

Philosophy Year 1 Transition Work 2025

Welcome to A-level philosophy. Philosophy is a rigorously academic subject. You will be required to read extensively, think deeply and write analytically. If you are logically-minded and detail-oriented, then this is the subject for you! Along the way, we will study to the following topics:

- Epistemology
- Moral Philosophy
- The Metaphysics of God
- The Metaphysics of Mind

Compulsory task 1:

A foundational skill required to 'do' philosophy is critical thinking. Complete 'Lesson 1: Fundamentals' and 'Lesson 2: Fallacies'. Follow the link below:

[Introduction to Critical Thinking, Part 1 \(practice\) | Khan Academy](#)

Compulsory task 2:

Now that you are philosophically 'warmed-up', you can begin your research task. You will read a section of David Chalmers' book, *Reality +: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy* (2021). David Chalmers is a world-renowned philosopher, particularly interested in the question of how to define what the mind *is*. In this fascinating book, Chalmers uses the concept of virtual worlds to explore the fundamental questions of life.

- i. You must read the introduction ('Adventures in techno philosophy') and then choose a section that interests you, e.g. 'Part 1 Knowledge', and read all the relevant chapters in that section (e.g. chapters 3-5).
- ii. You should take hand-written notes or print off the chapter (you could even buy the book if you would like to but this is not expected) and annotate them, as you did with texts in your English Literature GCSE.
- iii. Bring them with you to your first philosophy lesson. **Important note:** In one of your first lessons, you will be asked to do a piece of writing exploring how Chalmers deals with the topic explored in your chosen section. The response will be 'open book', so you may use the notes you took during your summer research to help you.

Choose from the options below:

Part 1 VIRTUAL WORLDS

- Chapter 1 Is this the real life?
- Chapter 2 What is the simulation hypothesis?

Part 2 KNOWLEDGE

- Chapter 3 Do we know things?
- Chapter 4 Can we prove there is an external world?
- Chapter 5 Is it likely that we're in a simulation?

Part 3 REALITY

- Chapter 6 What is reality?
- Chapter 7 Is God a hacker in the next universe up?
- Chapter 8 Is the universe made of information?
- Chapter 9 Did simulation create its from bits?

Part 4 REAL VIRTUAL REALITY

- Chapter 10 Do virtual reality headsets create reality?
- Chapter 11 Are virtual reality devices illusion machines?
- Chapter 12 Does augmented reality lead to alternative facts?
- Chapter 13 Can we avoid being deceived by deepfakes?

Part 5 MIND

- Chapter 14 How do mind and body interact in a virtual world?
- Chapter 15 Can there be consciousness in a digital world?
- Chapter 16 Does augmented reality extend the mind?

Part 6 VALUE

- Chapter 17 Can you lead a good life in a virtual world?
- Chapter 18 Do simulated lives matter?
- Chapter 19 How should we build a virtual society?

Part 7 FOUNDATIONS

- Chapter 20 What do our words mean in virtual worlds?

- Chapter 21 Do dust clouds run computer programs?
- Chapter 22 Is reality a mathematical structure?
- Chapter 23 Have we fallen from the Garden of Eden?

Optional fun task:

Watch one of the following films:

1. *Inception* (2010)
2. *The Matrix* (1999)
3. *The Truman Show* (1998)
4. *Ready Player One* (2018)
5. *Free Guy* (2021)

Consider how the nature of truth, reality and/or knowledge is explored in this film.