SAMPLE ASSESSMENT TASKS

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS
ATAR YEAR 11

Sample assessment task

Philosophy and Ethics – ATAR Year 11

Task 6 – Unit 2

Assessment type: Critical reasoning

Conditions
Time for the task: 50 minutes under standard test conditions
Answer all questions in the space provided

Total marks: 30
Task weighting: 10% of the school mark for this pair of units

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1. Identify the premise, inference indicator and conclusion in the following argument.   (3 marks)

    The game cannot be played when conditions are unsafe. Thus, the game must be postponed.

    The premise is: _____

    The inference indicator is: _____

    The conclusion is: _____

2. Classify each of the following sentences as description, explanation or argument.   (3 marks)

1. The men are all walking in unison because they face punishment if they choose not to.	
2. The men are all walking in unison.	
3. If the men do not walk in unison then they face punishment so they walk in unison.	

3. What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning? (1 mark)

If the lights are out, then it will probably be dark. The lights are out, so it will probably be dark.

_____

4. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy? (1 mark)

If the blue hat does not fit properly on your head then you should try the red hat. The blue hat does fit properly on your head; therefore you should not try the red hat.

_____

5. Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning? (1 mark)

Every time I go to the restaurant the waiter with the long hair is rude to me. The waiter with the long hair will be rude to me tonight, as I am going to the restaurant once again.

_____

6. What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning? (1 mark)

If, as some suggest, the human population of our planet is becoming increasingly unsustainable, we will face serious problems in the future. The reality, unfortunately, is that the human population is becoming increasingly unsustainable and, as a consequence of this, we will face serious problems in the future.

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7. Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning? (1 mark)

Old people are grumpier than young people. My brother is older than me, so his grumpiness can be attributed to his age.

_____

8. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy? (1 mark)

If this car is going to win the race, then an experienced driver must be behind the wheel. This car is going to win the race, as an experienced driver is behind the wheel.

_____

9. Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning? (1 mark)

    Rabbits are ferocious beasts. My neighbour recently bought a pet rabbit, which now lives in a cage in his garden. This means there is a ferocious beast living next door to me.

    _____

10. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy? (1 mark)

    If my daughter wishes to travel abroad, then she must immunise herself against the risk of disease. My daughter has immunised herself from the risk of disease, so clearly she wishes to travel abroad.

    _____

11. What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning? (1 mark)

    If it were true that the Loch Ness monster existed, then locals would be cautious about swimming in the Loch. As it happens, locals happily swim in the Loch, and this goes to show that the existence of the Loch Ness monster is a myth.

    _____

12. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy? (1 mark)

    If the present situation concerns you, then the future situation will fill you with dread. The present situation does not concern you, so you will not be filled with dread by the future situation.

    _____

13. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

    (2 marks)

    It is clear that little green men do not live on Mars, as there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case.

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

14. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

(2 marks)

Being paid in potatoes is better than nothing, but nothing beats being paid in money. Therefore, being paid in potatoes beats being paid in money.

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

(2 marks)

I spent six years in the infantry and my experience means I am uniquely placed to succeed in the tactical challenges facing anyone who plays chess.

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

(2 marks)

Each weekend, for the past three weeks, I have fished in the river with no success. This leads me to conclude that there are no fish in the river.

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. **Trees come in all shapes and sizes. Flowers come in all shapes and sizes. Animals come in all shapes and sizes. From this, we can conclude there is diversity in nature.**

    (i) Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the above argument. (1 mark)

    Weak   Moderate   Strong   Deductively valid

    (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the above argument. (1 mark)

    Lacking cogency   Moderate cogency   Cogent

18. **All senior students eat at least one banana per week. Unlike certain foods, bananas are nutritional for humans. Consequently, all senior students benefit from banana consumption.**

   (i)   Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the above argument. (1 mark)

   Weak   Moderate   Strong   Deductively valid

   (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the above argument. (1 mark)

   Lacking cogency   Moderate cogency   Cogent

19. **By our very nature, humans are compassionate and loving. For this reason, we should abolish taxation and encourage voluntary contributions in its place.**

   (i)   Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the above argument. (1 mark)

   Weak   Moderate   Strong   Deductively valid

   (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the above argument. (1 mark)

   Lacking cogency   Moderate cogency   Cogent

Marking key for sample assessment task 6 – Unit 2

1. Identify the premise, inference indicator and conclusion in the following argument.
   The game cannot be played when conditions are unsafe. Thus, the game must be postponed.

Description	Marks
Premise: 'The game cannot be played when conditions are unsafe.'	1
Inference indicator: 'Thus,'	1
Conclusion: 'The game must be postponed.'	1
Total	**3**

2. Classify each of the following sentences as description, explanation or argument.

Description	Marks
Sentence 1: explanation	1
Sentence 2: description	1
Sentence 3: argument	1
Total	**3**

3. What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning?
   If the lights are out, then it will probably be dark. The lights are out, so it will probably be dark.

Description	Marks
modus ponens	1

4. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy?
   If the blue hat does not fit properly on your head then you should try the red hat. The blue hat does fit properly on your head; therefore you should not try the red hat.

Description	Marks
denying the antecedent	1

5. Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning?
   Every time I go to the restaurant the waiter with the long hair is rude to me. The waiter with the long hair will be rude to me tonight as, I am going to the restaurant once again.

Description	Marks
inductive reasoning	1

6.   What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning?

If, as some suggest, the human population of our planet is becoming increasingly unsustainable, we will face serious problems in the future. The reality, unfortunately, is that the human population is becoming increasingly unsustainable and, as a consequence of this, we will face serious problems in the future.

Description	Marks
modus ponens	1

7.   Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning?

Old people are grumpier than young people. My brother is older than me, so his grumpiness can be attributed to his age.

Description	Marks
deductive reasoning	1

8.   What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy?

If this car is going to win the race, then an experienced driver must be behind the wheel. This car is going to win the race, as an experienced driver is behind the wheel.

Description	Marks
affirming the consequent	1

9.   Is the following inference an example of inductive or deductive reasoning?

Rabbits are ferocious beasts. My neighbour recently bought a pet rabbit, which now lives in a cage in his garden. This means there is a ferocious beast living next door to me.

Description	Marks
deductive reasoning	1

10.   What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy?

If my daughter wishes to travel abroad, then she must immunise herself against the risk of disease. My daughter has immunised herself from the risk of disease, so clearly she wishes to travel abroad.

Description	Marks
affirming the consequent	1

11.   What is the technical name for the following form of reasoning?

If it were true that the Loch Ness monster existed, then locals would be cautious about swimming in the Loch. As it happens, locals happily swim in the Loch, and this goes to show that the existence of the Loch Ness monster is a myth.

Description	Marks
modus tollens	1

12. What is the technical name for the following formal fallacy?

If the present situation concerns you, then the future situation will fill you with dread. The present situation does not concern you, so you will not be filled with dread by the future situation.

Description	Marks
denying the antecedent	**1**

13. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

It is clear that little green men do not live on Mars, as there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case.

Description	Marks
Identifies the informal fallacy as argument from ignorance.	1
Explains that something is not true just because it has not been proven false.	1
Total	**2**

14. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

Being paid in potatoes is better than nothing, but nothing beats being paid in money. Therefore, being paid in potatoes beats being paid in money.

Description	Marks
Identifies the informal fallacy as equivocation. *NOTE: it is equally correct to identify the example as The Four Term Fallacy or the Fallacy of the Four Terms, which is a special form of equivocation that can occur with formal syllogistic reasoning.*	1
Explains that the use of the term 'nothing' employs a different meaning in each premise and so the conclusion does not follow, even though it appears to be deductively valid e.g. 'better than nothing' employs a different meaning of 'nothing' from 'nothing beats'.	1
Total	**2**

15. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

I spent six years in the infantry and my experience means I am uniquely placed to succeed in the tactical challenges facing anyone who plays chess.

Description	Marks
Identifies the informal fallacy as argument from irrelevant authority.	1
Explains that tactical training in a military context does not ensure strategic success when faced with tactical challenges in a board game.	1
Total	**2**

16. Explain why the following is a fallacious argument. In your explanation, name the fallacy.

    Each weekend, for the past three weeks, I have fished in the river with no success. This leads me to conclude that there are no fish in the river.

Description	Marks
Identifies the informal fallacy as hasty generalisation.	1
Explains that failing to catch fish over three weekends is not enough time to conclude that the river is empty of fish.	1
Total	**2**

17. **Trees come in all shapes and sizes. Flowers come in all shapes and sizes. Animals come in all shapes and sizes. From this, we can conclude there is diversity in nature.**
    (i) Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the argument.
    (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the argument.

Description	Marks
(i) Identifies the inferential move as deductively valid.	1
(ii) Identifies the argument as cogent.	1
Total	**2**

18. **All senior students eat at least one banana per week. Unlike certain foods, bananas are nutritional for humans. Consequently, all senior students benefit from banana consumption.**
    (i) Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the argument.
    (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the argument.

Description	Marks
(i) Identifies the inferential move as deductively valid.	1
(ii) Identifies the argument as lacking cogency.	1
Total	**2**

19. **By our very nature, humans are compassionate and loving. For this reason, we should abolish taxation and encourage voluntary contributions in its place.**
    (i) Circle one of the following to best describe the strength of the inferential move in the argument.
    (ii) Circle one of the following to best describe the cogency of the argument.

Description	Marks
(i) Identifies the inferential move as weak.	1
(ii) Identifies the argument as lacking cogency.	1
Total	**2**

Sample assessment task

Philosophy and Ethics – ATAR Year 11

Task 2 – Unit 1

Assessment type: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (extract)

Conditions
45 minutes in class assessment under test conditions

Total marks: 20
Task weighting: 7.5% of the school mark for this pair of units

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Summarise, clarify and critically evaluate the following passage.

> We believe that we have the freedom of will to do things. If people are capable of doing things that they don't want to do, then the proposition that we have 'free will' is hopeful at best. For example, a person trying to quit smoking might smoke a cigarette, even if they don't want to smoke. It seems fair to say that, on some level, even if the person doesn't want to smoke, he or she does, in fact, want to smoke. This seems absolutely contradictory. It is logically impossible to both want to smoke and to want to refrain from smoking. So, notions such as moral responsibility need to be radically overlooked if a person's will is a fractured jumble of competing desires. Therefore, free will does not exist.

You will need to:

- Summarise the argument (i.e. identify the topic and the conclusion/s).   (2 marks)
- Clarify the core concepts.   (3 marks)
- Clarify the main arguments (i.e. identify the arguments and clarify the premises and inferences).   (5 marks)
- Evaluate the premises (i.e. identify the major premises and evaluate their acceptability using illustrative examples).   (4 marks)
- Evaluate the inferences (i.e. identify the inferential moves and evaluate the inferential strength using illustrative examples).   (4 marks)
- Assess the overall cogency of the argument.   (2 marks)

Marking key for sample assessment task 2 – Unit 1

Description	Marks
Criterion 1: Summary	
Identifies the topic	1
Identifies the main conclusions	1
Subtotal	**2**
Criterion 2: Clarification	
Concepts	
Explains core concepts using illustrative examples	3
Describes core concepts	2
States core concepts	1
Subtotal	**3**
Arguments	
Identifies the arguments in the texts and clarifies the premises and inferences	5
Identifies the arguments in the texts and clarifies some of the premises and inferences	4
Identifies the arguments in the texts and refers to some of the premises and inferences	3
Identifies the arguments in the texts	2
Identifies an argument or some arguments in the texts	1
Subtotal	**5**
Criterion 3: Evaluation	
Premises	
Identifies the major premises and evaluates their acceptability using illustrative examples	4
Identifies the major premises and evaluates their acceptability	3
Identifies the major premises and states their acceptability	2
Identifies some of the major premises	1
Subtotal	**4**
Inferences	
Identifies the inferential moves and evaluates inferential strength using illustrative examples	4
Identifies the inferential moves and evaluates inferential strength	3
Identifies the inferential moves and makes some assertions about inferential strength	2
Identifies some inferential moves	1
Subtotal	**4**
Cogency	
Assesses the cogency of the argument based on their evaluation of premise acceptability and inferential strength	2
Makes assertions about cogency	1
Subtotal	**2**
Total	**20**

Sample assessment task

Philosophy and Ethics – ATAR Year 11

Task 8 – Unit 2

Assessment type: Construction of argument

Conditions
Period allowed for completion of the task: 2 weeks
Two periods in class and homework
Question and guidelines issued prior to assist student research
50 minutes in-class assessment under standard test conditions. One side of A4 notes are permitted (must be submitted after the in-class assessment).

Total marks: 30
Task weighting: 10% of the school mark for this pair of units

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Choose **one** of the following propositions and argue **for or against** the statement.

• Beauty can be measured and categorised.

• Art and craft are two separate things altogether.

• 'Someone will walk on the stage at Carnegie Hall and vomit and someone will call it art', *Woody Allen*.

Construct an argument that displays independence of thought, originality, precision, consistency, relevance and cogency.

The task will be marked as follows:
• Criterion 1: Philosophical understandings using philosophical language and concepts   (10 marks)
• Criterion 2: Philosophical arguments using effective examples and counter-examples   (15 marks)
• Criterion 3: Clarity and structure   (5 marks)

Marking key for sample assessment task 8 – Unit 2

Description	Marks
Criterion 1: Philosophical understandings	
Demonstrates a critical understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question and uses sophisticated philosophical language and concepts	9–10
Demonstrates understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question and uses appropriate language and concepts	7–8
Demonstrates an understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question and uses some appropriate philosophical language and concepts	5–6
Demonstrates some understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question	3–4
Demonstrates a limited understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question	1–2
Fails to demonstrate an understanding of philosophical topics relevant to the question	0
Subtotal	**10**
Criterion 2: Philosophical arguments	
Constructs a relevant, cogent argument, which demonstrates originality, and a deep understanding of philosophical method (e.g. relies on plausible assumptions, demonstrates logical insight, effectively uses examples and counter-examples where appropriate)	14–15
Constructs a relevant, cogent argument, which demonstrates a sound understanding of philosophical method	12–13
Constructs a relevant, moderately cogent argument, which demonstrates some understanding of philosophical method	10–11
Constructs a relevant, moderately cogent argument (e.g. may contain some errors in reasoning or fails to consider possible objections where appropriate)	8–9
Constructs a relevant, weak argument (e.g. may make controversial assumptions, beg the question and/or commit some other serious errors of reasoning, such as informal or formal fallacies)	6–7
Constructs a weak argument that makes few relevant claims (e.g. commits several serious errors of reasoning, has tenuous/occasional links with the question)	4–5
Makes some claims relevant to the question but fails to construct any argument (e.g. merely makes assertions, merely discusses the thoughts of others)	2–3
No relevant argument (e.g. fails to address the question)	0–1
Subtotal	**15**
Criterion 3: Clarity and structure	
Writes with structure and clarity (e.g. clarifies key terms, sign-post key steps of the argument, logical ordering of topics)	4–5
Writes with some structure and some clarity	2–3
Writing is poorly structured and lacks clarity (e.g. fails to clarify key terms, unclear argument structure)	0–1
Subtotal	**5**
Total	**30**

Sample assessment task

Philosophy and Ethics – ATAR Year 11

Task 4 – Unit 1

Assessment type: Philosophical analysis and evaluation (community of inquiry dialogue)

Conditions
50 minutes in class under test conditions

Total marks: 20
Task weighting: 7.5% of the school mark for this pair of units

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The following dialogue is an excerpt from a classroom community of inquiry.

You are required to:
- summarise   (2 marks)
- clarify   (6 marks)
- critically evaluate the contributions of each participant.   (12 marks)

Shaun: You can't perform good actions unless you have good character. Rule-following based on reason is not worth moral praise.

Tyson: If you weren't religious you'd reason about moral questions. Sadly, you are religious so you don't use reason. Morality needs principles and the way to discover them is through reason.

Shaun: Following reason without good character can result in evil. If the principle of 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number' is blindly applied, it could justify egotistical self-interest. But this can't be justified, so reason should not be applied blindly.

Tyson: Okay. Moral principles won't lead to good action unless you have good character, so define 'good character'.

Shaun: I define good character as someone who possesses virtues. You know, honesty, justice and compassion, for example.

Tyson: Virtues give some help but they don't really offer any specific guidance on how to act. If someone is thinking of abortion, being honest isn't going to help them much. Having a principle would.

Shaun: It's foolish to think moral principles tell people how to live. 'Treat others as you would like to be treated' can be abused. How I want to be treated is not the same as how you want to be treated because you're not religious, so moral principles only confuse things when trying to do the right thing. Only good character helps.

Tyson: No one has ever been able to prove what good is, so good character doesn't actually exist!

Marking key for sample assessment task 4 – Unit 1

Description	Marks
Criterion 1: Summary	
Identifies the main position of the first participant	1
Identifies the main position of the second participant	1
Subtotal	**2**
Criterion 2: Clarification	
Concepts	
States philosophical concepts that frame the argument of the first participant	1
States philosophical concepts that frame the argument of the second participant	1
Arguments	
Explains the arguments using examples	2 (for each participant)
Describes the arguments	1 (for each participant)
Subtotal	**6**
Criterion 3: Evaluation	
Examples	
Explains the relevance of examples/counter examples of the first participant	1
Explains the relevance of examples/counter examples of the second participant	1
Premises	
Provides reasons to justify their stated acceptability of the premises	2 (for each participant)
States the acceptability of the premises	1 (for each participant)
Inferences	
Provides reasons to justify their stated strength of the inferential moves	2 (for each participant)
States the strength of the inferential moves	1 (for each participant)
Cogency	
Assesses the cogency of the argument of the first participant	1
Assesses the cogency of the argument of the second participant	1
Subtotal	**12**
Total	**20**