1.3 Arguments and the core essay

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS argument • premise • valid • sound • fallacy • philosophical issue • counter-argument

Objective

Build the skills for the **core essay**: read a stimulus (a picture or a short text), find the **philosophical issue** in it, and write a clear argument with **counter-arguments** and a **conclusion**.

You must be able to:

- identify the philosophical issue raised by a stimulus
- state an argument in premises and a conclusion
- distinguish valid and sound arguments
- identify common fallacies
- plan a core essay

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Arguments

An **argument** gives **premises** (reasons) for a **conclusion**. It is **valid** if the conclusion must be true *when* the premises are true; it is **sound** if it is valid *and* the premises are true.

Valid but not sound: All birds can fly. Penguins are birds. So penguins can fly. (Premise 1 is false.)

Common **fallacies**: attacking the person (*ad hominem*); a false choice between two options; a slippery slope with no evidence; begging the question (the conclusion is hidden in a premise).

■ From stimulus to issue

Stimulus: *a photo of an elderly woman looking at a photo of herself as a young girl.* Possible issues: Is she the same person? What makes a life one life? Does a person change their nature?

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■ Core essay plan

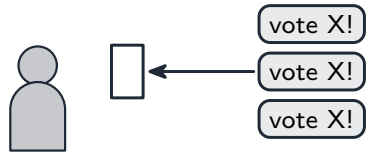
1. **Issue**: name the philosophical issue in the stimulus and the question you will answer.
2. **Thesis**: your answer.
3. **Argument**: two or three arguments, each with a philosopher's view and an example.
4. **Counter-arguments**: the strongest objection and your reply.
5. **Conclusion**: a judgement, with its limits.

2 Practice

2.1 Distinguish a **valid** argument from a **sound** argument. [2]

2.2 Look at this argument: "Robots will never think. My uncle, who builds robots, says so, and he is an expert." Name the weakness in the argument, and rewrite it as a stronger argument. [3]

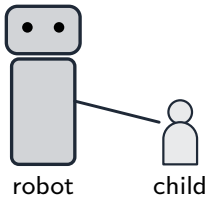
2.3 Identify a **philosophical issue** raised by this stimulus: *a cartoon of a person in a voting booth who sees three advertisements on their phone, all telling them how to vote.* Explain why it is philosophical and which part of the core theme it links to. [4]



2.4 Plan a core essay on the stimulus in 2.3. Include the issue, a thesis, two arguments with philosophers, a counter-argument and a conclusion. [6]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Core theme style.)* Stimulus: *a photograph of a humanoid robot holding a child's hand in a hospital.* With explicit reference to the stimulus, discuss a philosophical issue about **being human** that it raises. [15]



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