

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is there something to be said for boredom?
2. Should historical fiction keep to the facts?
3. Are some languages more beautiful than others?
4. Is online learning real learning?
5. Does a religion have to be old?
6. Should the BBC be a subscription service?
7. Why travel?
8. 'Does guilt promote creativity?' (MARTHA NUSSBAUM).
9. Have video referee systems improved sport?
10. 'What would I eliminate if I had a magic wand? Overconfidence' (DANIEL KAHNEMAN). Discuss.
11. Should genetic enhancement of intelligence be explored?
12. Is the gig economy opportunity or exploitation?
13. 'Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence' (TONI MORRISON). Discuss.
14. Vaccine passports: a sensible public health measure or an assault on our liberty?
15. Defend the indefensible.
16. Surveys of life satisfaction suggest that, across the world, happiness declines from the teenage years to middle age and increases thereafter. Why might that be?
17. Will eating animals be condemned by future generations?
18. 'What matters as much to us as the house in which we live is the one next door to it' (ROGER SCRUTON). Discuss.
19. Are older politicians better politicians?
20. Is your belief about evolution based on faith or reason?
21. For how long should wars be memorialized?

[OVER]

22. Can a robot have a gender?
23. Are extrajudicial killings and capital punishment morally equivalent?
24. Does the pandemic have the potential to reshape our relationship to the environment?
25. Does the United Kingdom have an obligation to accept asylum seekers from Iraq?
26. Is all bodily mutilation an unjustifiable assault unless performed on consenting adults?
27. 'Stories are a form of action, the way we insert ourselves into the human world' (HANNAH ARENDT). Discuss.
28. Can a translation be considered original?
29. Are cryptocurrencies the future?
30. 'I never know why self-sacrifice is meant to be noble. Why is it better to sacrifice oneself than someone else?' (IVY COMPTON-BURNETT). Discuss.

GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Did punctuation improve prose?
2. Should there be a *lingua franca* in academia?
3. 'Our classic, the classic of all Europe, is Virgil' (so said the American-born T.S. ELIOT). What is the relationship between the field of Classics and Europe?
4. Has feminist history writing become too rosy?
5. Should Schliemann have left Troy in the ground?
6. Should history be rewritten in public spaces?
7. Should any new science be published behind paywalls?
8. How can policy combat algorithmic discrimination?
9. Should former politicians be allowed to act as lobbyists?
10. 'Great art points in the direction of the good' (IRIS MURDOCH). Discuss.
11. 'My heart, the deluded admiral / Who ruled a fleet of never-built ships' (FERNANDO PESSOA). Discuss the uses and abuses of metaphor.
12. How will historians study the Internet Age?
13. 'Social science has been outmanoeuvred by literary historicism as the neighbour discipline to which history is most in thrall' (MARK GOLDIE). Discuss.
14. Write the history of a colour.
15. '[M]y friends, even if it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, go on out and sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures; sweep streets like Handel and Beethoven composed music; sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry' (MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.). Discuss.
16. When is it justifiable for a government to instruct citizens to do something that they are not legally required to do?
17. Should judges refrain from publishing personal memoirs?
18. Has Western society put too much faith in competition?
19. Should those whose views are abhorrent be listened to?

[OVER]

20. Nature is replete with suffering. What follows?
21. Is the Turing Test a reasonable criterion for the achievement of general AI?
22. How useful is the law for the achievement of racial **AND/OR** gender justice?
23. Should theorists care about the practical consequences of their theories, or just their truth?
24. Does identity politics undermine class politics?
25. Should we defund the police?
26. '[T]o live in a world in which no one is forgiven, where all are irredeemable, is the same as living in hell' (MILAN KUNDERA). Discuss.
27. 'The habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned' (FRANTZ FANON). How should we conceptualize racism today?
28. 'Extinction Rebellion are fighting for a just cause, but with a misguided strategy.' Discuss.
29. Where do the Benin Bronzes belong?
30. What is the place of humour in scholarship?

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1. Should we bring back woolly mammoths from the dead?
2. What eligibility rules should apply to athletes who are transgender or intersex?
3. What's wrong with the Oscars?
4. Should we give what we can?
5. Does *Homo sapiens* have responsibilities to other species?
6. What, if any, limitations on immigration are defensible?
7. 'The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves' (FRANTZ FANON). Discuss.
8. Why are conspiracy theories so enduring?
9. If Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela had died on the same day, whose death should the BBC have reported as its top story?
10. Why teach poetry to children?
11. 'We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology' (CARL SAGAN). Does this matter?
12. Why are top female tennis players so much more prominent than top female footballers?
13. 'To photograph is to confer importance' (SUSAN SONTAG). Discuss.
14. Would it matter if newspapers ceased to be printed?
15. 'Taste is first and foremost distaste, disgust and visceral intolerance of the taste of others' (PIERRE BOURDIEU). Is it?
16. Is it 'colonialist' for the UK to pressure its former colonies to repeal anti-sodomy laws imposed during the period of British rule?
17. Are streaming services good for music?
18. 'We know what happens to people who stay in the middle of the road. They get run down' (ANEURIN BEVAN). Discuss.
19. Which concept is more fundamental, shape or colour?

[OVER]

20. What should be done to achieve greater take-up of vaccinations?
21. Should more artwork be shredded?
22. Has single-sex education had its day?
23. Can food be both sustainable and affordable?
24. Can a place of worship comfortably function as a museum or heritage site as well?
25. How choosy should charities be about those from whom they accept donations?
26. 'These extreme inequalities that divide us are human-made. May I even say, man-made.' (WINNIE BYANYIMA). Discuss.
27. Which writer, from any period, would be most dismayed by how they are viewed today?

GENERAL PAPER II

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1. Do ancient and modern slavery differ in nature?
2. '[Female judges'] experience of leading women's lives allows us to see things that the men cannot always see' (BARONESS HALE). Discuss.
3. Is Artificial Intelligence already beyond our control?
4. 'Millions in Africa are poorer today because of aid; misery and poverty have not ended but increased' (DAMBISA MOYO). Discuss.
5. What, if anything, is wrong with neoliberal economics?
6. Should we stop reading authors because of their political views?
7. Has masculinity ever not been 'in crisis'?
8. Is the Anthropocene a useful concept?
9. Should beauty be taxed? Should ugliness be compensated?
10. North Macedonia: what's in a name?
11. In what sense are civil servants servants?
12. Do the methods of philosophy differ fundamentally from those of the natural sciences?
13. Can the history of emotions be more than the history of cultural representations of emotions?
14. What does it mean to live a feminist life?
15. Should Facebook and Google be required to pay money for the information they acquire about people?
16. Does anything justify stripping someone of their citizenship?
17. 'The gendered metaphor of the "faithful" translation, whose worth is always secondary to that of the male-authored original, acquires a particular edge in the context of a translation by a woman [...]' (EMILY WILSON, translator of the *Odyssey*). Discuss.
18. Is the future Asian?
19. What should the geographical and temporal limits of Classics be?

20. Is it useful to categorize writers as e.g. 'Black', 'queer', or 'postcolonial'?
21. Is the justice system just?
22. 'Novels arise out of the shortcomings of history' (NOVALIS). Discuss.
23. Do you own your body?
24. How useful is the analysis of objects from the past in furthering historical understanding?
25. Are there any unanswerable questions?

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1. Is ignorance bliss?
2. Why spend money on public art?
3. Defend tweeting.
4. When is charity wrong?
5. Are there too many books?
6. Does Google know us better than we do?
7. Are Old Masters overrated?
8. What is a gift?
9. Can a literary competition be fair?
10. Are consumers in search of bargains complicit in modern slavery?
11. Would you rather be a vampire or a zombie?
12. Do we value our security too highly?
13. Is it possible to imagine a society without law?
14. What is the point of voting?
15. When, if ever, should one prioritise form over function?
16. Are emotions irrational?
17. Does it matter if we are alone in the universe?
18. Are there topics one should not joke about?
19. Compare a contemporary political leader to a character in mythology.
20. Are male and female outdated concepts?
21. Should there be a University Church?
22. How should we close the gender pay gap?
23. 'Music came to a full stop with Brahms' (WITTGENSTEIN). Discuss.
24. Should we even try to understand how the brain works?

[OVER]

25. 'Richest 1% on target to own two-thirds of all wealth by 2030' (THE OBSERVER).
Does this matter?
26. What, if any, are the advantages of binge-watching?
27. Is the dominance of English in Western popular music regrettable?
28. What sort of equality ought to exist in a family?
29. 'We write to taste life twice, in the moment, and in retrospection' (ANAI'S NIN).
Discuss.

GENERAL PAPER II

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1. Is Shakespeare too good for actors?
2. Should signatory States withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights?
3. Is the internet beyond effective regulation?
4. How important are market forces in the development of the arts?
5. Is globalization in retreat?
6. Is it time to give up on the Nobel Peace Prize?
7. 'In a well-functioning democracy, people do not live in echo chambers (CASS SUNSTEIN). Do you agree?
8. 'Much more exhilaration and gusto can be got out of literature if one takes a more devious way in' (DON FOWLER). Discuss.
9. Is tourism a necessary evil?
10. Can we teach machines to be good?
11. How useful is the concept of decline to a historian?
12. 'Television is a form of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time, and yet remain lonesome' (T. S. ELIOT). Are social media any better?
13. Should 'no-fault divorce' be recognized?
14. Is literature inherently international?
15. What will be the next disruptive innovation?
16. 'The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it' (NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON). Discuss.
17. Did the Enlightenment happen?
18. Is the centre-left doomed to extinction?
19. Does time heal historic injustice?
20. Should there be a right to financial security?

[OVER]

21. 'Microhistory: the ultimate example of historians being captured by their evidence.' Discuss.
22. What can fiction do that other forms of artistic expression cannot?
23. Is Classics racist?
24. Does it matter whether we have free will?
25. 'Disaster is rarely as pervasive as it seems from recorded accounts' (BARBARA TUCHMAN). Discuss.
26. Is it permissible to use animals in scientific research and, if so, in what circumstances?
27. Should sugar be taxed?
28. Is it ever justified to use force in breach of international laws?
29. 'The age of utopias is over.' Do you agree?
30. 'Writing saved me from the sin and inconvenience of violence' (ALICE WALKER). Discuss.

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1. How should we prepare for the end of the world?
2. Why are there still Communists?
3. Do we owe duties to the dead?
4. If you were a dictator, what would you ban?
5. Is the European ideal kaput?
6. 'Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most taken away' (CATHARINE MACKINNON). Discuss.
7. Account for the rise of internet memes.
8. Can sports make a nation?
9. Defend a neglected classic.
10. 'The second Elizabethan age is likely to be remembered as a reign of uninterrupted national decline.' Is it?
11. Does it matter what we eat?
12. What is the use of magic?
13. 'In the age of pictorial reproduction the meaning of paintings is no longer attached to them' (JOHN BERGER). Has the age of Instagram altered our ways of seeing?
14. Is cynicism inescapable?
15. Should journalists always tell the truth?
16. Can a deal be art?
17. What is 'alt' about the 'alt-right'?
18. Are the only good answers those that destroy the question?
19. Is the sampling of music theft or quotation?
20. Invent a new idiom—then spill the beans.
21. Should you love your neighbour?

[OVER]

22. Whose interests does WikiLeaks serve?
23. Is there such a thing as bad taste in visual arts, music or literature?
24. 'Archimedes will be remembered when Aeschylus is forgotten, because languages die and mathematical ideas do not' (G. H. HARDY). Discuss.
25. Can democracy enthuse only those who are deprived of it?
26. Debunk a modern myth.
27. For what should we ask forgiveness?
28. Is censorship good for creativity?

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1. Can satire be constructive?
2. Why is the price of housing so high?
3. Is sex work just work?
4. What does the European Union owe to the Roman Empire?
5. Is incompetence the most underrated force in human history?
6. Should we put the brakes on globalization?
7. 'All lives matter.' Do they?
8. Is there any such thing as an original work of literature?
9. Make the case for mandatory retirement.
10. Can economists study irrational choice?
11. Does it matter if a language dies out?
12. Can national borders be anything other than artificial?
13. Should Bob Dylan have won the Nobel Prize?
14. 'The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers' (WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE). Discuss.
15. Why is 'journalistic' a pejorative term?
16. How should juries be selected?
17. 'The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.' Discuss.
18. Is the future of the humanities teaching Great Books to engineers?
19. Are there any questions that should be beyond the pale of philosophical discussion?
20. 'When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody' (W.S. GILBERT). Discuss.
21. '[P]hilosophy is dead. Philosophers have not kept up with modern developments in science' (STEPHEN HAWKING). Has he missed the point?
22. What makes a good citizen?

[OVER]

23. What properties should a well-constructed universal language possess?
24. 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (AUDRE LORDE). Discuss.
25. If we change the ending of 'Little Red Riding Hood' is it still 'Little Red Riding Hood'?
26. What if there were no hypothetical questions?

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1. What should determine the pay of CEOs?
2. Should technology companies cooperate with governments in matters of national security?
3. Should Rhodes fall?
4. Propose an image or an event that defines the twentieth century.
5. Do referendums subvert parliamentary democracy?
6. Are there any 'Asian values'?
7. Why are traditional political parties losing popularity in the Euro-American world?
8. Is it acceptable that most of us have much less exposure to the laws of thermodynamics than the works of Shakespeare?
9. Are open-access journals the future of academic publishing?
10. What is the difference between a team of stars and a star team?
11. What can be done about unconscious bias?
12. What impact does inequality have upon a nation's prosperity?
13. Is 'forgetting' always a problem?
14. In what ways, if any, is the refugee crisis distinctive?
15. 'Cowardice ... is the most terrible vice.' (MIKHAIL BULGAKOV) Discuss.
16. What did Shakespeare do for us?
17. Should you always read the book first?
18. What consequences can immorality in fiction have in fact?
19. Why is the idea of apocalypse appealing?
20. Is Putin's Russia a threat to the West?
21. Is there a public interest in publishing kiss and tell stories?
22. Are there any systems of exchange that should not be regarded as markets?

[OVER]

23. 'The caterpillar who knew himself would never become a butterfly' (ANDRÉ GIDE)
Discuss.
24. What do terrorists want?
25. What is the point, if any, of requiring students to write essays?

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1. Why does it matter how Palmyra is destroyed?
2. Cultural property – a contradiction in terms?
3. Do we really need a literary canon?
4. ‘I prefer the most unfair peace to the most righteous war.’ (CICERO) Do you agree?
5. Is a common language an essential part of a culture?
6. Can a person who has always been wealthy imagine what it is like to be poor?
7. Will ‘big data’ increase or decrease the importance of theory in the social sciences?
8. What features of a text enable it to outlive the immediate circumstances of its production?
9. Why don’t books of literary criticism sell?
10. ‘The truth is that no definition of tragedy more elaborate than “very sad” has ever worked.’ (TERRY EAGLETON) Discuss.
11. Should global history be about more than movement and connection?
12. Is it time for historians to read less Foucault and more Weber?
13. What history should children learn?
14. Defend diplomatic history.
15. When and why was there a ‘great divergence’ in economic performance between Europe and Asia?
16. Is popular politics always conservative?
17. Is Third World poverty the legacy of colonialism?
18. Has the importance of 1968 been overstated?
19. ‘More than two thirds of Britons support gender equality, but just 7 per cent would call themselves feminists.’ (DAILY TELEGRAPH) Discuss.
20. Should poverty ever be a defence against a charge of shoplifting?
21. ‘A woman should not have to ask the permission of two doctors to have an abortion.’ Discuss.

[OVER]

22. What, if any, are the lessons of Chilcot?
23. ‘A phrase we often used to avoid punishment contained something true, hence uncontrollable, hence dangerous. The formula was: I didn’t do it on purpose.’ (ELENA FERRANTE) Discuss.
24. ‘We are fallen creatures. All we can do is to uphold the laws, all of us, without allowing the memory of justice to fade.’ (J.M. COETZEE) Discuss.
25. ‘To say of whatever we think people ought to have that they have a right to it is not to say very much.’ (MICHAEL WALZER) Discuss.
26. Are balanced budgets a legitimate moral ideal?
27. Is speculation in commodity markets morally defensible?
28. Is racial profiling ever legitimate?
29. Should FIFA be placed under the governance of the United Nations?
30. Should an architect refuse to design a dictator’s vanity project?
31. Should the study of non-Western philosophy be a requirement for a philosophy degree in the UK?
32. Will philosophy eventually be absorbed by the sciences?
33. ‘The distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.’ (JUDITH BUTLER) Discuss.
34. Is experimental philosophy just bad psychology?