# Optional themes and the prescribed text

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Philosophy · SL · Vocabulary in context

| Word | Example |
|---|---|
| **optional theme** | Choose one **optional theme**, such as ethics or political philosophy. |
| **prescribed text** | Study one **prescribed text**, such as a book by Mill. |
| **consequentialism** /ˌkɒnsɪˈkwenʃɪəlɪzəm/ | **Consequentialism** judges actions by their results. |
| **utilitarianism** | **Utilitarianism** aims for the greatest happiness for the greatest number. |
| **deontology** /diːənˈtɒlədʒi/ | **Deontology** judges an action by duties and rules. |
| **categorical imperative** | Kant's **categorical imperative** says act only in ways everyone could follow. |
| **virtue ethics** /ˈvɜːtʃuː ˈeθɪks/ | **Virtue ethics** asks what a good person would do. |
| **epistemology** | **Epistemology** is the study of knowledge. |
| **knowledge** /ˈnɒlɪdʒ/ | **Knowledge** is more than just belief. |
| **justified true belief** | Knowledge is often defined as **justified true belief**. |
| **rationalism** /ˈræʃənəlɪzəm/ | **Rationalism** says we gain knowledge through reason. |
| **empiricism** /emˈpɪrɪsɪzəm/ | **Empiricism** says we gain knowledge through the senses. |



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| Word | Example |
|---|---|
| **scepticism** /ˈskeptɪsɪzəm/ | **Scepticism** doubts that we can know anything for sure. |
| **harm principle** | Mill's **harm principle** says we may limit freedom only to stop harm to others. |
| **Tao Te Ching** | Laozi wrote the **Tao Te Ching**. 《 》 |
| **non-action** | Laozi praised **non-action**: letting things happen naturally. |