

GCE 2004  
*June Series*



# Mark Scheme

## Philosophy *A2 Unit 5 – Texts (PLY5)*

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*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General*

**Levels-of-Response Marking Criteria**

Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels-of-response marking criteria. Question-specific marking notes are provided for reference on the following pages.

**Part (a)****Total: 14 marks**

- (i) 2 marks: A full answer in accordance with the mark scheme.  
1 mark: A partial answer.  
0 marks: An incorrect response.
- (ii) 4 - 6 marks: The candidate will select and apply relevant aspects of the passage in a directed and coherent manner. There will be few, if any, errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation.  
1 - 3 marks: The candidate will select and apply some relevant aspects in a directed manner. Some points will be omitted and there may be lack of clarity at the lower end. Errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation may be present.  
0 marks: No relevant aspects are selected.
- (iii) 4 - 6 marks: The candidate will select relevant material which displays a directed evaluative element. The central requirement of the question will be addressed in a coherent and well-expressed form.  
1 - 3 marks: Some relevant material will be selected but evaluation or criticism may be lacking or misdirected. There may be errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation.  
0 marks: No relevant knowledge will be displayed.

**Part (b)****Total: 11 marks**

Knowledge and understanding of text, showing an awareness of the arguments developed within it. The ability to identify, select and apply ideas and examples employed in the development of the philosopher's position, which involves a capacity to interpret text.

- 9 - 11 marks: The candidate shows detailed knowledge and understanding of the positions, concepts and argument, displaying an ability to select and apply relevant material in a sustained, coherent and well-structured form.
- 6 - 8 marks: The candidate displays either a detailed knowledge and understanding of limited aspects of the relevant material or a wide-ranging but non-specific grasp of the material. They will select and apply relevant information, but not draw on it fully, or leave important details out. The answer will be coherent and direct, but could contain passages that are not expressed clearly, or fail to sustain relevance.

3 - 5 marks: The candidate displays either a basic knowledge and general understanding of the material, or a limited grasp of at least one topical idea, selecting some relevant as well as some irrelevant material - but some knowledge will be effectively deployed. The answer will only partially address the question and could contain passages that are expressed very badly. There may be much repetition or assertion.

0 - 2 marks: This response is seriously incoherent or fragmentary, displaying little or no relevant knowledge.

**Part (c)****Total: 25 marks**

The ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate philosophical argument, showing awareness of weaknesses and strengths in the philosopher's position, and demonstrating the ability to express and defend their own positions, offering reasoned and supported judgements, and appropriate examples. This engages candidates' knowledge and understanding and their ability to select and apply relevant textual information. The candidate's ability to organise her/his response coherently and in good English will also be assessed.

20 - 25 marks: The candidate displays an ability to analyse, interpret and critically assess the issues and relevant evidence, supporting their own judgements with reasoned and considered argument. The response will read as an integrated whole developing in a coherent and fluent way. There will be few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

15 - 19 marks: The candidate demonstrates an ability to analyse and evaluate some relevant material and to form judgements relevant to the requirements of the question. The arguments and/or supporting material will lack the imagination, insight or penetration characteristic of the top band. There may be occasional errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

10 - 14 marks: The candidate will demonstrate a limited appreciation of the key issues. Supporting material may not always be well selected, but the ability to select some relevant material must be present. Lower marks may denote responses that are not always well integrated. At the higher end, evaluation must be present but will tend to lack penetration and/or depth. Some errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may be present.

5 - 9 marks: The candidate displays an ability to analyse and interpret a limited range of relevant material. Reasoned criticism will tend to be replaced by the assertion of positions. The question may be read as one-dimensional. There may be errors of reasoning and understanding. There may also be errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

0 - 4 marks: The candidate demonstrates little or no ability to interpret, analyse or evaluate relevant material. Responses are likely to be incoherent in relation to the requirements of the question. They may be fragmentary. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation may be intrusive.

**NB** The following marking notes are not prescriptive and do not constitute ‘model answers’; they are intended as an ‘aide-memoire’ for Examiners. Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels-of-response marking criteria.

**1.** *Text: Aristotle’s “Nicomachean Ethics”*

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the extract above:

- (i) what does Aristotle suggest as a first response to those who cite examples of bad pleasures? (2 marks)

That such pleasures are not really pleasant.

- (ii) how does Aristotle try to show that not all pleasures are desirable? (6 marks)

We would not regard something as pleasant if it appealed to an unhealthy disposition. Some pleasures can become undesirable if they are achieved in the wrong way. Pleasures admit of different kinds. Some things are pursued/avoided irrespective of consequences.

Text examples or other suitable examples may be used to illustrate these points.

- (iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Aristotle’s claim that pleasure is not *the* Good. (6 marks)

- (a) Statement of classical Hedonist position adapted accordingly.
- (b) Utilitarian view that consequences are all that do matter, preferably with examples.
- (c) Things regarded as good in themselves are only so regarded as they result in something self-evidently pleasurable and **this** is the ultimate justification for their pursuance.
- (d) Pleasures are only regarded as bad as a result of their impact on aggregated pleasure.
- (e) Statement of psychological Hedonism – man is so constituted by nature that he can only pursue his own pleasure – adapted accordingly.
- (f) Aristotle underestimates the ethical significance of pleasure as arbiter in matters of right and wrong; its use as a moral criterion.
- (g) Is it correct to claim that no one would pursue certain disgraceful acts even if there were no fear of unpleasant consequences? This would seem to imply that any legislation in such areas was redundant.

- (b) Outline and illustrate Aristotle’s distinction between voluntary and involuntary action. (11 marks)

It is important to make the distinction for purposes of legislation and moral judgement. Involuntary acts are done through either compulsion or ignorance. In the case of compulsion the agent does not contribute to the act; it is brought about by external events. In the case of a voluntary action the agent is the initiator of the action and contributes to it. Aristotle recognises the existence of borderline cases – examples. These are voluntary given the context, but they are not considered voluntary in the abstract. Such actions can be praised or blamed; some are pardonable. There are, however, actions which are never to be performed in spite of external pressures.

Involuntary acts are sub-divided into involuntary and not-voluntary. Repentance is all important in the ascription. The type of ignorance relevant to the ascription is that of the particular circumstances of the act; ignorance of purposes is not excusable hence moral responsibility is preserved.

- (c) Critically assess the Doctrine of the Mean as a guide in morality. (25 marks)

There should be some attempt to explain the doctrine. It is a doctrine concerned with the way to develop a virtuous character. The doctrine states that things are destroyed by excess and deficiency; virtue is a mean between the two extremes. Examples of bravery or temperance are likely to figure. We avoid excess and deficiency and this is how every art fulfils its function. Virtue must also aim at the mean in relation to the actions and passions. There is only one way of being good: the mean relative to us. What is a mean for us depends on the kind of person we are (wrestler example).

### Critical Points

1. Defence of Aristotle’s position, e.g. it is not intended to provide solutions to moral issues, but provides a rough guide as to how to act socially.
2. It is unclear how the doctrine would relate to moral dilemmas. There are cases where the virtues themselves may clash.
3. We do not know what kind, or how much, of a particular virtue any given person should aim for as this is relative to him. The mean is supposed to be determined by practical wisdom but there is a problem here. Aristotle seems to be saying that the good life can vary from person to person as it is relative to us, **and** that a life of moderation is right for us all. What is moderate for one person is immoderate for another and nothing particularly informative seems to have been said regarding the **content** of such lives.
4. There are theoretical deficiencies, e.g. (a) the doctrine is incomplete as there are admitted exceptions. We must therefore know these independently of the theory; (b) the theory is contrived in order to give it credibility – the invention of names for vices; (c) Aristotle’s examples might be discussed.
5. Do the questions, “what kind of a person ought I to be?” and “what is right relative to me?” either mean the same or have the same implications for moral actions?

6. Blame is proportional to the amount of deviation from the mean. So there must be considerable uniformity as to what counts as the mean in various cases – this must be the case as we blame people for what they do, not for what they do relative to themselves. He admits that there is a difficulty in specifying permissible deviations as he allows for much variation in individual cases.
7. To attempt to deal with the point above by making the appeal that the decision rests with perception may be regarded as uninformative.
8. Is Aristotle reducing the acquisition of virtue to the acquiring of a technique? The role of reason in a broad sense could be explored here.
9. Alternative ethical theories could be discussed in the way of comparison. They should be used to highlight points of contrast, strengths or weaknesses in Aristotle's thesis. Candidates should not simply **list** alternatives. They may use a strategy of considering an example and showing how Aristotle would deal with it in comparison to some other thesis.

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**2.** *Text: Hume’s “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding”*

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the extract above:

(i) identify the principles of association; (2 marks)

Resemblance, contiguity (time and place), cause and effect.

**2 marks, 1 mark for 2**

(ii) briefly explain and illustrate how the principles are said to operate; (6 marks)

This is a naturalistic account of how ideas, regarded as ‘images’, come together to give rise to what we call ‘thinking’. Examples are given to illustrate the principles: picture/original, contiguous rooms, wound/pain. The complete enumeration of these principles is supposed to provide an **exhaustive** account of thinking.

(iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Hume’s principles of association. (6 marks)

- (a) It is not at all clear as to how ‘images’ can be related in these ways. It seems that only contiguity in time is even a possibility.
- (b) Particular development or illustration of the above point, e.g. ‘resemblance’ will not do without the mind actively noting the ways in which the ideas resemble each other.
- (c) The mind is portrayed as passive, i.e. it is an account of what happens to ideas, rather than of what we do with them.
- (d) Hume is seriously confused. As Kemp-Smith has pointed out, just because objects in the world can be related in these ways, it does not follow that ideas in the mind can be. There is a difference between having an idea of a table next to a chair and an idea of a table being next to an idea of a chair.
- (e) Hume’s attempt at empirical psychology is misguided. A Newton of the mind has not been found as the mind does not operate on Newton-type principles. Alternative models might be referred to.
- (f) The rationality of thinking, the logical connections between ideas, is overlooked. Hume needs these to provide a rationale for his own theorising.



(b) Outline Hume's attempt to show that liberty is compatible with necessity. (11 marks)

The free-will problem has a long history and no apparent solution. Hume thinks that a clear understanding of the key terms is required. Such a clarification will show that there was no real problem. The problems centre on the terms 'liberty' and 'necessity'.

For Hume, our idea of necessity arises out of the constant conjunction of objects. Repetition, custom and habit determine the mind to infer one from the other. Such regularity is present in the voluntary acts of men. Human behaviour is as uniform as that of the natural order. This regularity is all we mean by 'necessity'. The only apparent difficulty is that we **feel** differently about them – but this feeling does not represent any real difference. By 'liberty' we are said to mean a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will. Free actions are not random; they are simply not subject to constraint. Hume's compatibilism involves claiming that an action is necessary (regular) and free (not subject to constraint).

(c) Critically assess Hume's account of how we acquire the concept of necessary connection. (25 marks)

Hume attempts to find a possible impression of 'power' or 'necessity': objects/events in the world, mind-body, mind-mind, God-laws of nature. These are all rejected as possible sources of such an impression. There must be some other principle of equal weight or authority – repetition. Custom/habit in relation to constant conjunction is the ultimate explanation. He provides us with two clear definitions of 'cause', one philosophical and the other psychological. Cause and effect are regarded as distinct. We have impressions of the distinct objects or events but not of an extra something called 'necessity'. Candidates will probably use examples to illustrate the thesis. Credit should be given for good illustrations.

### Critical Points

1. The central claim is incompatible with Hume's epistemological thesis that there can be no ideas without corresponding impressions. A clear exception has now been made. The point might also be argued through a discussion of the copy principle.
2. The importance of repetition can be questioned. It seems perfectly acceptable to assert causal connections without having had repeated occurrences of them. Examples might be given, especially from astronomy. A supporter of Hume could defend his position by claiming that, although we might have had no previous experience of these events, we have had experience of the constituents which comprise them. This, however, will lead to a further objection. See below:
3. Hume underestimates the organisational features of the mind, e.g. the ability to extrapolate, isolate, distinguish relevant features, etc. His account of the mind is one of a passive recipient and it is difficult to sustain the defence in (2) above while maintaining the passive model.
4. If Hume's account is correct, then how is it that we can and do distinguish causal connections from accidental generalisations?

5. Hume has no explanations as to why connections persist through time. This point can be developed into a discussion of natural necessity.
6. Hume's two definitions are incompatible with each other as accounts of what we mean by 'cause'. There are examples that fit one but not the other.
7. On his own principles, has Hume sufficient justification for talking about 'secret' causes?
8. How does our acquisition and application of the concept operate in cases of simultaneous events?
9. It could be argued that Hume has used or presupposed the concept of causation in his account of how we acquire it.
10. Candidates may use constant conjunction as the focus of their discussion, e.g. is it either necessary or sufficient for the ascription of causal connections?

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3. *Text: Mill’s “On Liberty”*

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the extract above:

(i) what is said to be the characteristic of those who choose their own life-plan? (2 marks)

He uses all his faculties.

(ii) briefly describe Mill’s case for encouraging individual development; (6 marks)

He uses faculties other than ape-like imitation, thus increasing his worth as a human being. Examples can be given. The alternative decreases his worth. The way in which we do things matters. Robot analogy to show what would be lost. There is a difference between a machine and a tree, growth and development are characteristic of a living thing.

(iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Mill’s individualism. (6 marks)

- (a) Mill assumes that we are all rational and responsible to an equal degree. Guidance might be needed in **some** cases, though this could involve problems in deciding which. Credit should be given for relevant use of examples.
- (b) The position is hard to reconcile with an undiluted utilitarianism. There seem to be two absolute principles operating and the possibility of a clash is genuine. Again, an example may be used to illustrate the point.
- (c) Candidates may argue for distinctions between advice/guidance/paternalism. We ought to be prepared to listen to others as this involves respecting their rationality.
- (d) How practicable or desirable is steering your own course in an interdependent community? Examples might be used of cases which may damage the community interest.
- (e) Given the bombardment of influences today, the vulnerable need some protection for their own good. This is preferable to their choosing disasters for themselves.
- (f) It’s not imitation that’s wrong, but **what** you imitate.

(b) Outline any **three** of Mill’s arguments in support of free discussion. (11 marks)

An outline of any **three** of the following:

- (1) The infallibility argument – refusing to listen amounts to an assumption of infallibility.
- (2) Truth and utility. Mill holds such a distinction to be dubious. The truth of an opinion is part of its utility and cannot be separated from it.
- (3) To prevent free discussion is bad for both dissenters and receivers of opinion. The latter would have their rational/mental development impaired.
- (4) The dead dogma argument, i.e. discussion is needed at least for keeping an opinion alive.
- (5) The supplement argument.
- (6) The heretical ideas argument – with the use of appropriate examples.

(c) Critically discuss Mill’s claim that democracy is a “tyranny of the majority”. (25 marks)

There could be some historical remarks concerning the limiting of the power of a ruler whose interests did not coincide with those of the ruled. A shift was then made to representative government – the idea here is that there is an identity of interest. A nation would not need to be protected from itself.

However, the will of the people can mean the will of the numerically greater or more politically active. Minorities might be oppressed. The oppression could involve law, public opinion, prejudice and superstition. This would amount to a tyranny. Mill argues that the majority must not dictate on moral issues.

### Critical Points

1. The term ‘tyranny’ evokes certain images (examples). Candidates may discuss whether our democracy at work produces the same images. If not, has Mill overstated his case?
2. The case needs overstating in order to sustain vigilance. There is a genuine danger (examples) and Mill was right to warn us against it.
3. One of the most dangerous tyrannies is a creeping tyranny – one that almost imperceptibly ‘creeps’ into our thinking. This was Mill’s concern, hence his wariness of public or current opinion.
4. Mill is not opposing majority rule but warning against the ascendancy of a dominant class that decides moral issues.
5. Mill is implying that the rightful claims of the individual are not exhausted by an examination of the prevailing social/political forces. It could be argued that such a claim could only be defended within a democratic framework and, therefore, the term ‘tyranny’ is misapplied to such a framework.

6. Is Mill claiming that **any** view or activity should be defended on the grounds that it is held or practised by some minority? Do we not have to consider what they involve? It seems that ultimate judgement here must lie with the moral majority as it is hard to see what the alternative is. In defence of Mill, the Harm Principle could be invoked here. Candidates may explore whether such a move would solve all problems that might arise in today's society.
7. It might be argued that Mill's position is not consistent with general utilitarian considerations. However, Mill is likely to reply that such considerations also involve lessons of history which we ignore at our peril.
8. A moral consensus is necessary for a unified or cohesive society. Toleration can be such a value without implying unlimited application.
9. Mill allows society to be ultimate arbiter in what is necessary for its protection. Mill does not seem to regard this as a tyranny – is he consistent? Candidates may also unpack the term 'protection'.
10. The whole issue of minority pursuits must be related to Mill's conception of Man as a progressive being.

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4. Text: Nietzsche’s “Beyond Good and Evil”

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the extract above:

(i) identify any **two** features that are said to belong to the essence of life; (2 marks)

Any two of: appropriating, injuring, overpowering, being harsh, forcing, incorporation or exploitation of the weak.

(ii) briefly describe how Nietzsche regards our social or moral principles; (6 marks)

Inasmuch as they deny the will to power, they deny life. At best they result in a kind of etiquette. When sentimental frailty is stripped away, the will to deny life is revealed. Morals are undercut by the more fundamental, organic, will to power. This is the case even within a cohesive class – they treat others in the way they refrain from treating each other. This is governed by the will to power, not by principles. Moral judgements are irrelevant to the will to power.

(iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Nietzsche’s view of exploitation. (6 marks)

- (a) To see exploitation as so fundamental requires a fairly one-sided diet of examples. Other examples are available and other features described as ‘fundamental’. This would be the correct, neutral approach.
- (b) Nietzsche’s account of exploitation implies much unpleasantness for many. Surely, it is equally ‘natural’ for them to have moral principles for protection.
- (c) Are the exploiters responsible for what they do or are they merely the instantiations of an organic process? There is a strain here between what is natural and what is noble or right.
- (d) Nietzsche’s ‘exploitation’ is beyond good and evil (undercuts morality) but his writing is too similar to a moral crusade. There could be a problem here of consistency.
- (e) If Nietzsche is describing natural facts, what follows from them? Although he would not wish to claim moral status for exploitation, there is a clear sense in which he thinks it **ought** to prevail. It might be argued that the nature of this ‘ought’ is unclear.
- (f) It is not possible to advocate the treatment of others in this way without raising moral concerns. How we treat others is an irreducibly moral issue and he cannot make this vanish with descriptions of organic processes.

- (g) Why is nature so important? It could be argued that our moral capacity and sensitivity distinguishes us from other features of the natural order. It may also be argued that because something is 'natural' is not in itself a reason for admiring it or pursuing it. Counter examples are available.
- (h) If the exploitative state of affairs existed between individuals, classes and nations we would have a recipe for chaos and suffering. Would it not then be 'natural' to oppose it?

(b) Outline any **two** of Nietzsche's criticisms of religious belief. (11 marks)

Candidates should focus on **two** of the following:

- (1) Religion is described as an ongoing suicide of reason, the description of religion as a neurosis.
- (2) Christianity is guilty of reversing the natural order of values.
- (3) The ladder of sacrifice, resulting in the sacrifice of God for nothingness.
- (4) Christianity has resulted in the sacrifice of freedom, pride and spirit.
- (5) Religion becomes dangerous when regarded as an end in itself.
- (6) Christianity is responsible for European mediocrity and the herd morality.
- (7) The lurid description of saintliness or similar.

(c) Critically assess Nietzsche's view of past philosophy as the expression of prejudice. (25 marks)

He is questioning the foundation of Philosophy. There are some *ad hominem* arguments, but Nietzsche is also concerned with the language that leads philosophers astray. He questions the status of their writing. What they regarded as pure or objective knowledge is tainted by their own self-interest and their own physiological constitution. They are guilty of something similar to a Freudian rationalisation. The subject-centred grammar of our language means that we are imposing our interpretation on the world.

Concepts, including causality, are invented not given. Our main concern should be with the function of concepts: are they life-promoting? Among Nietzsche's targets that might be discussed are: Kant (synthetic *a priori* and the categorical imperative); Plato's Theory of Forms, Stoicism, Idealism; Leibniz, the Cartesian cogito, the traditional formulations of the free-will problem and laws of nature.

**Critical Points**

1. The problem of Truth. There are a number of related issues here. It seems that on Nietzsche's own account we should not question the truth of his philosophical claims, but just ask what function do they have. This is hard to reconcile with the way the claims are made. He seems to be offering a neutral account of what past philosophers have done, and yet such neutrality would be difficult within his own brand of perspectivism. Neutrality ought to be pursued as a goal in Philosophy.
2. He ridicules Kant for arguing from possibilities to faculties (opium example) but uses similar arguments to justify talk about instincts and will.
3. His entire strategy is flawed: you cannot dispose of a thesis by attacking the motives behind it, e.g. even if Plato wanted an elitist society, this in itself fails to dispose of the Theory of Forms.
4. Does Nietzsche's project involve special pleading? This issue could be discussed within the context of whether he is exempting himself from the strictures of language.
5. He tells us that the writings of past philosophers are caused by their physiological states. This is an alleged fact. However, we are also told that causation is a fiction.
6. There can be individual defences of the philosophers criticised. Descartes did address the issue of the nature of the self; sense-data theorists did attempt to secure uniqueness of reference.
7. There could be discussion of Nietzsche's treatment of traditional problems, e.g. it is too easy to dismiss 'the will' as a common prejudice – one should be suspicious of 'prejudices' which occur on a universal scale. There could be a defence of Schopenhauer, e.g. the most Nietzsche can claim is that he was wrong about the will in particular, but not mental simples in general. Nietzsche himself needs these to set up the multiplicity claim.
8. Realist positions might be used to claim that there can be good, independent reasons for employing the linguistic categories we do.
9. It might be argued that Nietzsche has used only those examples of philosophy which suit his purpose. Candidates may offer other examples as counter-examples to the prejudice thesis. It is not obvious how Nietzsche would accommodate the study of logic. It would be hard to do this simply by degrading 'Truth' when his own theorising must presuppose or retain the concept.
10. Could Nietzsche allow for or accommodate a philosopher coming to a repugnant conclusion?



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**5.** *Text: Russell’s “The Problems of Philosophy”*

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the extract above:

(i) why is the probability of a general law less than that of a particular case? (2 marks)

Particular cases can be true without the general law being true.

(ii) briefly describe Russell’s formulation of the inductive principle; (6 marks)

In regard to particular things or events, when A and B have been constantly associated without exception, the greater the probability that this will be so in a new case. When this has happened enough times, the probability of its continuance approaches certainty. The probability of a general law is also increased by repetition: the more often A and B are associated without exception, the more probable it is that they are always so associated. A sufficient number of cases of association of A and B will make the general law approach certainty.

(iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Russell’s treatment of the problem of induction. (6 marks)

- (a) There was a problem of which Russell was aware regarding what counts as a ‘sufficient’ number. The example of the swans might be used, or other examples that are more difficult to deal with. Simple inductive paradoxes could be used.
- (b) Not all cases of constant association result in the formulation of general laws. Examples of statistical accidents might be used and, ideally, a brief discussion of how Russell could identify them/distinguish them from genuine laws.
- (c) Russell makes no reference to natural necessity and/or support for counterfactuals. His account is therefore incomplete/no ultimate justification.
- (d) Candidates may question the importance of repeated associations. Laws have been formulated without them – how is this possible?
- (e) There may be appeals to the practice of science. Giving up a law is not as simple as Russell assumes. There is a reluctance to give them up and potential counter-examples may be explained (away) in order to preserve the law. Examples from social science could also be explored here.

- (f) Russell needs more on the subsumption of the particular under the general and why we do this. We are not inclined to say that the colour of a particular animal is a law of nature.
- (g) We need a more detailed account of which features of an observation we isolate as relevant and what is our rationale for so doing.

(b) Outline and briefly illustrate what Russell means by the Laws of Thought. (11 marks)

There are a number of principles not susceptible to proof or disproof by experience. They are our means of making inferences and being able to tell whether certain conclusions follow from given premises. Russell sets out some of these principles, from 'p' and 'p $\supset$ q' we can derive 'q'. Such knowledge is certain and independent of experience. There are other logical principles which go under the name 'Laws of Thought'.

- (1) Law of Identity: whatever is, is.
- (2) Law of Contradiction: a proposition cannot be both true and false.
- (3) Law of excluded Middle: a proposition is either the case or it is not.

For Russell, what is important about these principles is their necessity – they could not be otherwise. That is why it is misleading to call them laws of thought. It is misleading to the extent that that label has psychological connotations. These are not laws that describe how, as a matter of fact, people happen to think, but rather the principles that must hold if we are to think at all. They also give some support to rationalism, though this is limited.

(c) Critically assess Russell's rejection of Idealism. (25 marks)

There might be some general discussion of Berkeley's Idealism. This could include his denial of Locke's material substance – the support of qualities. Thus what we are left with are the qualities. The meaning of *esse est percipi* should be clear. In Berkeley's case, although the principle implies mind-dependency, it does not imply human minds. The importance of the mind of God should be made clear.

Russell wants to attack the notion of mind-dependency. He claims there is an equivocation in Berkeley's use of 'idea' – sense data and the objects themselves. Russell wants to reject the claim that for something to be known, it must be mental. The act of awareness is mental but not the thing apprehended. Distinction between in the mind and before the mind needs to be made. To say that all we can know is mental would be to limit the power of the mind.

### Critical Points

1. Russell fails to do justice to Berkeley's primary reason for formulating his thesis, namely the attack on Locke's matter. It could be claimed that Berkeley was being a consistent empiricist in denying Locke's matter.
2. Russell should have noted that on Berkeley's account, no actual object of experience is lost (Dr Johnson).

3. Russell concedes far too much to Berkeley with his endorsement of the sense-data theory. It can be argued that once you do this, you are never in a position to distinguish sense-data from physical objects as all you have are sense-data, or Berkeley's 'ideas'.
4. Related to (3) above, candidates may question what right Russell has in claiming that we can **know** things with which we have no acquaintance.
5. Russell can claim his hypothesis regarding the external world is more economical than Berkeley's, but surely there is more to it than that.
6. Would knowledge of the contents of God's mind be a limiting feature of our minds? If we could know the contents of an infinite/perfect mind, would that be a limitation? Russell could have argued that Berkeley's thesis is over-reliant on God. If God is removed, the entire system collapses.
7. The dismissal of Berkeley is too simplistic, e.g. he did not just fail to understand the meaning of the term 'idea'.

**NB** The following marking notes are not prescriptive and do not constitute ‘model answers’; they are intended as an ‘aide-memoire’ for Examiners. Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels-of-response marking criteria.

6. Text: Ayer’s “*Language, Truth and Logic*”

**Total for this question: 50 marks**

(a) With close reference to the passage above:

(i) how does Ayer account for the power of mathematics and logic to surprise us?

(2 marks)

By appealing to the limitations of our reasoning. (Or failing to grasp consequences of our definitions).

(ii) briefly describe Ayer’s account of mathematics and logic;

(6 marks)

All such propositions are analytic, they merely unfold definitions. Mathematics is completely tautologous. A being of supreme intellect could see immediately the implications of all definitions. Maths/logic are rule systems for tautological transformation. Error is explained by appeal to the inherent complexity of some of the definitions. The creative aspects are explained in terms of our choice of symbolic definitions.

(iii) suggest and briefly develop a criticism of Ayer’s view of mathematical knowledge.

(6 marks)

- (a) Standard criticisms of empiricist accounts of mathematics, e.g. mathematics is not straightforwardly analytic in the sense that a kitten is a young cat. ‘12’ does not **mean** ‘8 + 4’ any more than ‘6 + 6’. There might be references to Kant.
- (b) Does Ayer’s analysis of mathematics in terms of definitions do justice to the ability of mathematics to provide information about the world or its use in theoretical physics?
- (c) Does mathematics result in the discovery of knowledge which is independent of us? Many mathematicians, including Descartes, talk of a sense of discovery rather than invention. This might be hard to reconcile with the unfolding of our definitions. Ayer’s account is too conventionalist.
- (d) The point in (c) above might be made via examples of what have been regarded as ‘discoveries’. Wiles’s proof of Fermat’s Last Theorem could be used.
- (e) Ayer equates the meaning of a definition with its consequences. This implies that we do not properly understand a term until we know all its consequences. Is our knowledge provisional or indeterminate? This seems odd as we must **know** what a prime number is before we can understand, e.g. Goldbach’s conjecture.

- (f) How would Ayer deal with a mathematical conjecture that was shown to be false by use of an inductive method? For example,  $2^{2^n} + 1$  is prime, was shown to be false by the discovery of a number generated by the expression that was not prime.
- (g) There might be some discussion of Ayer's appeal to a 'supreme intellect'. Is he making his thesis true by definition? Is the concept so appealing when dealing with infinite quantities?

(b) Outline Ayer's account of the function of philosophy. (11 marks)

Ayer's conception of philosophy is often expressed as the handmaiden of the sciences. Philosophy is concerned with analysis and clarification of concepts. It does not issue in theories about reality, it does not deduce a picture of reality from first principles. There are no first principles of this kind and no *a priori* principles (tautologies). It is the business of science to construct pictures of reality in a piecemeal manner. Philosophy can analyse the logical structure of such propositions but it does not formulate the propositions. The function of Philosophy is wholly critical/analytical. Locke, Berkeley and Hume are portrayed as analysts rather than speculative thinkers. Descartes's approach is rejected. Philosophy analyses propositions **not** things. It is linguistic in characters, not factual.

(c) Critically assess Ayer's claim that sentences about material objects can be translated into sentences about sense-contents. (25 marks)

Ayer makes this claim in his attempt to solve the philosophical problem of perception. His solution is essentially a linguistic one. The question of what is the nature of a physical object is a demand for a definition, a definition in use. Symbols which represent physical objects can be replaced by sense-content symbols and the resultant propositions are equivalent. Physical objects are **logical** constructions out of sense-contents. He is not talking about the composition of physical objects. He explains that for two or more sense-contents to belong to the same material thing, relations of continuity and resemblance must hold.

### Critical Points

1. Ayer claims that, e.g. statements about tables are logical constructions out of sense-contents. He says this is not a factual statement but, according to the verification principle, this means it must be analytic or meaningless. It is hard to see how it can be analytic ('table' does not mean sense-contents) as Ayer himself remarks that they do not have the same meaning. What status is left?
2. What account of causation can Ayer give? Past or present unobserved causes seem to derive their causal status from being unfulfilled conditionals/possibilities.
3. Statements about sense-contents do not **logically** entail statements about the existence of a physical object. There is no relation of deductibility between statements about actual/possible sense-contents and statements about physical objects or vice-versa. This blocks Ayer's translation project.

4. How can Ayer give an account of perceptual depth that does not incorporate a reference to the observer's body? No material object, including the body, can be used as a reference point. Ayer's response was to dismiss this as a defect in all natural languages. Perhaps a 'defect' on such a grand scale should lead us to question the thesis.
5. Phenomenalism rests on the acceptance of the sense-data theory. A relevant and directed criticism of arguments to support such a theory should be rewarded.
6. If we say that two people are looking at the same object then, according to Ayer, this reduces to saying that they are experiencing similar sense-contents. But how can Ayer account for **why** it is that they are experiencing similar sense-contents?
7. One might question whether the central problem of perception is a linguistic one. This is very much tied to Ayer's conception of philosophy and that can be questioned.
8. It is not clear that the claim that what we are aware of in perception are sense-contents is a purely linguistic claim or that it reduces to one.
9. Ayer's distinction between equivalence and meaning is unclear. The translated sentences are said to be equivalent without having the same meaning. The thesis that meaning can be explained in terms of psychological effect can be questioned, e.g. two different propositions having the same effect or the same proposition having a different effect in two listeners.
10. The claim leads to solipsism.