Exercise walk-through

2.3
Optional theme: political philosophy

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Philosophy · SL

Ethics

- **The trolley cases three ways.** A utilitarian pulls the lever *and* pushes the man: five lives outweigh one.
- A Kantian may pull the lever (the death is a side effect) but not push (that uses the man only as a means).
- A virtue ethicist asks what a good person could live with, and may say that pushing someone to his death is something a decent person would not do.
- An essay that compares all three, and then judges which explains our intuitions best, shows the analysis examiners reward.

Paper 2 questions

- (a) The best ruler acts through **non-action** : he interferes as little as possible, so that people hardly notice him (chapter 17). More laws create more crime (chapter 57), and governing a large state is like cooking a small fish: stir it too much and it falls apart (chapter 60).
- (b) For the claim: the text seems to trust that people left alone will live simply and peacefully; Hobbes, who thought life without a strong state would be "nasty, brutish, and short", would disagree. Against the claim: the text does not say people are good, only that heavy government creates the desires and conflicts it then tries to control. Judgement: the view is less naive than it looks, but it fits small, simple communities better than large modern states.

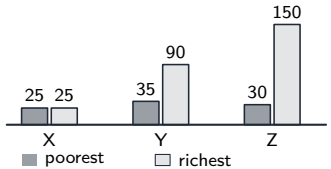
Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Philosophy guide* (first assessment 2024) and the prescribed text list.
- P. Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect", *Oxford Review* 5 (1967); J. J. Thomson, "The Trolley Problem", *Yale Law Journal* (1985).
- E. Gettier, "Is **Justified True Belief Knowledge**?", *Analysis* 23 (1963).

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Distinguish **negative liberty** from **positive liberty**, with an example of each. [2]

2.2 Three societies have these incomes for their poorest and richest groups: X (25, 25), Y (35, 90), Z (30, 150). Which does Rawls' difference principle choose, and why? Which might Nozick accept? [3]



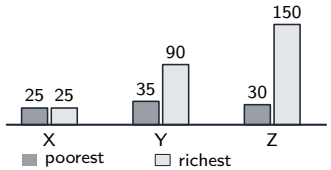
Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Distinguish **negative liberty** from **positive liberty**, with an example of each. [2]

2.1

negative liberty: freedom from interference, e.g. no law stops you speaking; positive liberty: the real ability to act, e.g. free education gives you the ability to choose a career

2.2 Three societies have these incomes for their poorest and richest groups: X (25, 25), Y (35, 90), Z (30, 150). Which does Rawls' difference principle choose, and why? Which might Nozick accept? [3]



2.2

Rawls chooses Y, because its least advantaged group (35) is better off than in X (25) or Z (30); Nozick would accept any of them if the holdings arose by fair acquisition and free transfer; he looks at history, not the pattern

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 Compare the views of **Hobbes** and **Locke** on the state of nature and its consequences for government. [4]

2.4 Explain Rawls' **veil of ignorance**, and evaluate **one** objection to it. [6]

Exercises 2.3·2.4

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2.3

Hobbes: the state of nature is a war of all against all, so people should accept a powerful sovereign for safety; Locke: people have natural rights even without government, but no fair judge, so government should be limited and can be resisted if it violates rights

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2.4 Explain Rawls' **veil of ignorance**, and evaluate **one** objection to it. [6]

2.4

people choose principles without knowing their own position, talents or beliefs; so they choose fairly, without bias to their own interests; they would protect the worst-off position: equal liberties and the difference principle; objection, e.g. Nozick: it ignores how goods were fairly earned / people might gamble rather than play safe / real people cannot ignore their identity (communitarians); explanation of the objection; evaluation of how strong it is

Exercise 3.1

3.1 *(Optional theme style.)* "A just society is one that guarantees equal outcomes for all." Discuss. [15]



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3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, clear explanation of the philosophical issue, relevant philosophers and arguments used accurately, counter-arguments evaluated, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: explains justice and the claim of equal outcomes; arguments for equality of outcome, e.g. luck in birth and talents is undeserved; Rawls: not equal outcomes, but the difference principle; worked example of the difference principle; Nozick: entitlement theory; liberty upsets patterns (Wilt Chamberlain example); utilitarian view of justice as maximum welfare; positive and negative liberty in the debate; a real case, e.g. progressive taxation or a universal basic income; evaluation of the strongest view; a reasoned conclusion