A-level
PHILOSOPHY
7172/1

Paper 1 Epistemology and moral philosophy

Mark scheme
June 2021

Version: 1.0 Final Mark Scheme

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the performance at the mid-point of the level. There are marks in each level. For the 3 and 5 mark questions that have only 1 mark in each level you need only apply step 1 below.

To support you in your marking, you will have standardisation scripts. These have been marked by the Lead Examiner at the correct standard. Generally, you will have a standardisation script to exemplify the standard for each level of the mark scheme for a particular item.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start by reading the whole of the student's response and then, using the mark scheme level descriptors and the standardisation scripts, place the response in the level which it matches or best fits.
When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. Start with the middle mark of the level and then look at the student's response in comparison with the level descriptor and the standardisation script. If the student's response is better than the standardisation script, award a mark above the mid-point of the level. If the student's response is weaker than the standardisation script, award a mark below the mid-point of the level.

For the 25 mark questions examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training.

Guidance

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other appropriate points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded zero marks.

Section A – Epistemology

0 1 What is the difference between *a priori* knowledge and *a posteriori* knowledge?

[3 marks]

AO1 = 3

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
3	A full and correct answer, given precisely, with little or no redundancy.
2	The substantive content of the answer is correct, but there may be some redundancy or minor imprecision.
1	Relevant, but fragmented, points.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content
The difference is a difference in how these kinds of knowledge are acquired/justified.
Here are some different ways in which this might be set out:

- A priori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge that can be acquired independently of experience [other than that needed to understand or grasp the proposition in question]…
- …whereas a posteriori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge that cannot be acquired independently of experience [other than that needed to understand or grasp the proposition in question].

- A priori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge the justification of/warrant for of which is independent of experience [other than that needed to understand or grasp the proposition in question]…
- …whereas a posteriori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge the justification of which is dependent on experience [other than that needed to understand or grasp the proposition in question].

- A priori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge justified/acquired by reason/rational deliberation alone as opposed to by any empirical experience…

- …whereas a posteriori knowledge is (propositional) knowledge the justification of which is dependent on experience [other than that needed to understand or grasp the proposition in question].

The part in square brackets is not required for full marks.

Examples of responses that would score 3 marks:

"A priori knowledge is knowledge that is gained without experience, whereas a posteriori knowledge requires experience"

"A posteriori knowledge cannot be acquired by reason alone as it is dependent on experience. In contrast, a priori knowledge can be gained through reason alone"

Examples of responses that would score 2 marks:

“ A priori knowledge is gained through reason and deduction, and a posteriori knowledge is gained through use of the senses / experience”

Examples of responses that would score 1 mark:

“A priori knowledge is innate knowledge gained through reason, whereas a posteriori knowledge is gained through the senses”

“A priori knowledge is not based on evidence, but a posteriori knowledge is based on evidence”

“A posteriori knowledge is based on sense experience”

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 2 Explain the view that the mind is a 'tabula rasa' at birth.

[5 marks]

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
5	A full, clear and precise explanation. The student makes logical links between precisely identified points, with no redundancy.
4	A clear explanation, with logical links, but some imprecision/redundancy.
3	The substantive content of the explanation is present and there is an attempt at logical linking, but the explanation is not full and/or precise.
2	One or two relevant points made, but not precisely. The logic is unclear.
1	Fragmented points, with no logical structure.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

Core content:

- The context here is the debate over (a) the acquisition of concepts/knowledge and specifically (b) whether we have any innate concepts/knowledge.
- This is a claim made by (classical) empiricists (such as Locke and Hume).
- The claim that the mind is a '*tabula rasa*' is made about the mind as it is "at birth" or, at least, as it is at/before the first point at which it is conscious.
- '*Tabula rasa'* is Latin for 'blank slate'.
- To claim that the mind, at this point, is a *tabula rasa* is to claim that there are no concepts and no knowledge/truths within the mind at this point.
- To claim this is to deny the existence of innate concepts/truths/knowledge (this includes innate concepts/truths/knowledge in the form of distinct potentialities à la Leibniz).
- Students might mention that the innate knowledge which is absent would have been a form of *a priori* knowledge. However, it would be a mistake to conflate 'innate' with '*a priori* ' as there are forms *a priori* knowledge which are not known innately (see below).
- As Locke says: "*Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas:—How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience" (Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book 2, Chapter 2, Section 2).*

The focus here is primarily on the view that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, but the best students will explain what empiricists say about what then happens – ie how the mind acquires concepts/knowledge.

- A corollary of the *tabula rasa* thesis is the empiricist claim that all concepts derive from experience.
  - Students may refer to Hume's distinction between 'impressions' and 'ideas' according to which all of our concepts must be copied from empirical experiences.
  - Students may here mention simple/complex concepts.
- A further corollary of the *tabula rasa* thesis is the claim that all knowledge we have is either *a posteriori*, or *a priori* but merely analytic (ie true in virtue of the meanings of concepts which were themselves acquired from experience). Students may refer to Hume's 'fork' (the distinction between 'matters of fact' ' and 'relations of ideas in this context).

- Students are likely to focus their explanation on Locke and Hume but may also refer to later empiricists (eg AJ Ayer's logical positivism).

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 3 Explain Descartes' third 'wave of doubt'.

[5 marks]

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
5	A full, clear and precise explanation. The student makes logical links between precisely identified points, with no redundancy.
4	A clear explanation, with logical links, but some imprecision/redundancy.
3	The substantive content of the explanation is present and there is an attempt at logical linking, but the explanation is not full and/or precise.
2	One or two relevant points made, but not precisely. The logic is unclear.
1	Fragmented points, with no logical structure.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

- Descartes imagines a scenario in which an evil but very powerful being ("the evil demon") is able to deceive him as regards any of his beliefs: ie to induce circumstances that mean that any belief he has is false.
- Students may set it out as a step-by-step argument. Here is one example of how this might be structured as an argument (for guidance only – students may explain this accurately and proficiently in many ways):
    - P1: It is possible that there is a powerful and deceptive being (a 'malignant/malicious demon') who is continuously deceiving me in all my perceptions of the external world and reasoning (eg mathematics) so that everything I take as true is in fact false.
    - P2: In order to know that *p* (for any proposition, *p*) I need to rule out this possibility.
    - P3: I cannot rule out this possibility. This is because, regardless of whether it is true or false, my experience/beliefs would stay the same. The grounds for all my beliefs would remain the same.
    - C: Therefore, I cannot know anything (global scepticism).
- It is important to recognise that this argument is meant to apply not only to (a) perceptual beliefs about the properties of the external world, but also to (b) beliefs about maths and geometry and (c) the belief that mind-independent objects exist (the latter ((a) and (b)) having not been threatened by the dreaming argument).
- Descartes' purpose is to subject himself and his opinions to radical scepticism (the 'method of doubt') with the aim of finding certainty/indubitability/foundational knowledge. The sceptical arguments, of which this is one, are proposed in this context as part of his radical methodological doubt − a strategy for testing the strength of his beliefs in order to establish whether anything he claimed to know was beyond doubt/infallible.
- Students might, but need not, contextualise the third wave of doubt, by explaining that, in the first two waves, Descartes has cast doubt on his senses as a source of knowledge, as they have, in some cases, deceived him; then, in the dreaming argument, cast doubt on even his 'best perceptions'. This is not a requirement but credit should be given if it is linked clearly to and supports/clarifies the explanation of the third wave of doubt.
- Students might note that the scepticism that results from this third 'wave' is sometimes described as 'global scepticism' since it applies to (almost) all of our beliefs – as Descartes claims, "I am finally compelled to admit that there is not one of my former beliefs about which a doubt may not properly be raised" (*Mediations*, Med 1, AT 7:21, CSM 2:14f).

NB: Students may go on to explain how the cogito avoids this doubt. This should not be judged as redundant. Although the cogito is not the focus of the question, it is closely linked to the third wave of doubt and could be used in such a way that it helps to illuminate / illustrate something about the nature of Descartes' 3rd wave of doubt.

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 4 Explain how an account of epistemic virtue can be used to show why Smith lacks knowledge in one of Gettier's original counter-examples.

[12 marks]

AO1 = 12

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
10–12	The answer is set out in a precise, fully-integrated and logical form. The content is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. Points are made clearly and precisely. Relevance is sustained, with very little or no redundancy. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
7–9	The answer is set out in a clear, integrated and logical form. The content of the answer is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. The content is clearly relevant and points are made clearly and precisely. Any lack of clarity with respect to particular points is not sufficient to detract from the answer. Relevance is largely sustained. There may be some redundancy, though not sufficient to detract from the answer. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
4–6	The answer is clear and set out in a coherent form, with logical/causal links identified. The content of the answer is largely correct and most points are made clearly. Relevance is not always sustained and there is some redundancy. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the response.
1–3	There are some relevant points made, but no integration. Some points are clear, but there is a lack of precision – with possibly insufficient material that is relevant or too much that is irrelevant. Philosophical language is used, though not always consistently or appropriately.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

An account of epistemic virtue (virtue epistemology):

- Gettier cases aim to challenge the sufficiency of the tripartite definition by showing how it is possible for someone to have a justified true belief, but not knowledge.
- In the original Gettier cases, Smith is said to meet all three conditions, but yet to lack knowledge.
- According to accounts based on epistemic virtue, S knows that p iff (if and only if)
    - 1. p is true
    - 2. S believes that p
    - 3. S's belief that p is a result of S successfully exercising his/her intellectual virtues
- Here an intellectual virtue is an intellectual skill, ability or trait that contributes to getting to the truth.
- The fact that you have a true belief is a 'cognitive achievement' for which you deserve 'credit'.
- One example of such a theory is Sosa's AAA theory. He introduces some terminology and uses an archery analogy to help:

	The archer ANALOGY	The believer
Accuracy	S's shot is accurate iff it hits the target.	S's belief is accurate iff it is true.
Adroitness	S's shot is adroit iff it was produced skilfully (ie in a way that made it likely to succeed).	S's belief is adroit iff it is arrived at skilfully / if it exhibits skill on the part of the person (in ways that tend to be good ways to acquire knowledge).
Aptness	S's shot is apt iff it is accurate because it is adroit.	S's belief is apt iff the truth of the belief is explained by (is arrived at because of) the skill of the believer.

- According to Sosa, S knows that p iff (if and only if)
  - 1. p is true (ie the accuracy condition is met)
  - 2. S believes that p
  - 3. S's belief that p is apt (ie it is true/accurate because it is adroit)
- Students may also discuss Zagzebski's virtue epistemology: she takes the position that S knows that p iff (if and only if)
  - 1. (p is true) – bracketed because, for Zagzebski, it is entailed by (3) below
  - 2. S believes that p
  - 3. S's belief arises from an act of intellectual virtue. An act of intellectual virtue is 'an act which is good in every respect' which entails not only that (a) it is done from the right motivation, and that (b) is an act that a person with virtue would characteristically do in the circumstances – but also (and crucially) that (c) the act is successful in leading S to a true belief because of (a) and (b).

How such an account can be used to show why Smith lacks knowledge in one of Gettier's original counter-examples.

- Students can use either of Gettier's cases.
- Students do not have to be able to give every detail of the case they select, but should identify the relevant aspects. Students should not be penalised for 'redundancy', however, if they do give substantial accounts of Gettier cases.
- For information, here are the details of the two counter-examples/cases of lucky JTB:
  - 1. Case 1: Smith and Jones are going for the same job; Smith has good reasons for believing that the man with "ten coins in his pocket" is "the man who will get the job" (because the boss told him Jones would get the job, and Smith had counted the coins in Jones' pocket). As it happens Smith himself gets the job and, by luck, he happens to have 10 coins in his pocket so the proposition is true, but when Smith formed this true belief, he actually had Jones in mind.
  - 2. Case 2: Concerns Smith, Jones's car, and the location of Smith's friend, Brown. In this case Smith is justified in believing that "Jones owns a Ford". On this basis, he forms the belief that "Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona", inferring the latter from the (seemingly well evidenced) former, and plucking Barcelona out of the air; but the former is false (Jones hired the Ford), and the latter is true by pure chance (Smith had no idea where Brown was, and Brown just happens to be in Barcelona).

- In general, according to accounts of epistemic virtue, Smith's beliefs do not count as knowledge because his success is not the result of his intellectual skills/virtues, but rather the result of luck/coincidence.
    - 1. In case 1: Smith's belief is true, but only because (unbeknownst to him) he happens to have 10 coins in his pocket, and (unbeknownst to him) he will get the job.
    - 2. In case 2: Smith's belief is true, but only because Brown happens to be in Barcelona.
- In the language of Sosa, Smith's belief is not apt (even though it is accurate and adroit). His skill does not explain his success.
- In the language of Zagzebski, Smith has not carried out an act of intellectual virtue (even though his belief is true and justified). He is not successful because of his intellectual virtue).

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 5 Is Berkeley's idealist account of perception convincing?

[25 marks]

AO1 = 5, AO2 = 20

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
21–25	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is sustained. The student demonstrates detailed and precise understanding throughout. The conclusion is clear, with the arguments in support of it stated precisely, integrated coherently and robustly defended. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Reasoned judgements are made, on an ongoing basis and overall, about the weight to be given to each argument. Crucial arguments are clearly identified against less crucial ones. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
16–20	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is largely sustained. The content is correct and detailed – though not always consistently. The conclusion is clear, with a range of appropriate arguments supporting it. Arguments are generally stated in their strongest forms. There is a balancing of arguments, with weight being given to each – so crucial arguments are noted against less crucial ones. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated clearly, integrated coherently and defended. There may be trivial mistakes, as long as they do not detract from the argument. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
11–15	A clear response to the question, in the form of an argument, demonstrating intent. The content is detailed and correct and most of it is integrated. A conclusion and reasons are given and those reasons clearly support the conclusion. There might be a lack of clarity/precision about the logic of the argument as a whole. Arguments and counter-arguments are given, but there may be a lack of balance. Not all arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Stronger and weaker arguments are noted and there are attempts to identify the weight to be given to different arguments, but not necessarily those which are crucial to the conclusion. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the argument.
6–10	The response to the question is given in the form of an argument, but not fully coherently. The content is largely correct, though there are some gaps and a lack of detail. Relevant points are recognised/identified, but not integrated. Alternative positions are identified, but not precisely. Counter-arguments might be stated in weak forms or even slightly misrepresented. Arguments and counter-arguments are juxtaposed, so similarities and contrasts identified, rather than their impact being clear.

	Philosophical language is used throughout, though not always fully correctly and/or consistently.
1–5	There is little evidence of an argument. There may be missing content, substantial gaps in the content or the content may be one-sided. There may be a conclusion and several reasonable points may be made. There may be some connections between the points, but there is no clear relationship between the points and the conclusion. There is some basic use of philosophical language.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

- **Positions a student might adopt:**
  - Berkeley's idealism is convincing
  - Berkeley's idealism is not convincing
  - Berkeley's idealism is convincing in some respects but not others (the best responses are likely to indicate where they think the balance of evidence/argument points overall).

Berkeley's idealism:

- Students do not have to give a detailed explanation of Berkeley's idealism at the outset of their answer in order to access the full range of marks, but their understanding should be clear in the arguments and counter arguments they present.
- Idealism: "The immediate objects of perception (ie ordinary objects such as tables, chairs, etc) are mind-dependent objects" (AQA Specification).
- Berkeley claims that only minds and their ideas exist, where minds are the many finite minds we have and God's infinite mind; God is sustaining (through being the omnipresent perceiver of) the real world; the *esse* of things perceived being *percipi*.
- Berkeley's idealism may be presented as rejecting the 'realist' dimension in 'direct realism' and 'indirect realism'– it denies the existence of a mind-independent (external) world.
- Berkeley's idealism is certainly anti-materialist, but it does not have to be presented as 'anti realist': it may well be presented as a metaphysical position which tries to give an account of the *nature* of the *real* world − a world constituted by perceivers ('minds' or 'spirits') and the objects of perception ('ideas').
- Idealism may be approached as a 'direct' theory of perception − the immediate objects of perception are mind-dependent objects (and their properties).

Berkeley's idealism is convincing because:

- Indirect realist theories lead to scepticism about our perceptual knowledge whereas idealism secures an objective (mental/spiritual) reality which we can know about directly.
- The primary/secondary distinction in some versions of indirect realism collapses in a way that shows that all qualities are mind-dependent: (a) perceptual variation arguments prove the mind-dependence of primary qualities no less than secondary; (b) it is impossible to conceive of something with primary qualities but not secondary qualities (the 'inextricability argument').
- It is not possible to conceive of a mind-independent material substance/substratum in which (mind-independent) properties in here: understood as a 'support' for properties, it must be extended, in which case its extension must inhere in a second substance/substratum, which leads to an untenable regress.
- It is impossible to conceive of a mind-independent sensible object (the 'master argument')

- Ideas can only resemble other ideas, so our ideas cannot inform us of a mind-independent external world of material objects (and their properties).

Berkeley's idealism is not convincing because:

- Berkeley fails to distinguish between two senses of 'idea' – the thing we are aware of and the actual act of apprehension – with the latter being obviously mental but the former not (Russell). This might be put in terms of the 'master argument' failing through confusing the act of conceiving with the content of what is conceived.
- Idealism struggles to deal with the distinction between veridical and non-veridical perceptions (ie illusions and hallucinations).
- Idealism leads to solipsism.
- There are problems with the role played by God in Berkeley's idealism:
    - Problems with (an eternal, immaterial, perfect and immutable) God having ideas of pain (plus, if God instead has intellectual ideas that correspond to our sensory ideas, whether this violates the likeness principle?)
    - The problem of evil
    - The problem of whether human beings and God can be said to be perceiving the same objects.
    - The problem of explaining the apparent causal order and three-dimensionality of things: if ideas are passive, they can't cause; ideas have no insides and so why does God need to create the appearance of insides?
    - Some students will claim that Berkeley appeals to God simply to plug the 'explanatory gap' opened by the problem of how it is that objects seem to endure when they are not perceived by anyone. This criticism can be credited. But some of the best students will realise that Berkeley thought there were very good reasons for believing in God (as an 'infinite mind' or 'spirit') given: a) his refutation (as he saw it) of the existence of 'material substance'; b) his conviction that there must be (causally) active minds (or 'spirts') which explain changes in our perceptions (since 'ideas' themselves are 'passive'); c) the order and beauty of the sensible world.

Berkeley's idealism is convincing in some respects but not others

- Students could draw from the previous arguments to formulate a multi-layered response which recognises the successes and failures of Berkeley's idealism.
- Students might argue that 'Berkeley's idealism' is more convincing than 'direct realism' in insisting on the mind dependent nature of (some) of our perceptions, but that it creates problems which are more convincingly solved by 'indirect realism'.
- Students might argue that 'Berkeley's idealism' dissolves the threat of scepticism raised by 'indirect realism' (eg the 'veil of perception'), but it creates other problems that are more convincingly solved by 'realism'.

NB: Do not penalise students heavily for misattributing arguments (when it does not confuse the point they are trying to make): the repeated misattribution of arguments may be a reason for not giving a student full marks, but it should not be a reason to deny them a top band mark (if the rest of their answer warrants it). We are testing students' understanding of philosophical arguments (AO1) and their ability to evaluate them (AO2).

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

Section B – Moral philosophy

0 6 What is the difference between cognitivism and non-cognitivism about ethical language?

[3 marks]

AO1 = 3

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
3	A full and correct answer, given precisely, with little or no redundancy.
2	The substantive content of the answer is correct, but there may be some redundancy or minor imprecision.
1	Relevant, but fragmented, points.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

- The distinction between moral cognitivism and moral non-cognitivism relates to moral language/judgement (this is distinct from the realist/anti-realist debate).
- Here are various ways in which this might be explained (not all of this is needed – each bullet point is a different way of expressing it):

Moral cognitivism is the view that [sincerely] made moral/ethical utterances (statements, judgements)...	Moral non-cognitivism is the view that [sincerely] made moral/ethical utterances (statements, judgements)...
• ...are factual/descriptive claims (ie claims about factual states of affairs).	• ...are not factual/descriptive claims (ie claims about factual states of affairs).
• ...express propositions (ie things that are true or false).	• ...do not express propositions (ie things that are true or false).
• …say something that is truth-apt (ie something that can be true or false).	• ...do not say something that is truth-apt (ie something that can be true or false).
• ...are/express beliefs with propositional content.	• ...are not/do not express beliefs with propositional content.

- Students might, but need not, explain the kinds of "positive" claims made by some non-cognitivists. If they did this, students might say something like the following:

- (At least some) non-cognitivists claim that you are doing something else with this language, for example expressing emotions (eg AJ Ayer) and/or giving commands (eg Hare).

<u>Examples of responses that would score 3 marks:</u>

"Cognitivism is the view that ethical claims are truth evaluable, whereas non-cognitivism is the view that moral claims cannot be true or false / are not therefore truth evaluable"

"Cognitivists claim that ethical language expresses beliefs, whereas non-cognitivists claim that ethical language does not express beliefs but has a different function"

"According to non-cognitivists, ethical claims do not describe reality. In contrast, cognitivists claim that ethical language does attempt to describe reality"

Examples of responses that would score 2 marks:

"Cognitivism claims there is a moral reality that ethical language aims to describe, whereas non-cognitivists deny that ethical language is descriptive"

Examples of responses that would score 1 mark:

"Cognitivists think that ethical language is fact-stating, whereas non-cognitivist deny the existence of morality / moral values / moral facts"

Examples of responses that would score 0 marks:

"Cognitivists believe there are moral facts, whereas non-cognitivism denies the existence of moral facts".

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 7 Explain why utilitarianism has an issue with partiality.

[5 marks]

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
5	A full, clear and precise explanation. The student makes logical links between precisely identified points, with no redundancy.
4	A clear explanation, with logical links, but some imprecision/redundancy.
3	The substantive content of the explanation is present and there is an attempt at logical linking. But the explanation is not full and/or precise.
2	One or two relevant points made, but not precisely. The logic is unclear.
1	Fragmented points, with no logical structure.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content
Utilitarianism:

- The question does not specify any particular type of utilitarianism (and this is ostensibly an issue for all varieties) so students can either consider (a) utilitarianism in general or (b) focus on one particular version of utilitarianism.
- "Utilitarianism": (1) An act is morally right if and only if [we can reasonably expect/predict that] doing it produces at least as much utility as any other act that could be performed
    - "Hedonistic utilitarianism": Utility = sensations of pleasure or happiness – ie something that can be experienced by a being
    - "Non-hedonistic utilitarianism": Utility = something other than sensations of pleasure or happiness (eg for preference utilitarians utility is the satisfaction of preferences).

Issue accounting for partiality:

- Overall, it has been argued that utilitarianism cannot adequately account for partiality insofar as it ignores the moral status/importance of particular relationships (family/friendship) we may have with others, and, indeed, ignores the special duty we may have to ourselves.

- It seems clear that utilitarianism emphasises impartiality by considering the effects on happiness of all those affected and neither ignoring or prioritising anyone during the calculating process:
    - *"every man to count for one, nobody for more than one" (Bentham).*
    - *"...I must again repeat, what the assailants of utilitarianism seldom have the justice to acknowledge, that the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator" (Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 2).*

To claim that this constitutes an objection to utilitarianism, one would need to make/argue both of the following claims:

  - Particular people, ie those that we have a relationship with, have greater moral importance than others. This might involve arguing that the very possibility of, eg, “friendship”, requires (perhaps conceptually) that the friends prioritise each other over others.
  - There will always be possible scenarios (even if counterfactual) where the utilitarian calculation would go against these strong moral intuitions that we have about the value of certain relationships.
- Students might give examples to support this: giving presents, spending time with others, and examples from family relationships or friendships. They might also consider “lifeboat”-style cases.

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 8 Explain what Mackie's error theory claims.

[5 marks]

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
5	A full, clear and precise explanation. The student makes logical links between precisely identified points, with no redundancy.
4	A clear explanation, with logical links, but some imprecision/redundancy.
3	The substantive content of the explanation is present and there is an attempt at logical linking. But the explanation is not full and/or precise.
2	One or two relevant points made, but not precisely. The logic is unclear.
1	Fragmented points, with no logical structure.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

- Error theory is
    1. a <u>cognitivist</u> theory:
        - ethical language is cognitively meaningful
        - ethical language makes claims about mind-independent reality
        - ethical language claims that there are mind-independent moral facts/properties
        - such ethical judgements/claims are truth-apt
    2. but also an <u>anti-realist</u> theory about morality:
        - these moral judgements/claims are false
        - there are no such mind-independent moral facts/properties
        - when we make such ethical judgements we are in error / mistaken.

- If students neglect to explain point (1) – so they may say that error theory is the claim that moral statements are false – this is not as serious an omission as neglecting to explain point (2). This is because moral statements can only be false if they are truth-apt.
- However, if they omit to explain point (2), this is more serious, as this would not distinguish error theory from moral realism.

NB: It is possible for a student to explain points (1) and (2) clearly without mention of the underlined terminology.

- <u>To clarify (2) above</u>: The moral judgements that error theorists claim are false are those moral judgements whose truth would presuppose the existence of moral properties (ie the judgements 'murder is wrong' and 'murder is right' are both false). However, some judgements about morality (namely, those that do not presuppose the existence of moral properties) are of course still true – eg the anti-realist claim 'There are no moral properties' is true according to error theorists.
- It is possible to respond by explaining how error theory contrasts with alternative positions (eg moral realism).
- NB: Mackie is an error theorist, as opposed to another sort of anti-realist, because he thinks that we are wrong to think that moral properties (understood, as he thinks they ordinarily are, as objectively prescriptive) exist.

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

0 9 Explain Aristotle's view on how we develop moral character and how this is challenged by the issue of circularity in his definition of 'virtuous acts'.

[12 marks]

AO1= 12

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
10–12	The answer is set out in a precise, fully-integrated and logical form. The content is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. Points are made clearly and precisely. Relevance is sustained, with very little or no redundancy. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
7–9	The answer is set out in a clear, integrated and logical form. The content of the answer is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. The content is clearly relevant and points are made clearly and precisely. Any lack of clarity with respect to particular points is not sufficient to detract from the answer. Relevance is largely sustained. There may be some redundancy, though not sufficient to detract from the answer. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
4–6	The answer is clear and set out in a coherent form, with logical/causal links identified. The content of the answer is largely correct and most points are made clearly. Relevance is not always sustained and there is some redundancy. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the response.
1–3	There are some relevant points made, but no integration. Some points are clear, but there is a lack of precision – with possibly insufficient material that is relevant or too much that is irrelevant. Philosophical language is used, though not always consistently or appropriately.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

Explain Aristotle's view on how we develop moral character…

The core points are:

- By "moral character" is meant the possession of the virtues, where virtues are stable states/traits of character (ie dispositions to think, feel and react in particular situations).
- We do not have moral character/virtues by nature (we are not virtuous by nature). Rather, we have the capability to become virtuous.
- We can understand how we acquire virtues by drawing an analogy with how we acquire practical skills:
    - You don't learn to play the lyre by just acquiring knowledge about lyre playing, but by actually practising the activity (ie by playing the lyre).
    - You don't become virtuous just by acquiring knowledge of how to be good, but by practising being good (ie doing good actions).
- Thus, we become virtuous through habituation and, in particular, through the habits we develop when growing up. Over time, a child develops the appropriate habits and learns to take pleasure in what s/he should take pleasure in and be pained by what should pain him/her – *"It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference"* (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2).

- Aristotle says*: 'by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly'* (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2).
- Students may discuss the importance Aristotle places on the following:
    - The presence of (and identification of) role models (including, perhaps, having a good family) *– NB: this will be particularly important in relation to the circularity issue.*
    - Living under laws/a state that encourages virtue.
    - The existence of a good public education system.

Here are some further points that may be made:

- Aristotle is not saying that simply performing (for example) just acts makes you a truly just person. For example, a child might behave justly because s/he has been taught do act justly (so do actions which are "in accordance with justice"), but, over time, come to act justly because s/he has chosen to do so. S/he recognises the value of just acts. Virtue is chosen knowingly, for its own sake.
- A fully virtuous action is one where the agent knows what they are doing, chooses the act for its own sake and makes their choice from a firm and unchangeable character.
- Students might use the term 'practical rationality' when making the kinds of points mentioned above.

<u>…**and** how this might be challenged by the issue of circularity in his definition of 'virtuous acts'</u>

- Aristotle defines a 'virtuous act' as an act which would be done by a 'virtuous person' in a particular situation. However, Aristotle also defines a 'virtuous person' as a person who is disposed to do virtuous acts.
- Now assuming that we do not already know what a virtuous act is, or what constitutes a virtuous person, the issue is that we are not left any clearer following the definitions he provides. This means that someone who does not understand virtue is no nearer to understanding it, *and (crucially for this question) unable to identify a role model to follow.*
- This is because the definition of a 'virtuous act', as 'an act which would be done by a virtuous person in a particular situation', contains the term being defined, because for Aristotle 'virtuous person' means 'a person who is disposed to do virtuous acts in a particular situation' (and vice versa).
- The best candidates will make it clear exactly what the *issue* is with the circularity: namely, that it does little (or nothing) to inform us about the nature of virtuous acts (some will then tease out some of the problems which follow from this).

<u>Integration of the two parts of the question:</u>

- In terms of integration, we would want students to make it clear that if there is a circularity here then this makes it at best difficult and at worst impossible for someone to…
    - …identify an appropriate (virtuous) role model by their actions
    - …habituate themselves into having a virtuous/moral character
    - …know whether the character they are developing, and its associated behavioural dispositions, are or are not moral/virtuous.

Notes

- This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be rewarded with reference to the generic mark scheme.

1 0 To what extent can Kantian deontological ethics be defended?

[25 marks]

AO1 = 5, AO2 = 20

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
21–25	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is sustained. The student demonstrates detailed and precise understanding throughout. The conclusion is clear, with the arguments in support of it stated precisely, integrated coherently and robustly defended. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Reasoned judgements are made, on an ongoing basis and overall, about the weight to be given to each argument. Crucial arguments are clearly identified against less crucial ones. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
16–20	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is largely sustained. The content is correct and detailed – though not always consistently. The conclusion is clear, with a range of appropriate arguments supporting it. Arguments are generally stated in their strongest forms. There is a balancing of arguments, with weight being given to each – so crucial arguments are noted against less crucial ones. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated clearly, integrated coherently and defended. There may be trivial mistakes, as long as they do not detract from the argument. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
11–15	A clear response to the question, in the form of an argument, demonstrating intent. The content is detailed and correct and most of it is integrated. A conclusion and reasons are given and those reasons clearly support the conclusion. There might be a lack of clarity/precision about the logic of the argument as a whole. Arguments and counter-arguments are given, but there may be a lack of balance. Not all arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Stronger and weaker arguments are noted and there are attempts to identify the weight to be given to different arguments, but not necessarily those which are crucial to the conclusion. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the argument.
6–10	The response to the question is given in the form of an argument, but not fully coherently. The content is largely correct, though there are some gaps and a lack of detail. Relevant points are recognised/identified, but not integrated. Alternative positions are identified, but not precisely. Counter-arguments might be stated in weak forms or even slightly misrepresented. Arguments and counter-arguments are juxtaposed, so similarities and contrasts identified, rather than their impact being clear. Philosophical language is used throughout, though not always fully correctly and/or consistently.

1–5	There is little evidence of an argument. There may be missing content, substantial gaps in the content or the content may be one-sided. There may be a conclusion and several reasonable points may be made. There may be some connections between the points, but there is no clear relationship between the points and the conclusion. There is some basic use of philosophical language.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

Students do not have to give a detailed explanation of Kantian deontological ethics at the outset of their answer in order to access the full range of marks, but their understanding should be clear in the arguments and counter arguments they present. But students may well begin by explaining Kant's view, which could include some of the points below:

- Kant argues that we have duties to do (or not do) certain things which are right (or wrong) in themselves.
- Kant argues that our moral duties are discoverable by reason and that only those who possess adequate rational capacities have such duties.
- Only the good will is good without qualification and to have a good will is to do your duty because it is your duty (other motivations are irrelevant). Students may develop this point with the 'shopkeepers' example.
- Moral duties are categorical and not hypothetical, because they are your duty regardless of what you want and are not a means to a further end.
- Categorical imperatives are (most readily) derivable from the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Acting on a maxim which does not pass this test is morally wrong.
- A maxim fails the test of the Categorical Imperative if it cannot be consistently universalised, so it would be impossible for everyone to act on it. For example, in the case of lying to get what you want, Kant would argue that your maxim would be 'I can tell a lie, if it gets me what I want.' If, however, you universalised this, then you would have to say 'all rational agents must, by a law of nature, lie when it gets them what they want.' Lying presupposes people taking you at your word, but, in this world, the practice of giving your word doesn't exist. So my maxim cannot be universalised.
- Students may mention the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties, distinguished by whether a failure is constituted by a contradiction in conception or a contradiction in the will.
- The second formulation of the Categorical Imperative (the Formula of Humanity): "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end." For example, to lie to someone is to treat them merely as a means to your own ends, rather than as an end. It is to undermine their power of making a rational choice themselves.

The question is asking specifically the extent to which Kantian deontological ethics can be defended, and so it's likely that students will focus on arguments/considerations <u>against</u> the view and consider whether they are successful or not. However, students may approach the question by considering arguments <u>for</u> Kant's view and evaluating whether they can be successfully defended against objections.

Conclusions may be drawn by discussing some of the following objections to Kant's position, considering possible responses, and ultimately deciding the extent to which they give us good enough reason to reject some or all of his account (though remember that this list is not exhaustive).

Kant's deontological approach to ethics cannot be defended

- Kant's deontological approach cannot be defended because of issues with his categorical imperatives as a way of generating moral rules.
    - Problems with application of the principle:
        - 'Not all universalisable maxims are distinctly moral' (AQA Specification).
        - 'Not all non-universalisable maxims are immoral' (AQA Specification).
        - It can be argued that all actions are non-universalisable (it is impossible for everyone to do exactly what I am doing now, whatever it is).
        - We are not capable of setting aside self-interest in the way that Kant supposes we are (this may be put as the idea that reason (or at least reason alone) cannot motivate action).
    - 'Clashing/competing duties' (AQA Specification) – for example, 'not lying' versus 'save lives' or Sartre's example of a young man torn between his duty to his country and his duty to his mother where "no rule of general morality can show you what you ought to do".

Kant's deontological approach to ethics cannot be defended in its entirety

- Kant's deontological approach cannot be defended in its entirety because his theory is lacking or imperfect (even if not wholly incorrect).
    - Good intentions can lead to bad consequences which need to be taken into account, eg A might try to educate/help B on in life and B might turn out to be an intelligent criminal – A ought to have foreseen this and is morally culpable.
    - One can do one's duty and yet bad things can happen (moral luck examples): one should still feel a sense of regret/responsibility (eg you hit someone who runs out in front of your car).
    - Kant doesn't acknowledge the role of the moral dimension of emotions such as guilt, love and/or sympathy and/or fails to take into account the pleasure which an agent takes in performing a morally good action.
    - Given that only rational agents are intrinsically valuable, Kant is left open to the charge that his view means that (eg) animals have no moral worth and can be used as instruments.
    - Some may argue that Kant does not allow for the actions of non-rational agents to be morally assessed.
    - Kant's view means that we have the same duties to those who have done (or would do) wrong as we do to those that act morally (eg we ought to tell the truth to the murderer about the location of his intended victim). This seems at odds with our views about morality.

- **Kant's deontological approach cannot be defended and some other account is more persuasive.**

    - Kant ignores 'the view that consequences of actions determine their moral value' (AQA Specification) – independent of considerations of universalisability. Consequences/happiness/utility are a morally relevant consideration (and perhaps the only morally relevant consideration). Utilitarianism may be discussed in this context as the right (or a better) account – for example, if you can never lie, you cannot lie to save lives or protect the innocent (lying to the murderer at the door). Some may also even argue that Kant himself relies on consequentialist/teleological reasoning.

    - Kant ignores the possible value of certain motives (eg the desire to do good) and commitments (eg those we have to family and friends). Virtue ethics may be discussed in this context as the right (and a better) account (the morally right thing to do is that which is the expression of virtue and virtuous character).

    - Foot – 'morality is a system of hypothetical, rather than categorical, imperatives' (AQA Specification).

    - Students who introduce alternative moral theories ought to introduce them as criticisms of elements of Kant's view (or at least as preferable to Kant in some respect) rather than just as juxtaposed alternatives.

- **Kant's deontological approach can be defended in its entirety**

    - Students may argue that Kant's deontological approach can be defended in its entirety by countering the critical points raised above.
    - In the process of defending Kant's deontological ethics, students may also pick up on various features of the theory and provide positive arguments in support of these features. For example, students may provide reasons / arguments in support of:
        - The claim that morality must be based on categorical imperatives rather than hypothetical imperatives
        - Kant's formulations of the categorical imperative
        - The claim that moral actions should be performed out of duty alone
        - The rejection of consequences as a basis for moral decision making and moral judgment
        - The absolutist nature of deontological ethics, including with reference to the notion of 'rights'.

Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.