Course notes

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Philosophy · SL

IB philosophy first assessment 2025

Core Being human; one optional theme at SL, two at HL; one school-selected prescribed text. HL extension is Philosophy and contemporary issues. No unverified prescribed text is chosen by default.

SL: Paper 1 105 min 50%, prescribed-text Paper 2 60 min 25%, philosophical analysis 25%. HL: Paper 1 150 min 40%, Paper 2 60 min 20%, unseen Paper 3 75 min 20%, analysis 20%.

Being human · Arguments, identity and personhood

An argument supports a conclusion through premises. Validity asks whether the conclusion follows if the premises are true; soundness also requires true premises.

Personal identity can be examined through bodily, psychological and relational criteria.

> ■ **Checked example**
>
> All people with unchanged memories are the same person; this person has changed memories; therefore this is a different person does not follow.
> The premises do not say unchanged memory is necessary; losing a sufficient condition does not prove loss of identity.

■ Limits and practice

Do not substitute personal opinion for an argument.

A counterexample should challenge a premise or inference precisely, not merely express disagreement.

What is wrong with the classroom argument?

Answer: It treats a stated sufficient condition as if it were necessary.

Optional themes; prescribed text · Ethical reasoning and textual interpretation

Consequentialist approaches evaluate outcomes; duty-based approaches examine obligations; virtue approaches consider character and practical judgement.

When reading a prescribed text, identify the author's actual claims and structure before criticizing them.

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■ Checked example

In an original dilemma, a harmless promise of secrecy conceals a serious safety risk. Compare reasons to keep the promise with reasons to protect a person.
Explain how the facts alter the strength of each reason; do not assume a theory has one automatic answer.

■ Limits and practice

Ethics is one possible option, not a universal school selection. Other options and the approved prescribed text need dedicated teaching.

Paper 2 assesses the chosen prescribed text, so a general ethics worksheet cannot replace textual study.

What should come before evaluating a prescribed argument?

Answer: An accurate reconstruction of its premises, conclusion and relevant distinctions.

Philosophical analysis IA · From stimulus to philosophical inquiry

A non-philosophical stimulus provides a starting point. Define a philosophical issue and examine concepts, arguments and objections.

The analysis should be focused enough to develop reasons and a qualified conclusion within the word limit.

■ Checked example

Ask whether consciousness is necessary for personhood. Compare one argument for this condition with an objection concerning how consciousness can be known.
Return to the stimulus only when it helps clarify the issue or argument.

■ Limits and practice

The IA is supervised coursework, not a written mock replacing it.

Reference arguments and stimulus sources; teacher checks eligibility, authenticity and assessment requirements.

Which question is most philosophical?

Answer: Is consciousness necessary for personhood, and how could that condition be justified?

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