a discouragement, but rather an incitement, as is usual, to attempt something more full and satisfactory, than has yet been proposed to the public.

(4) All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses. If you were to ask a man, why he believes any matter of fact, which is absent; for instance, that his friend is in the country, or in FRANCE; he would give you a reason; and this reason would be some other fact; as a letter received from him, or the knowledge of his former resolutions and promises. A man, finding a watch or any other machine in a desert island, would conclude, that there had once been men in that island. All our reasonings concerning fact are of the same nature. And here it is constantly supposed, that there is a connexion between the present fact and that which is inferred from it. Were there nothing to bind them together, the inference would be entirely precarious. The hearing of an articulate voice and rational discourse in the dark assures us of the presence of some person: Why? Because these are the effects of the human make and fabric, and closely connected with it. If we anatomize all the other reasonings of this nature, we shall find, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect, and that this relation is either near or remote, direct or collateral. Heat and light are collateral effects of fire, and the one effect may justly be inferred from the other.

(5) If we would satisfy ourselves, therefore, concerning the nature of that evidence, which assures us of matters of fact, we must enquire how we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect.

(6) I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience, when we find, that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. ADAM, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity, and transparency of water, that it would suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of fire, that it would consume him. No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.

(7) This proposition, *that causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason but by experience*, will readily be admitted with regard to such objects, as we remember to have once been altogether unknown to us; since we must be conscious of the utter inability, which we then lay under, of foretelling what would arise from them. Present two smooth pieces of marble to a man, who has no tincture of natural philosophy; he will never discover, that they will adhere together, in such a manner as to require great force to separate them in a direct line, while they make so small a resistance to a lateral pressure. Such events, as bear little analogy to the common course of nature, are also readily confessed to be known only by experience; nor does any man imagine that the explosion of gunpowder, or the attraction of a loadstone, could ever be discovered by arguments *a priori*. In like manner, when an effect is supposed to depend upon an intricate machinery or secret structure of parts, we make no difficulty in attributing all our knowledge of it to experience. Who will assert, that he can give the ultimate reason, why milk or bread is proper nourishment for a man, not for a lion or a tiger?

(8) But the same truth may not appear, at first sight, to have the same evidence with regard to events, which have become familiar to us from our first appearance in the world, which bear a close analogy to the whole course of nature, and which are supposed to depend on the simple qualities of objects, without any secret structure of parts. We are apt to imagine, that we could discover these effects by the mere operation of our reason, without experience. We fancy, that were we brought, on a sudden, into this world, we could at first have inferred,

that one billiard-ball would communicate motion to another upon impulse; and that we needed not to have waited for the event, in order to pronounce with certainty concerning it. Such is the influence of custom, that, where it is strongest, it not only covers our natural ignorance, but even conceals itself, and seems not to take place, merely because it is found in the highest degree.

(9) But to convince us, that all the laws of nature, and all the operations of bodies without exception, are known only by experience, the following reflections may, perhaps, suffice. Were any object presented to us, and were we required to pronounce concerning the effect, which will result from it, without consulting past observation; after what manner, I beseech you, must the mind proceed in this operation? It must invent or imagine some event, which it ascribes to the object as its effect; and it is plain that this invention must be entirely arbitrary. The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. Motion in the second billiard-ball is a quite distinct event from motion in the first; nor is there anything in the one to suggest the smallest hint of the other. A stone or piece of metal raised into the air, and left without any support, immediately falls: But to consider the matter *a priori*, is there any thing we discover in this situation, which can beget the idea of a downward, rather than an upward, or any other motion, in the stone or metal?

(10) And as the first imagination or invention of a particular effect, in all natural operations, is arbitrary, where we consult not experience; so must we also esteem the supposed tie or connexion between the cause and effect, which binds them together, and renders it impossible, that any other effect could result from the operation of that cause. When I see, for instance, a billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? All our reasonings *a priori* will never be able to show us any foundation for this preference.

(11) In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it, *a priori*, must be entirely arbitrary. And even after it is suggested, the conjunction of it with the cause must appear equally arbitrary; since there are always many other effects, which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural. In vain, therefore, should we pretend to determine any single event, or infer any cause or effect, without the assistance of observation and experience.

(12) Hence we may discover the reason, why no philosopher, who is rational and modest, has ever pretended to assign the ultimate cause of any natural operation, or to show distinctly the action of that power, which produces any single effect in the universe. It is confessed, that the utmost effort of human reason is, to reduce the principles, productive of natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes, by means of reasonings from analogy, experience, and observation. But as to the causes of these general causes, we should in vain attempt their discovery; nor shall we ever be able to satisfy ourselves, by any particular explication of them. These ultimate springs and principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and enquiry. Elasticity, gravity, cohesion of parts, communication of motion by impulse; these are probably the ultimate causes and principles which we shall ever discover in nature; and we may esteem ourselves sufficiently happy, if, by accurate enquiry and reasoning, we can trace up the particular phenomena to, or near to, these general principles.

The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer: As perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it. Thus the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us, at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it.

(13) Nor is geometry, when taken into the assistance of natural philosophy, ever able to remedy this defect, or lead us into the knowledge of ultimate causes, by all that accuracy of reasoning, for which it is so justly celebrated. Every part of mixed mathematics proceeds upon the supposition, that certain laws are established by nature in her operations; and abstract reasonings are employed, either to assist experience in the discovery of these laws, or to determine their influence in particular instances, where it depends upon any precise degree of distance and quantity. Thus, it is a law of motion, discovered by experience, that the moment or force of any body in motion is in the compound ratio or proportion of its solid contents and its velocity; and consequently, that a small force may remove the greatest obstacle or raise the greatest weight, if, by any contrivance or machinery, we can increase the velocity of that force, so as to make it an overmatch for its antagonist. Geometry assists us in the application of this law, by giving us the just dimensions of all the parts and figures, which can enter into any species of machine; but still the discovery of the law itself is owing merely to experience, and all the abstract reasonings in the world could never lead us one step towards the knowledge of it. When we reason *a priori*, and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect; much less, show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them. A man must be very sagacious, who could discover by reasoning, that crystal is the effect of heat, and ice of cold, without being previously acquainted with the operation of these qualities.

#### **SECTION IV SCEPTICAL DOUBTS concerning the OPERATIONS of the UNDERSTANDING PART II**

(14) But we have not, yet, attained any tolerable satisfaction with regard to the question first proposed. Each solution still gives rise to a new question as difficult as the foregoing, and leads us on to farther enquiries. When it is asked, *What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact?* the proper answer seems to be, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect. When again it is asked, *What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation?* it may be replied in one word, EXPERIENCE. But if we still carry on our sifting humour, and ask, *What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience?* this implies a new question, which may be of more difficult solution and explication. Philosophers, that give themselves airs of superior wisdom and sufficiency, have a hard task, when they encounter persons of inquisitive dispositions, who push them from every corner, to which they retreat, and who are sure at last to bring them to some dangerous dilemma. The best expedient to prevent this confusion, is to be modest in our pretensions; and even to discover the difficulty ourselves before it is objected to us. By this means, we may make a kind of merit of our very ignorance.

(15) I shall content myself, in this section, with an easy task, and shall pretend only to give a negative answer to the question here proposed. I say then, that, even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, our conclusions from that experience are *not* founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding. This answer we must endeavour, both to explain and to defend.

(16) It must certainly be allowed, that nature has kept us at a great distance from all her secrets, and has afforded us only the knowledge of a few superficial qualities of objects; while she conceals from us those powers and principles, on which the influence of these objects entirely depends. Our senses inform us of the colour, weight, and consistence of

bread; but neither sense nor reason can ever inform us of those qualities, which fit it for the nourishment and support of a human body. Sight or feeling conveys an idea of the actual motion of bodies; but as to that wonderful force or power, which would carry on a moving body for ever in a continued change of place, and which bodies never lose but by communicating it to others; of this we cannot form the most distant conception. But notwithstanding this ignorance of natural powers and principles, we always presume, when we see like sensible qualities, that they have like secret powers, and expect, that effects, similar to those which we have experienced, will follow from them. If a body of like colour and consistence with that bread, which we have formerly eat, be presented to us, we make no scruple of repeating the experiment, and foresee, with certainty, like nourishment and support. Now this is a process of the mind or thought, of which I would willingly know the foundation. It is allowed on all hands that there is no known connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; and consequently, that the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction, by anything which it knows of their nature. As to past *Experience*, it can be allowed to give *direct* and *certain* information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance: But why this experience should be extended to future times, and to other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar; this is the main question on which I would insist. The bread, which I formerly eat, nourished me; that is, a body of such sensible qualities was, at that time, endued with such secret powers: But does it follow, that other bread must also nourish me at another time, and that like sensible qualities must always be attended with like secret powers? The consequence seems nowise necessary. At least, it must be acknowledged, that there is here a consequence drawn by the mind; that there is a certain step taken; a process of thought, and an inference, which wants to be explained. These two propositions are far from being the same, *I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect, and I foresee, that other objects, which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects.* I shall allow, if you please, that the one proposition may justly be inferred from the other: I know, in fact, that it always is inferred. But if you insist, that the inference is made by a chain of reasoning, I desire you to produce that reasoning. The connexion between these propositions is not intuitive. There is required a medium, which may enable the mind to draw such an inference, if indeed it be drawn by reasoning and argument. What that medium is, I must confess, passes my comprehension; and it is incumbent on those to produce it, who assert, that it really exists, and is the origin of all our conclusions concerning matter of fact.

(17) This negative argument must certainly, in process of time, become altogether convincing, if many penetrating and able philosophers shall turn their enquiries this way; and no one be ever able to discover any connecting proposition or intermediate step, which supports the understanding in this conclusion. But as the question is yet new, every reader may not trust so far to his own penetration, as to conclude, because an argument escapes his enquiry, that therefore it does not really exist. For this reason it may be requisite to venture upon a more difficult task; and enumerating all the branches of human knowledge, endeavour to show, that none of them can afford such an argument.

(18) All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence. That there are no demonstrative arguments in the case seems evident; since it implies no contradiction, that the course of nature may change, and that an object, seemingly like those which we have experienced, may be attended with different or contrary effects. May I not clearly and distinctly conceive, that a body, falling from the clouds, and which, in all other respects, resembles snow, has yet the taste of salt or feeling of fire? Is there any more intelligible proposition than to affirm, that all the trees will flourish in DECEMBER and JANUARY, and decay in MAY and JUNE? Now whatever is intelligible, and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract reasoning *a priori*.

(19) If we be, therefore, engaged by arguments to put trust in past experience, and make it the standard of our future judgement, these arguments must be probable only, or such as regard matter of fact and real existence, according to the division above mentioned. But that there is no argument of this kind, must appear, if our explication of that species of reasoning be admitted as solid and satisfactory. We have said, that all arguments concerning existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect; that our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience; and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition, that the future will be conformable to the past. To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.

(20) In reality, all arguments from experience are founded on the similarity, which we discover among natural objects, and by which we are induced to expect effects similar to those, which we have found to follow from such objects. And though none but a fool or madman will ever pretend to dispute the authority of experience, or to reject that great guide of human life; it may surely be allowed a philosopher to have so much curiosity at least, as to examine the principle of human nature, which gives this mighty authority to experience, and makes us draw advantage from that similarity, which nature has placed among different objects. From causes, which appear *similar*, we expect similar effects. This is the sum of all our experimental conclusions. Now it seems evident, that, if this conclusion were formed by reason, it would be as perfect at first, and upon one instance, as after ever so long a course of experience. But the case is far otherwise. Nothing so like as eggs; yet no one, on account of this appearing similarity, expects the same taste and relish in all of them. It is only after a long course of uniform experiments in any kind, that we attain a firm reliance and security with regard to a particular event. Now where is that process of reasoning, which, from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred instances, that are nowise different from that single one? This question I propose as much for the sake of information, as with an intention of raising difficulties. I cannot find, I cannot imagine any such reasoning. But I keep my mind still open to instruction, if any one will vouchsafe to bestow it on me.

(21) Should it be said, that, from a number of uniform experiments, we *infer* a connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; this, I must confess, seems the same difficulty, couched in different terms. The question still recurs, on what process of argument this *inference* is founded? Where is the medium, the interposing ideas, which join propositions so very wide of each other? It is confessed, that the colour, consistence, and other sensible qualities of bread appear not, of themselves, to have any connexion with the secret powers of nourishment and support. For otherwise we could infer these secret powers from the first appearance of these sensible qualities, without the aid of experience; contrary to the sentiment of all philosophers, and contrary to plain matter of fact. Here then is our natural state of ignorance with regard to the powers and influence of all objects. How is this remedied by experience? It only shows us a number of uniform effects, resulting from certain objects, and teaches us, that those particular objects, at that particular time, were endowed with such powers and forces. When a new object, endowed with similar sensible qualities, is produced, we expect similar powers and forces, and look for a like effect. From a body of like colour and consistence with bread, we expect like nourishment and support. But this surely is a step or progress of the mind, which wants to be explained. When a man says, *I have found, in all past instances, such sensible qualities conjoined with such secret powers*: And when he says, *similar sensible qualities will always be conjoined with similar secret powers*; he is not guilty of a tautology, nor are these propositions in any respect the same. You say that the one proposition is an inference from the other. But you must confess that the inference is not intuitive; neither is it demonstrative: Of what nature is it then? To say it is experimental, is begging the question. For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities. If there be any suspicion, that the course of nature may

change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion. It is impossible, therefore, that any arguments from experience can prove this resemblance of the past to the future; since all these arguments are founded on the supposition of that resemblance. Let the course of things be allowed hitherto ever so regular; that alone, without some new argument or inference, proves not, that, for the future, it will continue so. In vain do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience. Their secret nature, and consequently, all their effects and influence, may change, without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens sometimes, and with regard to some objects: Why may it not happen always, and with regard to all objects? What logic, what process of argument secures you against this supposition? My practice, you say, refutes my doubts. But you mistake the purport of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher, who has some share of curiosity, I will not say scepticism, I want to learn the foundation of this inference. No reading, no enquiry has yet been able to remove my difficulty, or give me satisfaction in a matter of such importance. Can I do better than propose the difficulty to the public, even though, perhaps, I have small hopes of obtaining a solution? We shall at least, by this means, be sensible of our ignorance, if we do not augment our knowledge.

(22) I must confess, that a man is guilty of unpardonable arrogance, who concludes, because an argument has escaped his own investigation, that therefore it does not really exist. I must also confess, that, though all the learned, for several ages, should have employed themselves in fruitless search upon any subject, it may still, perhaps, be rash to conclude positively, that the subject must, therefore, pass all human comprehension. Even though we examine all the sources of our knowledge, and conclude them unfit for such a subject, there may still remain a suspicion, that the enumeration is not complete, or the examination not accurate. But with regard to the present subject, there are some considerations, which seem to remove all this accusation of arrogance or suspicion of mistake.

(23) It is certain, that the most ignorant and stupid peasants, nay infants, nay even brute beasts, improve by experience, and learn the qualities of natural objects, by observing the effects, which result from them. When a child has felt the sensation of pain from touching the flame of a candle, he will be careful not to put his hand near any candle; but will expect a similar effect from a cause, which is similar in its sensible qualities and appearance. If you assert, therefore, that the understanding of the child is led into this conclusion by any process of argument or ratiocination, I may justly require you to produce that argument; nor have you any pretence to refuse so equitable a demand. You cannot say, that the argument is abstruse, and may possibly escape your enquiry; since you confess, that it is obvious to the capacity of a mere infant. If you hesitate, therefore, a moment, or if, after reflection, you produce any intricate or profound argument, you, in a manner, give up the question, and confess that it is not reasoning which engages us to suppose the past resembling the future, and to expect similar effects from causes, which are, to appearance, similar. This is the proposition which I intended to enforce in the present section. If I be right, I pretend not to have made any mighty discovery. And if I be wrong, I must acknowledge myself to be indeed a very backward scholar; since I cannot now discover an argument which, it seems, was perfectly familiar to me, long before I was out of my cradle.

## Non-mandatory primary texts: Descartes

The following text extracts from Descartes are not prescribed but are included here for illustrative purposes to exemplify the philosophical positions and arguments that candidates are required to study.

### **In the *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes words the *Cogito* differently from the wording in Meditation II**

#### **Discourse on the Method Part 4<sup>4</sup>**

I don't know whether I should tell you of the first meditations that I had there, for they are perhaps too metaphysical [here = 'abstract'] and uncommon for everyone's taste. But I have to report on them if you are to judge whether the foundations I have chosen are firm enough. I had long been aware that in practical life one sometimes has to act on opinions that one knows to be quite uncertain just as if they were unquestionably true (I remarked on this above). But now that I wanted to devote myself solely to the search for truth, I thought I needed to do the exact opposite — to reject as if it were absolutely false everything regarding which I could imagine the least doubt, so as to see whether this left me with anything entirely indubitable to believe. Thus, I chose to suppose that nothing was such as our senses led us to imagine, because our senses sometimes deceive us. Also, I rejected as unsound all the arguments I had previously taken as demonstrative [= 'absolutely rigorous'] proofs, because some men make mistakes in reasoning, even in the simplest questions in geometry, and commit logical fallacies; and I judged that I was as open to this as anyone else. Lastly, I decided to pretend that everything that had ever entered my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams, because all the mental states we are in while awake can also occur while we sleep and dream, without having any truth in them. But no sooner had I embarked on this project than I noticed that while I was trying in this way to think everything to be false it had to be the case that I, who was thinking this, was something. And observing that this truth **I am thinking, therefore I exist** was so firm and sure that not even the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics could shake it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

### **In the *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes explains what he means by clear and distinct perception:**

#### **45. What 'vivid perception' means, and what 'clear perception' means**

Many people, indeed, never perceive anything accurately enough to be able to make a judgement about it with certainty. For a perception to support a certain and indubitable judgement, it needs to be not merely •vivid but also •clear. I call a perception 'vivid' when it is present and accessible to the attentive mind — just as we say that we see something vividly when it is present to the eye's gaze and stimulates it with a sufficient degree of strength and accessibility. I call a perception 'clear' if, as well as being vivid, it is so sharply separated from all other perceptions that every part of it is vivid.

#### **46. The example of pain shows that a perception can be vivid without being clear, but can't be clear without being vivid**

For example, when someone feels an intense pain, his perception of it is very vivid; but it isn't always clear, because people often get this perception muddled with an obscure

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judgement they make about something that they think exists in the painful spot — something they think resembles the sensation of pain. But in fact it is the sensation alone that they perceive vividly. Hence a perception can be vivid without being clear, but it can't be clear without being vivid.

**47. In order to correct the prejudices of our early childhood we must consider the simple notions and what elements in each of them are vivid**

In our childhood the mind was so immersed in the body that it perceived many things vividly but nothing clearly. Yet the mind made judgements about many things, and that's the origin of the many prejudices that most of us cling to throughout life.

## Non-mandatory primary text: Hume

The following Hume extract is not mandatory but included here for illustrative purposes to exemplify the philosophical positions and arguments that candidates are required to study. This extract increases our understanding of Hume's position on the origin of our ideas.

### Extract from Hume's Treatise Book 1 Part I <sup>5</sup>

#### 1: The origin of our ideas

All the perceptions of the human mind fall into two distinct kinds, which I shall call 'impressions' and 'ideas'. These differ in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind and make their way into our thought or consciousness. The perceptions that enter with most force and violence we may name 'impressions'; and under this name I bring all our sensations, passions, and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul [= 'mind'; no religious implications]. By 'ideas' I mean the faint images of the others in thinking and reasoning: for example, all the perceptions aroused by your reading this book — apart from perceptions arising from sight and touch, and apart from the immediate pleasure or uneasiness your reading may cause in you. I don't think I need to say much to explain this distinction: everyone will readily perceive for himself the difference between feeling (·impressions·) and thinking (·ideas·). The usual degrees ·of intensity· of these are easily distinguished, though there may be particular instances where they come close to one another. Thus, in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may become like our impressions; as on the other hand it sometimes happens that our impressions are so faint and low that we can't distinguish them from our ideas. But although ideas and impressions are fairly similar in a few cases, they are in general so very different that no-one can hesitate to classify them as different and to give to each a special name to mark the difference. [In this work, 'name' is often used to cover not only proper names but also general terms such as 'idea'.]

Another division of our perceptions should be noted; this one cuts across the line between impressions and ideas. It is the division into simple and complex. Simple perceptions — that is, simple impressions and ideas — are ones that don't allow any distinction or separation ·among their parts·. Complex perceptions, on the contrary, can be distinguished into parts. Though a particular colour, taste, and smell, are qualities all united together in this apple, it's easy to perceive that they aren't the same as one another and can least be distinguished from each other — ·and so one's total perception of the apple is complex·.

Having through these divisions ordered and arranged our subject-matter (·perceptions·), we can now set ourselves to consider more accurately their qualities and relations. The first fact that springs to my attention is that our impressions greatly resemble our ideas in every respect except their degree of force and liveliness. Perceptions of one kind seem to be, in a way, reflections of perceptions of the other kind; so that all the perceptions of the mind do double duty, appearing both as impressions and as ideas. When I shut my eyes and think of my study, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt ·when I was in my study·; every detail in one is to be found in the other. And I find the same resemblance and representation when I survey my other perceptions: ideas and impressions seem always to correspond to each other. This remarkable fact holds my attention for a moment. Surveying the field more accurately, I find I have been swept along by how things first appeared to me, and that I must — with help from the simple/complex distinction — limit this general thesis that all our ideas and impressions are resembling. I observe that ·many of our

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<sup>5</sup> Treatise of Human Nature, Book 1  
David Hume 1739  
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complex ideas never had impressions that corresponded to them: I can imagine a city such as the New Jerusalem, with golden pavements and ruby walls, though I never saw such a thing. And I observe that many of our complex impressions are never exactly copied by ideas: I have seen Paris, but I can't form an idea of that city that perfectly represents all its streets and houses in all their detail.

So I perceive that although there is in general a great resemblance between our complex impressions and ideas, it is not true across the board that they are exact copies of each other. Now let us consider how the case stands with our simple perceptions. After the most accurate examination I am capable of, I venture to say that here the rule holds without exception: that every simple idea has a simple impression that resembles it, and every simple impression has a corresponding idea. The idea of red that we form in the dark differs only in degree of intensity, not in nature, from the impression of red that strikes our eyes in sunshine. You can satisfy yourself that I am right about this by going over as many of your simple impressions and ideas as you like; it's impossible to prove my point by going over all of them! But if anyone should deny this universal resemblance between simple impressions and simple ideas, I don't know how to convince him except by asking him to show a simple impression that doesn't have a corresponding idea, or a simple idea that has no corresponding impression. If he doesn't answer this challenge — and it's certain that he can't — then his silence and our own observation will suffice to establish our conclusion.

Thus we find that all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and as the complex are formed from simple ones we can say generally that these two sorts of perception exactly correspond. Having uncovered this relation, which requires no further examination, I am curious to find some of the other qualities of impressions and ideas. Let us consider what brings them into existence: as between impressions and ideas, which are causes and which are effects?

The full examination of this question is the subject of this book; so I shall here content myself with establishing one general proposition:

**All our simple ideas, when they first appear, are derived from simple impressions which correspond to them and which they exactly represent.**

In looking for phenomena to support this proposition, I can find only two kinds; but the phenomena of each kind are obvious, numerous, and conclusive.

As a preliminary to the first kind of phenomenon, I first go over again in my mind, and make myself certain, of the proposition that I have already asserted, that every simple impression is attended with a corresponding idea, and every simple idea is attended with a corresponding impression. From this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions I immediately conclude that there is a great connection between our corresponding impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence on the existence of the other. Such a constant conjunction in such an infinite number of instances can't arise from chance, but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas or of the ideas on the impressions. Wanting to know which way the dependence runs, I consider the order in which these simple impressions and ideas first appear; and I find by constant experience that the simple impressions always come first — it is never the other way around. To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present objects that are that colour or taste — that is, I give him those impressions. I don't do anything as absurd as trying to give the child the impression by arousing in him the idea! When our ideas occur they don't produce the corresponding impressions; we don't see any colour or feel any sensation merely by thinking of them. On the other hand we find that every impression — whether of mind or body — is followed by an idea that resembles it in every way except its degree of force and liveliness. The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions is a

convincing proof that the one are the •causes of the other; and the fact that the impression always comes first is an equal proof that impressions are the causes of our ideas, not vice versa.

This is confirmed by another plain and convincing phenomenon, namely: whenever someone happens to lack the faculty that gives rise to impressions of some kind — for example when someone is born blind or deaf — he lacks not only impressions of that kind but also the corresponding ideas; so that his mind never shows the least traces of either of them. This holds not only where the relevant organs of sensation are entirely destroyed, but also when they haven't yet been put into action to produce a particular impression; we can't form an accurate idea of the taste of a pineapple without having actually tasted it.

But there is one phenomenon that goes the other way, and may prove that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to occur in advance of their corresponding impressions. I think you'll agree that the various ideas of colours that enter by the eyes are really different from each other, though there are resemblances amongst them; similarly for ideas of sounds that are conveyed by the sense of hearing. If this is true of different colours, it must equally hold for the different shades of the same colour that each of them produces a distinct idea that is independent of the others. (If not, then it is possible by the continual gradation of shades to run a colour imperceptibly into what is most remote from it. We can create a sequence of colours, each barely perceptibly different from its neighbours, with some colour at the start of the sequence and a totally different one at the end. If you won't allow any of the intervening pairs of neighbours to be different, you can't without absurdity say that the colours at the ends of the sequence are different — which they patently are.) Now take the case of someone who has had the use of his eyesight for thirty years, and has become perfectly well acquainted with colours of all kinds except for one particular shade of blue, which he happens never to have encountered. Let all the different shades of blue except that single one be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest. Obviously, he will perceive a blank in the sequence where that shade is missing, and will be aware that the qualitative gap between neighbours is greater at that place than anywhere else in the sequence. Now I ask:

**Can he fill this gap from his own imagination, raising up in his mind the idea of that particular shade, even though an impression of it had never been conveyed to him by his senses?**

I think most people will agree that he can; and this may serve as a proof that simple ideas are not always derived from corresponding impressions. But this instance is so particular and singular [those are Hume's adjectives] that it is hardly worth noticing, and isn't enough on its own to require us to alter our general maxim.

But I ought to mention that the principle that impressions come before ideas is subject not only to the exception (about the missing shade of blue) that I have just sketched but also to another limitation, namely: just as our ideas are images [= 'copies'] of our impressions, so we can form secondary ideas that are images of primary ones; and my own theory allows for this. This is not strictly speaking an exception to the rule that impressions come first, but rather an explanation of it. Ideas produce the images of themselves in new secondary ideas; but as the first or primary ideas are derived from impressions, it still remains true that all our simple ideas come from their corresponding impressions — either immediately or as secondary ideas through the mediation of primary ideas.

This, then, is the first principle I establish in the science of human nature. Don't despise it because it looks simple. It is a remarkable fact that the present question about which comes first, impressions or ideas, is the very one that has created so much noise when expressed as the question of whether there are any innate ideas, or whether all ideas are derived from

sensation and reflection. Notice that when philosophers want to show the ideas of extension and colour not to be innate, all they do is to show that those ideas are conveyed by our senses. To show that the ideas of passion and desire are not innate they observe that we have a prior experience of these emotions in ourselves. Now, if we carefully examine these arguments we shall find that they prove only that ideas are preceded by other more lively perceptions, from which they are derived and which they represent. I hope this clear statement of the question will remove all disputes about it, and will render this principle of more use in our reasonings than it seems to have been up to now.

# Moral philosophy text extracts

The following moral philosophy extracts are not prescribed but are included here for illustrative purposes to exemplify the philosophical positions and arguments that candidates are required to study.

## Bentham extract 1

Jeremy Bentham, from

### *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do...

By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual...

The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community then is what? — the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it...

## Bentham extract 2

Jeremy Bentham, from

### *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

#### Chapter IV: Value of a Lot of Pleasure or Pain, How to be Measured

I. Pleasures then, and the avoidance of pains, are the *ends* that the legislator has in view; it behoves him therefore to understand their *value*. Pleasures and pains are the instruments he has to work with: it behoves him therefore to understand their force, which is again, in other words, their value.

II. To a person considered by *himself*, the value of a pleasure or pain considered *by itself*, will be greater or less, according to the four following *circumstances*:

1. Its *intensity*
2. Its *duration*
3. Its *certainty* or *uncertainty*
4. Its *propinquity* or *remoteness*

III. These are the circumstances which are to be considered in estimating a pleasure or a pain considered each of them by itself. But when the value of any pleasure or pain is considered for the purpose of estimating the tendency of any *act* by which it is produced, there are two other circumstances to be taken into the account; these are:

5. Its *fecundity*, or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *same* kind: that is, pleasures, if it be a pleasure: pains, if it be a pain.
6. Its *purity*, or the chance it has of not being followed by sensations of the *opposite* kind: that is, pains, if it be a pleasure: pleasures, if it be a pain.

These two last, however, are in strictness scarcely to be deemed properties of the pleasure or the pain itself; they are not, therefore, in strictness to be taken into the account of the value of that pleasure or that pain. They are in strictness to be deemed properties only of the act, or other event, by which such pleasure or pain has been produced; and accordingly are only to be taken into the account of the tendency of such act or such event.

IV. To a *number* of persons, with reference to each of whom to the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered, it will be greater or less, according to seven circumstances: to wit, the six preceding ones; viz.,

1. Its *intensity*
2. Its *duration*
3. Its *certainty* or *uncertainty*
4. Its *propinquity* or *remoteness*
5. Its *fecundity*
6. Its *purity*

And one other; to wit:

7. Its *extent*; that is, the number of persons to whom it *extends*; or (in other words) who are affected by it

V. To take an exact account then of the general tendency of any act, by which the interests of a community are affected, proceed as follows. Begin with any one person of those whose interests seem most immediately to be affected by it: and take an account,

1. Of the value of each distinguishable *pleasure* which appears to be produced by it in the *first* instance.
2. Of the value of each *pain* which appears to be produced by it in the *first* instance.
3. Of the value of each pleasure which appears to be produced by it *after* the first. This constitutes the *fecundity* of the first *pleasure* and the *impurity* of the first *pain*.
4. Of the value of each *pain* which appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the *fecundity* of the first *pain*, and the *impurity* of the first pleasure.
5. Sum up all the values of all the *pleasures* on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance, if it be on the side of pleasure, will give the *good* tendency of the act upon the whole, with respect to the interests of that *individual* person; if on the side of pain, the *bad* tendency of it upon the whole.
6. Take an account of the *number* of persons whose interests appear to be concerned; and repeat the above process with respect to each. *Sum up* the numbers expressive of the degrees of *good* tendency, which the act has, with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *good* upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *good* upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *bad* upon the whole. Take the *balance* which if on the side of *pleasure*, will give the general *good tendency* of the act, with respect to the total number or community of individuals concerned; if on the side of pain, the general *evil tendency*, with respect to the same community.

VI. It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously to every moral judgement, or to every legislative or judicial operation. It may, however, be always kept in view: and as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one.

## **Mill extract 1**

**John Stuart Mill, from**

***Utilitarianism* Chapter 2**

Now, such a theory of life excites in many minds, and among them in some of the most estimable in feeling and purpose, inveterate dislike. To suppose that life has (as they express it) no higher end than pleasure — no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit — they designate as utterly mean and grovelling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine ... the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable ... if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other ... (however) ... Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification. I do not, indeed, consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences from the utilitarian principle. To do this in any sufficient manner, many Stoic, as well as Christian, elements require to be included. But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect; of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. It must be admitted, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness, &c., of the former — that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and, as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognise the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.

Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both, do give a most marked preference to the manner

of existence which employs their higher faculties. Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs. They would not resign what they possess more than he for the most complete satisfaction of all the desires which they have in common with him. If they ever fancy they would, it is only in cases of unhappiness so extreme, that to escape from it they would exchange their lot for almost any other, however undesirable in their own eyes. A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence ... It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

It may be objected, that many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good.

From this verdict of the only competent judges, I apprehend there can be no appeal. On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of existence is the most grateful to the feelings, apart from its moral attributes and from its consequences, the judgement of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final.

## Mill extract 2

John Stuart Mill, from

*Utilitarianism* Chapter 4

The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it.

## Mill extract 3

John Stuart Mill, from

*Utilitarianism* Chapter 4

No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons.

## Kant extract 1

Immanuel Kant, from

*Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com)

Nothing in the world — *or out of it!* — can possibly be conceived that could be called 'good' without qualification except a GOOD WILL. Mental talents such as intelligence, wit, and judgement, and temperaments such as courage, resoluteness, and perseverance are doubtless in many ways good and desirable; but they can become extremely bad and harmful if the person's *character* isn't good — that is, if the *will* that is to make use of these gifts of nature isn't good. Similarly with gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honour, even health, and the overall wellbeing and contentment with one's condition that we call 'happiness', create pride, often leading to arrogance, if there isn't a good will to correct their influence on the mind .... Not to mention the fact that the sight of someone who shows no sign of a pure and good will and yet enjoys uninterrupted prosperity will never give pleasure to an impartial rational observer. So it seems that without a good will one can't even be worthy of being happy.

Even qualities that are conducive to this good will and can make its work easier have no intrinsic unconditional worth. We rightly hold them in high esteem, but only because we assume them to be accompanied by a good will; so we can't take them to be absolutely -or unconditionally- good. Moderation in emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation not only are good in many ways but seem even to constitute part of the person's *inner* worth, and they were indeed unconditionally valued by the ancients. Yet they are very far from being good without qualification — -good in themselves, good in any circumstances-

— for without the principles of a good will they can become extremely bad: ·for example·, a villain’s coolness makes him far more dangerous and more straightforwardly abominable to us than he would otherwise have seemed.

What makes a good will *good*? It isn’t what it brings about, its usefulness in achieving some intended end. Rather, good will is good because of *how it wills* — that is, it is *good in itself*. Taken just in itself it is to be valued incomparably more highly than anything that could be brought about by it in the satisfaction of some preference — or, if you like, the sum total of all preferences! Consider this case:

Through bad luck or a miserly endowment from stepmotherly nature, this person’s will has no power at all to accomplish its purpose; not even the greatest effort on his part would enable it to achieve anything it aims at. But he does still have a good will — not as a mere wish but as the summoning of all the means in his power.

The good will of this person would sparkle like a jewel all by itself, as something that had its full worth in itself. Its value wouldn’t go up or down depending on how useful or fruitless it was. If it was useful, that would only be the *setting* ·of the jewel·, so to speak, enabling us to handle it more conveniently in commerce (·a diamond ring is easier to manage than a diamond·) or to get those who don’t know much ·about jewels· to look at it. But the setting doesn’t affect the value ·of the jewel· and doesn’t recommend it the experts.

## Kant extract 2

Immanuel Kant, from

*Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com)

My topic is the difference between doing something from duty and doing it for other reasons. In tackling this, I shall set aside without discussion two kinds of case — one for which my question doesn’t arise, a second for which the question arises but is too easy to answer for the case to be interesting or instructive. Following those two, I shall introduce two further kinds of case·.

- 1 I shan’t discuss actions which — even if they are useful in some way or other — are clearly opposed to duty, because with them the question of doing them from duty doesn’t even arise.
- 2 I shall also ignore cases where someone does A, which really is in accord with duty, but where what he directly wants isn’t to perform A but to perform B which somehow leads to or involves A. ·For example: he (B) unbolts the door so as to escape from the fire, and in so doing he (A) enables others to escape also. There is no need to spend time on such cases·, because in them it is easy to tell whether an action that is in accord with duty is done ·from duty or rather ·for some selfish purpose.
- 3 It is far harder to detect that difference when the action the person performs — one that is in accord with duty — is what he directly wanted to do, ·rather than being something he did only because it was involved in something else that he directly wanted to do·.  
Take the example of a shop-keeper who charges the same prices for selling his goods to

inexperienced customers as for selling them to anyone else. This is in accord with duty. But there is also a prudential and not-duty-based motive that the shop-keeper might have for this course of conduct: when there is a buyers' market, he may sell as cheaply to children as to others so as not to lose customers. Thus the customer is honestly served, but we can't infer from this that the shop-keeper has behaved in this way from duty and principles of honesty. His own advantage requires this behaviour, and we can't assume that in addition he directly wants something for his customers and out of love for them he charges them all the same price. His conduct of his policy on pricing comes neither from duty nor from directly wanting it, but from a selfish purpose.

[Kant's German really does say first that the shop-keeper isn't led by a direct want and then that he is. His point seems to be this: — The shop-keeper does want to treat all his customers equitably; his intention is aimed at precisely that fact about his conduct (unlike the case in (2) where the agent enables other people to escape but isn't aiming at that at all). But the shop-keeper's intention doesn't stop there, so to speak; he wants to treat his customers equitably not because of what he wants for them, but because of how he wants them to behave later in his interests. This involves a kind of indirectness, which doesn't assimilate this case to (2) but does distinguish it from a fourth kind of conduct that still isn't morally worthy but not because it involves the 'indirectness' of (2) or that of (3).]

- 4 It is a duty to preserve one's life, and moreover everyone directly wants to do so. But because of the power of that want, the often anxious care that most men have for their survival has no intrinsic worth, and the maxim *Preserve yourself* has no moral content. Men preserve their lives according to duty, but not from duty. But now consider this case:

Adversities and hopeless sorrow have completely taken away this unfortunate man's relish for life. But his fate has not made him passively despondent or dejected. He is strong in soul, and is exasperated at how things have gone for him, and would like actively to do something about it. Specifically, he *wishes for death*. But he preserves his life without loving it, not led by any want or fear, but acting from duty.

For this person the maxim *Preserve yourself* has moral content.

We have a duty to be charitably helpful where we can, and many people are so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy and take delight in the contentment of others if they have made it possible. But I maintain that such behaviour, done in that spirit, has no true moral worth, however amiable it may be and however much it accords with duty. It should be classed with actions done from other wants, such as the desire for honour. With luck, someone's desire for honour may lead to conduct that in fact accords with duty and does good to many people; in that case it deserves praise and encouragement; but it doesn't deserve high esteem, because the maxim on which the person is acting doesn't have the moral content of an action done not because the person *likes* acting in that way but from duty.

[In this context, 'want' and 'liking' and 'desire' are used to translate *Neigung*, elsewhere in this version translated as 'preference'; other translations mostly use 'inclination'.]

Now consider a special case:

This person has been a friend to mankind, but his mind has become clouded by a sorrow of his own that has extinguished all feeling for how others are faring. He still has the power to benefit others in distress, but their need leaves him untouched because he is too preoccupied with his own. But now he tears himself out of his dead insensibility and acts charitably purely from duty, without feeling any want or liking so to behave.

Now, for the first time, his conduct has genuine moral worth. Having been deprived by nature of a warm-hearted temperament, this man could find in himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than he could have got through such a temperament. It is just here that the worth of character is brought out, which is morally the incomparably highest of all: he is beneficent not from preference but from duty.

### Kant extract 3

Immanuel Kant, from

*Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com)

So the universal imperative of duty can be expressed as follows: **Act as though the maxim of your action were to become, through your will, a universal law of nature. ...**

I want now to list some duties, adopting the usual division of them into duties to ourselves and duties to others, and into perfect duties and imperfect duties.

- 1 A man who has been brought by a series of troubles to the point of despair and of weariness with life still has his reason sufficiently to ask himself: 'Wouldn't it be contrary to my duty to myself to take my own life?' Now he asks: 'Could the maxim of my action in killing myself become a universal law of nature?' Well, here is his maxim:

For love of myself, I make it my principle to cut my life short when prolonging it threatens to bring more troubles than satisfactions.

So the question is whether *this* principle of self-love could become a universal law of nature. If it did, that would be a nature that had a law according to which a single feeling created a life affirming push and also led to the destruction of life itself; and we can see at a glance that such a 'nature' would contradict itself, and so couldn't *be* a nature. So the maxim we are discussing *couldn't* be a law of nature, and therefore would be utterly in conflict with the supreme principle of duty.

- 2 Another man sees himself being driven by need to borrow money. He realizes that no-one will lend to him unless he firmly promises to repay it at a certain time, and he is well aware that he wouldn't be able to keep such a promise. He is disposed to make such a promise, but he has enough conscience to ask himself: 'Isn't it improper and opposed to duty to relieve one's needs in that way?' If he does decide to make the promise, the maxim of his action will run like this:

When I think I need money, I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know that the repayment won't ever happen.

Here he is — for the rest of this paragraph — reflecting on this.— ‘It may be that this principle of self-love or of personal advantage would fit nicely into my whole future welfare, so that there is no *prudential* case against it. But the question remains: would it be right? To answer this, I change the demand of self-love into a universal law, and then put the question like this: If my maxim became a universal law, *then* how would things stand? I can see straight off that it could never hold as a universal law of nature, and must contradict itself. For if you take a law saying that anyone who thinks he is in need can make any promises he likes without intending to keep them, and make it *universal* so that everyone in need *does* behave in this way, that would make the promise and the intended purpose of it *impossible* — no-one would believe what was promised to him but would only laugh at any such performance as a vain pretence.’

3 A third finds in himself a talent that could be developed so as to make him in many respects a useful person. But he finds himself in comfortable circumstances, and would rather indulge in pleasure than take the trouble to broaden and improve his fortunate natural gifts. But now he asks whether his maxim of neglecting his gifts, agreeing as it does with his liking for idle amusement, also agrees with what is called ‘duty’. He sees that a system of nature conforming with this law could indeed exist, with everyone behaving like the islanders of the South Pacific, letting their talents rust and devoting their lives merely to idleness, indulgence, and baby-making — in short, to pleasure. But he can’t possibly will that this should become a universal law of nature or that it should be implanted in us by a natural instinct. For, as a rational being, he necessarily wills that all his abilities should be developed, because they serve him and are given to him for all sorts of possible purposes.

4 A fourth man, for whom things are going well, sees that others (whom he could help) have to struggle with great hardships, and he thinks to himself:

What concern of mine is it? Let each one be as happy as heaven wills, or as he can make himself; I won’t take anything from him or even envy him; but I have no desire to contribute to his welfare or help him in time of need.

If such a way of thinking were a universal law of nature, the human race could certainly survive — and no doubt that *state* of humanity would be better than one where everyone chatters about sympathy and benevolence and exerts himself occasionally to practise them, while also taking every chance he can to cheat, and to betray or otherwise violate people’s rights. But although it is possible that that maxim should *be* a universal law of nature, it is impossible to **will** that it do so. For a will that brought *that* about would conflict with itself, since instances can often arise in which the person in question would need the love and sympathy of others, and he would have no hope of getting the help he desires, being robbed of it by this law of nature springing from his own will.

Those are a few of the many duties that we have (or at least think we have) that can clearly be derived from the single principle that I have stated on the preceding page. We must *be able to will* that a maxim of our action become a universal law; this is the general formula for the moral evaluation of our action. Some actions are so constituted that their maxim can’t even be *thought* as a universal law of nature without contradiction, let alone being *willed* to be such. It’s easy to see that an action of that kind conflicts with stricter or narrower (absolutely obligatory) duty. With other actions, the maxim — made-universal-law is not in

that way internally impossible (-self-contradictory-), but it is still something that no-one could possibly *will* to be a universal law of nature, because such a will would contradict itself. It's easy to see that an action of that kind conflicts with broader (meritorious) duty.

## Kant extract 4

Immanuel Kant, from

*Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*

In the version by Jonathan Bennett presented at [www.earlymoderntexts.com](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com)

But suppose there were something *whose existence in itself* had absolute value, something which *as an end in itself* could support determinate laws. *That* would be a basis — indeed the *only* basis — for a possible categorical imperative, that is, of a practical law.

*There is* such a thing! It is a human being! I maintain that man — and in general every rational being — exists as an end in himself and *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion. Whenever he acts in ways directed towards himself or towards other rational beings, a person serves as a *means* to whatever end his action aims at; but he must always be regarded as *also an end*. Things that are preferred have only *conditional* value, for if the preferences (and the needs arising from them) didn't exist, their object would be worthless. That wouldn't count against the 'objects' in question if the desires on which they depend did themselves have unconditional value, but they don't! If the preferences themselves, as the sources of needs, did have absolute value, one would want to have them; but that is so far from the case that every rational being must wish he were altogether free of them. So the value of any objects *to be obtained* through our actions is always conditional. Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature, if they are not rational beings, have only relative value as means, and are therefore called 'things' [*Sachen*]; whereas rational beings are called '*persons*', because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves (that is, as not to be used merely as means) — which makes such a being an object of respect, and something that sets limits to what anyone can choose to do. Such beings are not merely subjective ends whose existence as a result of our action has value *for us*, but are objective ends, that is, things [*Dinge*] whose existence is an end in itself. It is indeed an *irreplaceable* end: you can't substitute for it something else to which it would be merely a means. If there were no such ends in themselves, nothing of absolute value could be found, and if all value were conditional and thus contingent, no supreme practical principle for reason could be found anywhere.

So if there is to be a supreme practical principle, and a categorical imperative for the human will, it must be one which, being drawn from the conception of something that must be an end for everyone because it is an end in itself, constitutes an objective principle of the will that can serve as a universal law. The basis for this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. Human beings necessarily think of their own existence in this way, which means that the principle holds as a subjective principle of human actions. But every other rational being also thinks of his existence on the same rational ground that holds also for myself;<sup>6</sup> and so it is at the same time an *objective* principle — one that doesn't depend on continent

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<sup>6</sup> Here I put this proposition forward as a postulate.

facts about this or that *subject*— a supreme practical ground from which it must be possible to derive all laws of the will. So here is the practical imperative.

**Act in such a way as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of anyone else, always as an end and never merely as a means.** Let us now see whether this can be carried out.

To return to our previous examples:

First, someone thinking of committing suicide will, if he is guided by the concept of necessary duty to oneself, ask himself:

Could my suicide be reconciled with the idea of humanity as *an end in itself*? And his answer to this should be No. If he escapes from his burdensome situation by destroying himself, he is using a person merely as a *means* to keeping himself in a tolerable condition up to the end of his life. But a man is not a *thing* [*Sache*], so he isn't something to be used *merely* as a means, and must always be regarded in all his actions as an end in himself. So I can't dispose of a man by maiming, damaging or killing him — and that includes the case where the man is myself. (This basic principle needs to be refined so as to deal properly with questions such as 'May I have one of my limbs amputated to save my life?' and 'May I expose my life to danger in order to save it?' I shan't go into these matters here; they belong to *morals* and not to the metaphysic of morals.)

[Three times in this next paragraph, and nowhere else in this work, Kant writes of someone's 'containing' the end of an action by someone else. Presumably for B to 'contain' the end of A's action is for B to have A's end as *his* end also, to seek what A seeks.] Second, as concerns necessary.... duties to others, when someone A has it in mind to make someone else B a deceitful promise, he sees immediately that he intends to use B merely as a means, without B's containing in himself the *end* of the action. For B can't possibly assent to A's acting against him in this way, so he can't contain in himself the end of this action. This conflict with the principle about treating others as ends is even easier to see in examples of attacks on people's freedom and property; for in those cases it is obvious that someone who violates the rights of men intends to make use of the person of others merely as means, without considering that as rational beings they should always be valued at the same time as ends, that is, as beings who can contain in themselves the end of the very same action.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, with regard to contingent (meritorious) duty to oneself, it isn't sufficient that the action *not conflict* with humanity in our person as an end in itself; it must also *harmonize* with it. In human nature there are predispositions to greater perfection that are part of nature's purpose for humanity....; to neglect these might perhaps be *consistent* with the preservation of humanity as an end in itself but not with the *furtherance* of that end. [In the original, the italics

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<sup>7</sup> Don't think that the banal 'Don't do to anyone else what you wouldn't want done to you' could serve here as a guide or principle. It is only a consequence of the real principle, and a restricted and limited consequence at that. It can't as it stands be a universal law, because it doesn't provide a basis for duties to oneself, or benevolent duties to others (for many a man would gladly consent to not receiving benefits from others if that would let him off from showing benevolence to them!), or duties to mete out just punishments to others (for the criminal would argue on this ground against the judge who sentences him). And so on.

contrast 'furtherance' not with 'consistent' but with 'preservation'. The present version is based on a conjecture that was a slip.]

Fourthly, with regard to meritorious duty to others: — Humanity might survive even if no-one contributed to the happiness of others, but also no-one intentionally took anything away from the happiness of others; and this is a likely enough state of affairs, because the end or purpose that all men *naturally* have is *their own* happiness. This would put human conduct into harmony with humanity as an end in itself, but only in a *negative* manner. For a *positive* harmony with humanity as an end in itself, what is required is that everyone *positively* tries to further the ends of others as far as he can. For the ends of any person, who is an end in himself, must as far as possible be also *my* ends, if that thought of him as an end in himself is to have its *full* effect on me.

This principle concerning the status of each human being — and more generally of each rational creature — as an end in himself is the supreme limiting condition on the freedom of action of each man. (*Supreme* in the sense that it trumps everything else, for example prudential considerations.) It isn't drawn from experience; there are two reasons why it *can't* be. One reason is the principle's universality: it applies to *absolutely all rational beings*, and experience doesn't stretch out that far. The other is the fact that the principle isn't about humanity considered subjectively, as something that men *do* take to be an end, that is, do choose to aim at, but rather about humanity considered as the objective end that *ought to* constitute the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends, whatever they may be. Experience can inform us about what subjective ends men *do* set before themselves, but not about what non-subjective end *ought to* trump every subjective end. So this principle *can't* arise from experience, and *must* arise from pure reason.

# Administrative information

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**Published:** September 2018 (version 2.0)

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes, types of questions, helpful textbooks, argument diagrams and primary texts (extracts) added as appendices.  In the recommended reading section, details of the following textbook have changed from: Descartes, R. and Cottingham, J. (1988). <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> . In: <i>Selected Philosophical Writings</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press to: John Cottingham (ed), <i>René Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy. With Selections from the Objections and Replies</i> , 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2017	September 2018

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

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