

## Year 12 Pre-enrolment Project

You will be required to hand in your completed project in your first lesson in September

<b>AS Level/BTEC Subject:</b>	Philosophy
<b>Project Title:</b>	Introduction to philosophy
<b>Project overview/instructions</b>  You can choose from two tasks over the summer: task A or task B. Task A is a research based task. You may wish to present your findings as a large poster or presentation. You may also present them as a piece of written work. Task B is focused on reading a novel, <i>Sophie's World</i> (highly recommended), which introduces many of the important questions you will be studying over the next two years. There are some questions for you to answer briefly.	
<b>Tasks</b>  See separate sheets for instructions.  Please note you only need to do <b>ONE</b> project. <b>EITHER</b> task A or task B.	

## Task A: Focus on research and presenting.

### Task One

Many, or even most, students who study Philosophy do so without – initially – having a particularly clear idea of what the subject involves. This is, in a way, unsurprising, for Philosophy is a subject that resists any simple definition. Your first task, therefore, is to carry out some research and create your own definition of Philosophy. This should be a short paragraph. Please use the recommended sites below as well as exploring the internet yourself.

### Task Two

In the first term of your AS level year, you will be studying a unit called ‘Epistemology.’

Epistemology is the name given to the study of issues concerning the nature and basis of knowledge and the justification of knowledge/belief. In this subject, you will study, among other issues, questions such as:

- How should knowledge be defined?
- What are the limits of our knowledge?
- What are the sources of our knowledge, and of our concepts?
- How, if at all, can perception give us knowledge of reality?
- What are the objects of perception?

Your second task is to complete some research into the following terms. You should use the sites listed below as well as your own research.

1. Epistemology
2. Direct realism
3. Indirect realism
4. Idealism
5. Concept Empiricism
6. Knowledge Empiricism

Which ideas do you agree with? Which seem to have better arguments supporting them?

You may choose how to present your findings for both tasks.

### Recommended sites for Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu/>

<http://www.sophia-project.org/>

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/> (this site contains interactive activities that explore various philosophical topics – they are challenging!)

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

### Some recommended reading

- Simon Blackburn, *Think*.
- Thomas Nagel, *What Does it all Mean?*
- Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: The Basics*
- **The Radio 4 *In Our Time*** archive. This contains lots of programmes exploring philosophical topics.
- Podcasts on the *Philosophy Bites* site. <http://www.philosophybites.com/>

**Task B: this task is focused on reading a novel.**

*Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder

Your task over the summer is to read the novel, *Sophie's World*. It is a novel about a Norwegian girl who receives mysterious letters that document the history of Western philosophy. It is often possible to find the book quite cheaply in second hand bookshops or online. It is recommended that you buy yourself a copy.

However, it is also available as a PDF online.

<http://people.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/Sophie's%20World.pdf>

Googling 'Sophie's World pdf' will also bring up other sites where you can read it. If you don't have access to a printer and would like it to be photocopied for you please email Mr Paton.

Below are some questions for you to answer, but I hope the book will also get you interested and excited about some of the questions and issues we will be discussing during Philosophy A-Level.

These are some of the areas that you will study during your AS and A-level in Philosophy. Whilst reading Sophie's word, try to answer the questions below. In brackets I've indicated when this topic will be covered on the course.

**Materialism** (Year 2 – Philosophy of Mind)

1. What did Materialists like Thomas Hobbes believe?

**Descartes** (Year 1 – Epistemology)

2. For Descartes how can certain knowledge be obtained?

3. What was Descartes method of discovering the truth?

4. What was the one thing he realised with certainty?

**Empiricism** (Year 1 – Epistemology)

5. What is Empiricism?

**Locke** (Year 1 – Epistemology)

6. What did he believe that the mind was like before experiences?

7. What is the source of all knowledge according to Locke?

**Hume** (Year 1 – Epistemology and Year 2 – Philosophy of Religion)

8. How do we get ideas of things like Unicorns and Angels?

9. What does he say about cause and effect?

**The Enlightenment** (general)

10. What were the main ideas of Enlightenment philosophers?

**Kant** (Year 1 – Epistemology)

11. How did he compromise between Rationalism and Empiricism?

12. What job does the mind do in perceiving things?

**Aristotle** (Year 1 – Ethics)

13. What did Aristotle say about what the ‘good life?’

Don't worry if some of these questions are challenging. They introduce some difficult subjects and thinkers.

If you have any questions please email [ollie.paton@astonacademy.org](mailto:ollie.paton@astonacademy.org) and I will get back to you as soon as I can with an answer.