

ENROLMENT BOOKLET
COMPLETE THIS BEFORE YOUR FIRST LESSON

UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS AND ARGUMENT



NAME _____

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WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Philosophy is about thinking carefully and providing arguments to support conclusions. Philosophers place great importance on accuracy – they try hard to make sure what they are saying is right. To help you in this we have produced this workbook in which you will look at some key terms and different types of argument.

The key terms will help us with language when discussing whether a claim is true and how we know it's true.

You can find lots of support for this workbook either by looking at videos linked via QR codes or by going onto Godalming Online and looking at the links there.

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KEY TERMS

A PRIORI AND A POSTERIORI

1. The *a priori/a posteriori* distinction is about what evidence we have a claim is true.

An *a priori* statement does not need any further evidence from experience – you can figure out if it's true just by thinking about it (provided you already know the meaning of the terms).

An *a posteriori* statement needs evidence from experience (using our five senses) before we can decide whether it is true or not.

For example: "A dog is a mammal" is ***a priori*** because I do not need to go and check every single dog to confirm they are all mammals – I know, just by thinking about it that for a dog to be a dog it has to be a mammal.

"The chair has four legs" is ***a posteriori*** because it is possible that a chair has three legs, or wheels, or is just attached to a wall, I would have to see the chair myself (or use some kind of other sense data – someone could tell me and I could believe them or I could touch the chair) before I knew it has four legs.

For each of the claims below, tick the box which best describes how you would know the claim is true:

- a. A triangle has three sides

- I know this is true without needing to check each triangle (***a priori***)
- I would need to check all triangles to ensure there is no exception (***a posteriori***)

- b. The sky is blue

- I know this is true without needing to see the sky (***a priori***)
- I would need to look to confirm this was true at the time (***a posteriori***)

- c. Boris Johnson is Prime Minister

- I know this is true without needing to check the latest news (***a priori***)
- I would need to check the news before I was 100% sure – just to make sure he hadn't been replaced. (***a posteriori***)



Stuck? – Use the camera on your phone to scan the QR code, or click on the QR code for a helpful video.

d. $2 + 2 = 4$

- I know this is true without having to use my senses (*a priori*)
- I would need to keep checking this was true – say by picking up two objects and another two objects and checking it always makes four (*a posteriori*)

e. A bachelor is an unmarried man

- I know this is true without having to check each bachelor (*a priori*)
- I would need to ask every bachelor to ensure there was no exception (*a posteriori*)

2. Looking at the statements in question 1, can you give your own examples of *a priori* and *a posteriori* statements?

a. *A priori*: _____

b. *A posteriori*: _____

NECESSARY AND CONTINGENT

3. The necessary/contingent distinction is about whether it is possible that a statement is false.

A necessary truth is guaranteed to be true – the opposite would be a logical contradiction

A contingent truth is possible to imagine that it could be false.

For example: “A dog is a mammal” is **necessary** because the opposite – “A dog is not a mammal” is a logical contradiction, it is impossible for there to be a dog that is not a mammal

“The chair has four legs” is **contingent** because the statement “the chair has not got four legs” is not logically impossible – we can imagine a chair with a different number of legs, or with wheels.

a. A triangle has three sides

- The opposite (A triangle does not have three sides) is impossible (**necessary**)
- It is possible that a triangle exists that doesn't have three sides (**contingent**)



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- b. The sky is blue
 - The opposite (the sky is not blue) is impossible (**necessary**)
 - It is possible that the sky is a different colour (grey, black, red) (**contingent**)
- c. Boris Johnson is Prime Minister
 - The opposite (Johnson is not PM) is impossible (**necessary**)
 - It is possible to imagine a world or a time in which Johnson is not the Prime Minister. (**contingent**)
- d. $2 + 2 = 4$
 - The opposite ($2 + 2 \neq 4$) is impossible (**necessary**)
 - It is possible to add two and two and get an amount other than four (**contingent**)
- e. A bachelor is an unmarried man
 - The opposite (A bachelor is married or a bachelor is a woman) is impossible (**necessary**)
 - It is possible that there is a married and/or female bachelor (**contingent**)

4. Looking at the statements in question 3, can you give your own examples of necessary and contingent statements?

a. Necessary: _____

b. Contingent: _____

ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC

5. The analytic/synthetic distinction is about whether the statement is true by definition.

An analytic statement is true by definition. You only need to look at (analyse) the words to know if the statement is true.

A synthetic statement is true by experience. You need more information than just the words to know

whether the statement is true.

For example: "A dog is a mammal" is **analytic** because the I only need to analyse the definition of dog ("A domesticated carnivorous **mammal**") to know that it is true.

"The chair has four legs" is **synthetic** because the definition of chair does not require it to have four legs

b. A triangle has three sides

"Three sides" is part of the definition of "triangle" (**analytic**)

"Three sides" is not part of the definition of "triangle" (**synthetic**)

b. The sky is blue

"Blue" is part of the definition of "sky" (**analytic**)

"Blue" is not part of the definition of "sky" (**synthetic**)

c. Boris Johnson is Prime Minister

"Boris Johnson" is part of the definition of "Prime Minister" (**analytic**)

"Boris Johnson" is not part of the definition of "Prime Minister". (**synthetic**)

d. $2 + 2 = 4$

" $2 + 2$ " is part of the definition of "4" (**analytic**)

" $2 + 2$ " is not part of the definition of "4" (**synthetic**)

e. A bachelor is an unmarried man

"Unmarried man" is part of the definition of "bachelor" (**analytic**)

"Unmarried man" is not part of the definition of "bachelor" (**synthetic**)

6. Looking at the statements in question 3, can you give your own examples of analytic and synthetic statements?

a. Analytic: _____

b. Synthetic: _____



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SUMMING UP

- 7. Watch this video (scan using your phone's camera or click the image):



- a. Write down a statement which is *a priori*, necessary, and analytic:

- b. Write down a statement which is *a posteriori*, contingent, and synthetic:

Optional question (because it's really difficult!) – do you think it's possible for a true statement to be a different mixture of the above distinctions? (eg *a priori* and synthetic) If so give an example.

ARGUMENT

Philosophers use reasoning and arguments to support their views. It is important on this course that you are able to identify arguments, and to understand the structure of an argument. An argument attempts to demonstrate that something is true. In their simplest form, arguments are made up of **premises** and **conclusions**.

8. A **premise** must make a claim that is either true or false. Which of the below sentences could be premises?
- Is this the road to Edinburgh?
 - Everyone wants to be happy.
 - Hand in your homework tomorrow at 9am
 - Holy crap!
 - Shakespeare was born on April 26th, 1564.
 - Cristiano Ronaldo is a Brazilian footballer
9. A **conclusion** is literally what an argument concludes. For each of the below arguments highlight the conclusion:
- Socrates is a man, all men are mortal, therefore Socrates is mortal
 - She has coronavirus; I know this because she has a high temperature, a cough and has lost her sense of taste and smell.
 - Oscar swore at the teacher, he is badly behaved. Also, he stole Brian's lunch money.
 - Godalming College offers the courses I want to study, has great teaching and extra-curricular opportunities, students enjoy studying there and do well in their exams. Godalming College is the best place for me to do my A-Levels.

DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

10. A **deductive argument** is one where the conclusion is *guaranteed* to be true if the premises are true.

Here is a classic example:

Premise 1: Socrates is a man

Premise 2: All men are mortal

Conclusion: Socrates is mortal.

This argument is **deductive** because the conclusion (Socrates is mortal) certain to be true if both premises are true (which they are). It is **valid** because it has the correct structure, and it is **sound** because it is valid and the premises and conclusion are all true. For each of the below arguments determine whether they are valid, sound and have a true conclusion:

11. Premise 1: All birds are mammals

Premise 2: A lion is a bird

Conclusion: A lion is a mammal.

This argument is (tick all that apply):

- Valid (*if* the premises are true the conclusion has to be true)
- Sound (valid *and* the premises are true)
- Has a true conclusion

b. Premise 1: Godalming College is in Surrey

Premise 2: There are 20 foot tall people in Godalming College

Premise 3: There are ghosts in Godalming College

Conclusion: There are ghosts and 20 foot tall people in Surrey.

This argument is (tick all that apply):

- Valid (*if* the premises are true the conclusion has to be true)
- Sound (valid *and* the premises are true)
- Has a true conclusion



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c. Premise 1: The Premier League team that has the most points at the end of the season will be Premier League champions for that year.

Premise 2: Man City had the most points at the end of the 20/21 Premier League season

Conclusion: Man City are league champions

This argument is (tick all that apply):

- Valid (*if* the premises are true the conclusion has to be true)
- Sound (valid *and* the premises are true)
- Has a true conclusion

d. Premise 1: Buckingham Palace is in London

Premise 2: London is the capital of England.

Conclusion: Elizabeth II is Queen of England

This argument is (tick all that apply):

- Valid (*if* the premises are true the conclusion has to be true)
- Sound (valid *and* the premises are true)
- Has a true conclusion

12. Come up with your own arguments:

a. A deductive argument that is sound:

b. A valid argument, that is not sound (at least one of the premises are false)

- c. An invalid argument (where the conclusion is not guaranteed by the truth of the premises):

INDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

13. An inductive argument differs from a deductive argument in that the conclusion of an inductive argument is supported by its premises but is not guaranteed. A famous one is known as the black swan argument:

Premise: Every swan I have ever seen is white

Conclusion: All swans are white.

This is an inductive argument because the premise does not guarantee the conclusion, but it does support the conclusion. As it happens the conclusion here is false, there are black swans in the southern hemisphere. An inductive argument can be strong or weak, but it can never guarantee the conclusion. Some inductive arguments are listed below. Rank them from strongest to weakest:

- a. Premise: The train to Godalming was late yesterday
Conclusion: The train to Godalming will be late today
- b. Premise: The train to Godalming has been late every day for the last month
Conclusion: The train to Godalming will be late today
- c. Premise: The sun has risen everyday for the last 4.5 billion years
Conclusion: The sun will rise tomorrow
- d. Premise 1: A cough, high temperature, and loss of smell and taste are symptoms of Coronavirus
Premise 2: The patient has a cough, high temperature and loss of smell and taste
Conclusion: The patient has coronavirus



Stuck? – Use the camera on your phone to scan the QR code, or click on the QR code for a helpful video.

e. Premise 1: Rain causes the ground to be wet

Premise 2: The ground is wet

Conclusion: It has just rained

f. Premise: My grandmother listens to Kanye West

Conclusion: All grannies listen to Kanye West

Place the letter for each argument on the scale below:



14. Write down your own arguments:

a. A strong inductive argument:

b. A weak inductive argument:
