

What is Philosophy?

Worksheet

Philosophy is the rational, systematic inquiry into fundamental questions - about reality, knowledge, ethics, and meaning - using logical argument rather than experiment or faith alone.

Questions

1. What does the word 'philosophy' literally mean?
 - A) Study of nature
 - B) Love of wisdom
 - C) Search for truth only
 - D) Study of the past
2. Which branch of philosophy studies the nature of knowledge?
 - A) Metaphysics
 - B) Ethics
 - C) Epistemology
 - D) Logic
3. What method did Socrates use to examine ideas?
 - A) Laboratory experiment
 - B) The Socratic method of questioning
 - C) Statistical survey
 - D) Historical documentation
4. Philosophy primarily relies on which of these to reach conclusions?
 - A) Faith alone
 - B) Popular opinion
 - C) Logical argument
 - D) Random guessing
5. How would a philosopher approach the question 'Is it ever right to lie?'
6. How does philosophy differ from science when studying 'what is real'?
7. What is the Socratic method and how is it used?
8. Define: What does 'philosophy' literally mean?
9. Define: What are the four major branches of philosophy?
10. Define: What distinguishes philosophy from religion?

Answer Key

1. B) Love of wisdom - 'Philosophy' comes from Greek 'philosophia' - 'philo' (love) + 'sophia' (wisdom).
2. C) Epistemology - Epistemology asks what knowledge is and how we can justify believing something.
3. B) The Socratic method of questioning - Socrates probed definitions with follow-up questions to expose contradictions and refine understanding.
4. C) Logical argument - Philosophy builds and tests conclusions through rigorous logical argument, not authority or guesswork.
5. Start with the puzzling case: lying to protect someone from harm feels justified, yet lying seems generally wrong Formulate the precise question: 'Under what conditions, if any, is lying morally permissible?' Construct an argument: a consequentialist argues lying is right when it produces better outcomes than truth-telling Test with a counterexample: a deontologist objects that lying always violates a duty to truth, regardless of outcome Refine the view: perhaps lying is permissible only to prevent serious, imminent harm
6. Science investigates reality through observation, experiment, and measurement Philosophy (metaphysics) asks more fundamental questions science assumes, like 'what does it mean for something to exist?' A philosopher uses logical argument and thought experiments rather than a lab Both aim at truth, but philosophy examines the concepts and assumptions science builds on
7. Socrates begins by asking someone to define a concept, e.g., 'What is justice?' He asks follow-up questions that test the definition against counterexamples Contradictions in the original definition are exposed The process continues until a more refined, defensible understanding emerges - or the participants admit their ignorance
8. From Greek: 'philosophia' - 'love of wisdom'.
9. Metaphysics (reality), epistemology (knowledge), ethics (values), and logic (reasoning).
10. Philosophy relies on rational argument and is open to revision, rather than appeal to faith or authority.

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