

Sixth Form Entrance 2018

PHILOSOPHY

1 hour

Instructions for candidates:

This paper is intended to test how well you can think logically and construct arguments. You are not expected to have prior knowledge of the question topics. Make sure that you think before you start writing. You will be assessed on the clarity and precision of your work.

- Answer all parts of section A.
- Choose one question from section B.
- Spend 30 minutes on each section.

Please use the writing paper provided and write your name and present school clearly on all sheets of paper used.

Section A

Read the extract below and then answer the questions. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

IS there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it? This question, which at first sight might not seem difficult, is really one of the most difficult that can be asked.

To make our difficulties plain, let us concentrate attention on the table. To the eye it is oblong, brown and shiny, to the touch it is smooth and cool and hard; when I tap it, it gives out a wooden sound. Anyone else who sees and feels and hears the table will agree with this description, so that it might seem as if no difficulty would arise; but as soon as we try to be more precise our troubles begin. Although I believe that the table is 'really' of the same colour all over, the parts that reflect the light look much brighter than the other parts, and some parts look white because of reflected light. I know that, if I move, the parts that reflect the light will be different, so that the apparent distribution of colours on the table will change. It follows that if several people are looking at the table at the same moment, no two of them will see exactly the same distribution of colours, because no two can see it from exactly the same point of view, and any change in the point of view makes some change in the way the light is reflected.

It is evident from what we have found, that there is no colour which pre-eminently appears to be *the* colour of the table, or even of any one particular part of the table -- it appears to be of different colours from different points of view, and there is no reason for regarding some of these as more really its colour than others. And we know that even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or to a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be unchanged. This colour is not something which is inherent in the table, but something depending upon the table and the spectator and the way the light falls on the table. When, in ordinary life, we speak of *the* colour of the table, we only mean the sort of colour which it will seem to have to a normal spectator from an ordinary point of view under usual conditions of light. But the other colours which appear under other conditions have just as good a right to be considered real; and therefore, to avoid favouritism, we are compelled to deny that, in itself, the table has any one particular colour.

(Adapted from Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*)

Questions:

1. Set out, in your own words, the argument put forward by Russell in the extract above.
[5 marks]
2. Discuss whether you think that our senses can provide us with genuine knowledge about the nature of reality.
[10 marks]

Section B:

Choose **one** question from this section. Spend 30 minutes on this section.

1. 'It would not be possible for a God to be omniscient (all-knowing) without undermining free will.' To what extent do you agree with this claim?

[15 marks]

2. 'Hedonism (the pursuit of pleasure) will never lead to true happiness.' To what extent do you agree with this claim?

[15 marks]

3. 'In a world in which everyone was blind, colour would not exist.' To what extent do you agree with this claim?

[15 marks]

End of Examination