

Chapter 1

What Is Philosophy?

Thinking Philosophically About Life

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Philosophy is a way of thinking that allows one to think more deeply about one's beliefs and about meaning in life. It is not content with simply stating what one believes, but is a discipline that seeks to uncover the deeper principles that one's beliefs are based upon. The skill of critical thinking is extremely important to this endeavor. In critical thinking, we examine various points of view and seek out the best reasons for believing in them. With critical thinking comes the discipline of argumentation, in which one seeks to explicitly show how one's principles lead to certain conclusions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain what the nature of philosophy is.
- Describe the process and qualities of critical thinking.
- Explain the nature and structure of arguments.
- Identify and describe the main branches of philosophy.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What is philosophy? Why is it worth studying?
2. What is critical thinking? How is critical thinking important to philosophy?
3. What is deficient about the "Garden of Eden" and "anything goes" stages of thinking? Why would someone want to progress from those stages into the "critical thinking" stage?
4. Why are generalizations often fallacious? How can one best guard against generalizing too hastily?
5. Why are causal fallacies committed? What do they have in common with each other?

Test Bank

The following assessment has been created for in-class use. This assessment is available through Pearson's MyTest website—allowing for easy access for creating your own tests. Please contact your local Pearson sales representative to learn about the options available. Visit <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/relocator>.

Multiple Choice Questions

Difficulty: 1 = Easy; 2 = Medium; 3 = Challenging

Choose the best possible answer for each of the following.

1. Philosophy is of greatest help in the search for _____.
A. knowledge
B. skills
C. meaning
D. possibilities

Answer: C

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

2. Philosophy can most of all help a person to think more _____.
A. quickly
B. fairly
C. easily
D. critically

Answer: D

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

3. The ancient Greek definition of happiness is based on _____.
A. living to your potential
B. doing what you want
C. knowing yourself
D. knowing the right

Answer: A

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

4. Long ago, the field of philosophy was _____ than it is today.
A. better
B. more difficult
C. less difficult
D. broader

Answer: D

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

5. The term *dialectical* means _____.
A. controversial
B. analyzing all sides
C. always changing
D. consistent

Answer: B

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

6. Which of the following does "doing philosophy" require most of all?
A. devoting a lot of time to thinking
B. considering whether you might be wrong
C. knowing what you believe
D. having good writing skills

Answer: B

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

7. Issues and statements must be defined as clearly as possible so that _____.
A. their exact meaning can be determined
B. they can be as correct as possible
C. they can be as concise as possible
D. they are not too controversial

Answer: A

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

8. Why is it important to determine and state one's assumptions?
A. so that one can be more convincing
B. it is the standard way to formally communicate
C. so that it is clear what principles one's reasoning is based on
D. it is the best way to minimize controversy

Answer: C

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

9. Consequences of arguments are important mainly because _____.
A. They are required to make the argument work.
B. They tell whether the argument is logical.
C. They contribute to the argument's persuasiveness.
D. They show what other principles the arguer must be committed to.

Answer: D

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

10. *Consistency* between beliefs is important because _____.
A. it is important to avoid contradictions
B. arguments must explain the reason for beliefs
C. arguments must clearly state their principles
D. beliefs must be supported by arguments

Answer: A

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

11. Why is the "Garden of Eden" stage of thinking unsustainable?
A. People eventually learn to think critically.
B. People realize that authorities may be unreliable.
C. People realize that they need to clearly state their principles.
D. People learn to argue for their point of view.

Answer: B

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

12. Which is the most significant hallmark of the "Stage 3" critical thinker?
A. Knowing what one believes.
B. Recognizing that not all "authorities" may be reliable.
C. Recognizing that there are a number of possible positions to take on an issue.
D. Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of various theories.

Answer: D

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

13. The role of premises in an argument is to _____.
A. take part in a dialogue
B. give the rules for argumentation
C. give reasons for a conclusion
D. clearly state what one believes

Answer: C

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

14. A deductive argument's purpose is to _____.
A. prove that a conclusion is true
B. show that a conclusion is plausible
C. indicate that a conclusion is likely
D. state a conclusion as precisely as possible

Answer: A

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

15. An argumentative fallacy is _____.
A. an argument that is not as good as it could be
B. an argument that has false premises
C. an argument with a false conclusion
D. not deductively valid

Answer: D

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding

Essay Questions

1. What are the different branches of philosophy, and what are they about?

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

2. Explain what a fallacy is. What kind of mistake is someone making when they commit a formal fallacy in an argument?

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

3. What is the subject matter of ethics in philosophy? How are these questions approached?

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

4. How does the study of philosophy contribute to the search for a meaningful life?

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding, Evaluation

5. What is the subject matter of philosophy? As an academic subject, what does it teach?

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

6. What is "wisdom," and how does philosophy relate to it?

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

7. Describe the nature of critical thinking. What advantage does the critical thinker have over someone who lacks that skill?

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding, Analysis

8. Describe and explain the steps in the critical-thinking process.

Difficulty: 1

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Understanding

9. What is wrong with "relativism" as a thought process? What does the relativist need to understand?

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding, Evaluation

10. What do you think you can fruitfully learn from the study of philosophy? How can you apply philosophy to your life?

Difficulty: 2

Bloom's Taxonomy: Application, Evaluation