

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'How can you know anything about literature if all you've done is read books?' [GEOFF DYER]
2. Should you be allowed internet access during this exam?
3. Does the future of nutrition lie with chemistry?
4. When we make contact with an extra-terrestrial civilization, what should we tell them is humanity's greatest achievement?
5. Have email, blogs and tweets restored the primacy of writing?
6. Do we need borders?
7. 'Thinking is my fighting.' [VIRGINIA WOOLF, 1940] Discuss.
8. Which peoples should be considered 'indigenous'?
9. Should there be such a thing as intellectual property?
10. What is good about 'Big data'?
11. Is hip-hop/rap more political than the Eurovision Song Contest?
12. Why do autocrats oppress?
13. Are democracy and nationalism allies or enemies?
14. What accounts for the success of the gay rights movement in the West?
15. Is Edward Snowden a hero or a villain?
16. 'More boys from Eton went to Oxford and Cambridge than boys eligible for free school meals.' [MICHAEL GOVE] What should be done about it?
17. Are cooperatives doomed to fail?
18. Is the physicists' sought-for 'theory of everything' a chimera?
19. 'Businesses owned by responsible and organized merchants will eventually surpass those owned by wealthy rulers.' [IBN KHALDUN, c. 1377] Discuss.
20. Must an idol have died young?
21. Is it possible to dress rationally?

[OVER]

22. Is cosmetic surgery wrong?
23. Did Eve make the right choice?
24. Postmodernism – *sooo* last century. Discuss.
25. Why, seemingly, does the public have a taste for abstract art but not for atonal music?
26. ‘Fright is fun, but only up to a point.’ [EVA FIGES] Has contemporary culture passed that point?
27. ‘we owe most of our pleasures to illusion; woe to those who lose it’ [EMILIE DU CHATELET, *c.* 1740] Discuss.
28. ‘the sole end of science is the honour of the human mind, ... under this title a question about numbers is worth as much as a question about the system of the world.’ [C.G.J. JACOBI, 1830] Discuss.
29. Are sting operations defensible?
30. Is rising life expectancy a good thing?

GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'Every collection of human beings ... preserves its fables and its history in the archives of the shaman and the *griot* and the bard's memory.' [DEREK WALCOTT] Discuss.
2. 'Not just some, but *all* writing of the narrative kind, and perhaps all writing, is motivated, deep down, by a fear of and a fascination with mortality – by a desire to make the risky trip to the Underworld, and to bring something or someone back from the dead.' [MARGARET ATWOOD] Discuss.
3. 'Tell all the truth ... But tell it slant.' [EMILY DICKINSON] Is this sound advice to writers?
4. Can a good person be a really good novelist?
5. Some languages, for example French and Italian, do not distinguish clearly between 'history' and 'story'. Should we be warned?
6. What is, or should be, 'global history'?
7. What is the role of the 'hard sciences' in historical research?
8. 'The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.' [MARTIN LUTHER KING] Discuss.
9. Does the teaching of economics need a radical overhaul?
10. Is ever-rising inequality inevitable under capitalism?
11. Should the richest part of a country have the right to secede?
12. How should we measure the cost of climate change?
13. Should prisoners have the right to vote?
14. Should litigation be encouraged?
15. Does it matter that there is only one woman judge on the UK Supreme Court?
16. Does it matter what a judge had for breakfast?
17. Did people have human rights in the Paleolithic era?
18. When Romeo bribes the apothecary to sell him a drug, the apothecary says, 'My poverty but not my will consents.' Is that a coherent thing for him to say?
19. Privatization of public services: solution or problem?

[OVER]

20. 'If it be desirable that the public servants should be contented with small salaries, it is more desirable that they should be willing to serve gratuitously, and most desirable that they should pay for the liberty of serving' [J. BENTHAM]. Discuss.
21. What sort of event is most likely to precipitate the abolition of monarchy in Britain?
22. 'I am for violence if non-violence means we continue postponing a solution to the American black man's problem just to avoid violence.' [MALCOLM X] Discuss.
23. 'Death is nothing to us, since when we are there, death is not; and when death is, we are not.' [EPICURUS] Discuss.
24. Should we banish the poets?
25. Is the abortion debate separable from issues of gender?
26. Does mathematics need foundations?
27. If 'excavation is destruction' [MORTIMER WHEELER] can we defend it?
28. Does multilingualism mean multiple identities?
29. 'Domesticating' or 'foreignizing'? Which approach to translation is more appropriate to any one foreign-language book or author you have read?
30. Theories come to Classics to die. Discuss.
31. Is English the new Latin?

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Did the left or the right win the twentieth century?
2. Should intellectuals tweet?
3. Should states control their borders?
4. Is vegetarianism the future?
5. Should all citizens receive a basic income from the state?
6. Should airlines be permitted to charge passengers according to their weight?
7. 'Secure people dare.' Do they?
8. Should prisoners be allowed to watch television?
9. What, if anything, is wrong with using drones in warfare?
10. What are universities for?
11. What shapes urban landscapes?
12. Should scientific progress make us optimistic?
13. Is France the sick man of Europe?
14. Is gardening art?
15. Is globalization undermining democracy?
16. What role should disgust play in our moral decision-making?
17. Is it wrong to change your accent?
18. Is the middle class a force for good?
19. Defend kitsch.
20. Should tackling corruption be the first priority for developing countries?
21. 'Fiction's about what it is to be a fucking human being' [DAVID FOSTER WALLACE]. Is it?
22. How should we listen to music?
23. What will become of the English?

[OVER]

24. Can travel writing be literature?
25. What's wrong with doping?
26. Can there be a purely aesthetic appreciation of religious art?
27. Devise a new punctuation mark – and defend it.

GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Who is the most overrated figure in your discipline?
2. What is the most important unanswered question in philosophy?
3. How flexible should a constitution be?
4. Why didn't the ancient world permit same-sex marriage?
5. Do future generations have rights?
6. What can be learnt about literature from thinking about libraries?
7. Have modern chefs much to learn from ancient cookery?
8. Should creative talents be well paid?
9. Should governments 'nudge' their citizens?
10. In Renaissance Venice, it was illegal for a merchant to dress as a peasant to fool buyers that the offered produce was home grown. What kinds of regulation are needed to control modern retailers?
11. What is the Euro's most fundamental problem?
12. Did the wrong side win the Battle of Waterloo?
13. What obligations, if any, do individuals owe to international institutions?
14. What are the strengths and limitations of studying the reception history of texts?
15. How should the press be regulated?
16. Why does fiction so often involve imagining the future?
17. Is Magna Carta still important?
18. When should insurance premiums not be based on actuarial risk?
19. What was 'exceptional' about American history?
20. What would Pindar have made of the 2012 London Olympics?
21. Which is more important in the law, certainty or justice?
22. 'Historically, religion has been for women what politics has been for men.' Discuss.

[OVER]

23. Has contemporary philosophy anything to do with the love of wisdom?
24. Should judges be elected?
25. 'I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse, perhaps, to be locked in' [VIRGINIA WOOLF]. Are the best writers outsiders?
26. Is politics philosophy in action?
27. Are exceptions part of the rule?
28. Is the main thing that divides economists their political beliefs?
29. Will China avoid the fate of the Soviet Union?

GENERAL I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Whither feminism?
2. Explain the importance of studying the humanities in a letter to a living politician of your choice.
3. Reform the House of Lords.
4. Can conservatism be a force for good in an academic institution?
5. What's so bad about envy?
6. What's so good about creativity?
7. Is altruism really a form of self-interest?
8. Why should we value privacy?
9. 'O tell me the truth about love' [W.H. AUDEN].
10. How do you know whether you are happy?
11. When is a gift too generous?
12. Why do so many people want to get married?
13. Should public servants get bonuses?
14. 'You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor.' [SAMUEL JOHNSON, attributed]. Discuss.
15. What is most likely to bring about the extinction of the human race?
16. Are all Internet users equal?
17. What is the role of metaphor in science?
18. Is the brain a computer?
19. Did death evolve?
20. How might we be changed if we became aware of extraterrestrial life?
21. What should we do with Battersea power station?
22. What use is poetry?

[OVER]

23. Do we learn more about the world from fiction than from non-fiction?
24. Can something be beautiful if it is not fit for purpose?
25. Are reports of the death of the book greatly exaggerated?
26. 'I maintain music is not here to make us forget about life. It is here to teach us about life' [DANIEL BARENBOIM]. How might it do that?
27. Is jazz America's classical music?
28. 'Actors should be treated like cattle' [ALFRED HITCHCOCK]. Discuss.
29. Explain the power of fundamentalist religion.
30. Should we engineer our athletes?

GENERAL II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Do we police disciplinary boundaries too rigorously?
2. Have historical novelists done more than historians to recover the life and texture of the past?
3. Is the UN correct to identify linguistic diversity as a basic human good?
4. Is the financial sector larger than it should be?
5. 'Changes in attitudes towards the human body have been vastly exaggerated.' Discuss.
6. Can we be forced to be free?
7. 'Human behaviour remains the same, but "vices" change.' Discuss.
8. How can words be beautiful?
9. Should the judiciary be representative of the society which it serves?
10. Can policy rely on human rationality?
11. What has the Occupy movement revealed?
12. Should philosophy be taught in schools?
13. Are human rights universal?
14. Are any universal human traits manifested in tragedy?
15. 'A non-whiggish history of science, medicine and technology is an exercise in futility.' Discuss.
16. Has the jury system outlived its utility?
17. Examine the intellectual relationship, if any, between history and economics.
18. 'Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact' [MATTHEW ARNOLD]. Discuss.
19. Have independent central banks been a failure?
20. How long a period should elapse before it is acceptable for archaeologists to disinter human remains?
21. Are reparations a form of punishment?

[OVER]

22. Is it rational to fear your own death?
23. Assess the significance of dictionaries and encyclopaedias for the study of history.
24. What can the social sciences discover by better mapping of the brain and its operations?
25. Of what value is truth?
26. 'Democracy is being subverted by unaccountable judges who are sidelining Parliament'. Do you agree?
27. Why does Ovid's popularity fluctuate?
28. 'A science of politics is not so much impossible as undesirable.' Discuss.
29. If this were the last piece of paper available, what would you write on it?

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Why is gold valuable?
2. Should there be a maximum, as well as a minimum, wage?
3. What should be the role of public libraries in Britain today?
4. Have the baby boomers betrayed their children?
5. Should the consequences of the recent earthquake in Japan change our minds about nuclear energy?
6. What is the future of the printed book?
7. Should faith schools be encouraged?
8. What is wrong with plagiarism?
9. Is it meaningful to speak of a ‘morality of architecture’?
10. Should we celebrate suburbia?
11. ‘There is a certain incompatibility between the terms “cinema” and “Britain”’ [FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT]. Discuss.
12. Should we encourage the re-introduction of locally extinct species?
13. Is there more to *bel canto* opera than fine singing?
14. How would you account for the current obsession with Caravaggio?
15. ‘One of the under-appreciated tragedies of our time has been the sundering of our society from its past’ [MICHAEL GOVE, 2010]. Discuss.
16. Is the internet changing the ways in which we think?
17. Why are some jokes funnier than others?
18. Is boredom unfairly maligned?
19. ‘who pays any attention / to the syntax of things / will never wholly kiss you’ [e.e. cummings]. Discuss.
20. Should the law help celebrities to prevent publication of their sexual indiscretions?
21. Do you agree with Thomas Hardy that ‘It is better to fail in poetry than to succeed in prose’?

22. There is evidence that people give more to charity when asked by someone wearing a designer label. What should we make of this?
23. What is special about José Mourinho?
24. Why are the deaf members of a given society more likely to develop a distinct subculture than its blind members?
25. Can assassination ever be a proper instrument of foreign policy?
26. Is caricature an act of aggression?
27. For what should we celebrate the King James Bible?
28. Is militant atheism just another form of religious extremism?
29. Could my brain be evil?
30. Can we afford to support science at the cost of the humanities?
31. Has obesity taken over from smoking?
32. Write an essay on: (a) contagion or (b) contradiction or (c) misfortune.

GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. What would the ancient world have made of the recent financial crisis?
2. Was there an ancient concept of 'environmentalism'?
3. Is there any reason why films about the ancient world should be studied in a classics department rather than a film studies department?
4. What can game theory teach us about international relations?
5. 'Fundamentally, mainstream microeconomics is a "just world" theory, in which everyone gets what he or she deserves.' Do you agree?
6. Did economics save us from another Great Depression?
7. Is 'World Literature' an ersatz concept?
8. 'Many a single word also is itself a concentrated poem, having stores of poetical thought and imagery laid up in it' [R.C. TRENCH]. Discuss.
9. 'By great authors the many are drawn up into a unity, national character is fixed, a people speaks... Such men are, in a word, the spokesmen and prophets of the human family' [JOHN HENRY NEWMAN]. Discuss.
10. What is the difference between literature and *belles lettres*?
11. Should there be a legal remedy for persons who suffer losses as a result of the abandonment of election promises made by a political party elected into government?
12. How do we know whether or not prison works?
13. Should there be any restrictions on who can sit on a jury?
14. Should sex offenders remain for life on the sex offenders register?
15. Discuss what philosophy can learn from and contribute to some other academic discipline.
16. Are there any philosophical arguments which succeed in undermining what we ordinarily believe?
17. Should philosophers aim to provide a world view?
18. Should ethics make us better people?
19. Must historians make moral judgements?

[OVER]

20. Can monarchies be republics?
21. Is it possible to write a history of homosexuality?
22. Is technology the enemy of history?
23. How would your subject be different if women had always been equal in power to men?
24. Is higher education a public service or a business?
25. Is 'Red Toryism' a contradiction in terms?
26. Should governments aspire to make their citizens happy?
27. If you were Prime Minister, what considerations would you take into account in deciding the size and composition of your Cabinet?

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Could there be a highest form of art?
2. Should I care how many medals my country wins at the Olympics?
3. How much would you like to know about your own DNA sequence?
4. Is it unethical to exaggerate in a letter of recommendation, when it is anticipated that what is said will be discounted?
5. '[Humanity] is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions ... this planet does not supply the material for happiness' [THOMAS HARDY]. Do you agree?
6. Should I be convinced by a scientific argument I don't understand?
7. 'Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful' [WILLIAM MORRIS]. Is this good advice?
8. Should 'work' and 'life' be balanced?
9. Can music be immoral?
10. Is there anything wrong with pursuing one's social life through an online avatar?
11. Should we discourage child prodigies?
12. What does it mean for 'society' to be 'Big'?
13. 'We who hate change survive
Only through change' [CHRISTOPHER LOGUE]. Discuss.
14. Should rival football fans be allowed to fight each other if they all want to?
15. Is it wise to try to make contact with alien life forms?
16. Is Wikipedia an encyclopaedia?
17. Does Britain undervalue *grands projets*?
18. Can charity be selfish?
19. Do animals that make tools teach us anything about ourselves?
20. 'It seems to me that one of the kindest things that parents can do for their children is to die relatively young' [AUBERON WAUGH]. Is it?
21. Is climate change denial heresy?

[OVER]

22. 'If the [Oxford] Colleges could be transferred to the dry and bracing top of some hill, doubtless they would be more evidently useful to the nation.' [MAX BEERBOHM]. Would they?
23. Is the development of 3D cinema anything more than a gimmick?
24. Write an essay on: (a) luck or (b) inheritance or (c) imitation.

GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Do modern university syllabuses unfairly neglect ancient medical writers?
2. How much blame should academic economists take for the financial crisis?
3. Does it matter if national identities wither away?
4. 'The only obligation we have to the past is to re-write it' [OSCAR WILDE]. Discuss.
5. Should investors be able to fund legal actions in exchange for a share of the damages?
6. 'To know God's nature one would have to be God Himself' [JOSEPH ALBO]. Is philosophy of religion therefore futile?
7. Why are social inequalities so widely accepted?
8. What role, if any, should hatred play in our ethical lives?
9. 'A "new" play by Shakespeare? I'd prefer a new play by somebody else' [DAVID MITCHELL]. Would you?
10. Should people be paid according to their capabilities, their effort or something else?
11. Would an ancient Athenian consider modern Britain democratic?
12. Is there any point in distinguishing 'literature' from other kinds of writing?
13. In what sense (if any) have the members of the baby boom generation 'stolen their children's future' [DAVID WILLETTS]?
14. What is the place of common sense in philosophy?
15. Should the police be made accountable to elected politicians?
16. 'In literary criticism the critic has no choice but to make over the victim of his attention into something the size and shape of himself' [JOHN STEINBECK]. Do you agree?
17. Did the ancient world have a concept of child abuse?
18. Is fairness a relevant concept for economics?
19. Should it be possible to pursue scientific arguments through libel law?
20. 'I don't mind there being some medievalists around for ornamental purposes, but there is no reason for the state to pay for them' [CHARLES CLARKE]. Discuss.

[OVER]

21. Can historical novels be good novels and good history?
22. Are the Americans the Romans of the modern world?
23. Should religious convictions excuse breaches of legal duties?
24. 'History does not need explanatory principles ... only words to tell how things are'
[ELIE KEDOURIE]. Comment.
25. Should scientists even try to predict the future?
26. What are the moral obligations of the biographer?
27. Should England declare independence?

GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Does development aid do more harm than good?
2. Could a reduction in income inequality improve the health and wellbeing of a whole nation?
3. Are bankers or politicians more to blame for the present world economic crisis?
4. Should university education be free?
5. How many people should there be?
6. Do developing countries have a greater right to pollute the environment?
7. Does contemporary aesthetics need a concept of beauty?
8. 'The present age is one of overproduction ... never has there been so much music-making and so little musical experience of a vital order' [CONSTANT LAMBERT, 1934]. Discuss.
9. How can an examination of an artist's life help us to appraise his or her artistic achievements?
10. 'The ability to access the Web will be either a great divider or a great equaliser' [TIM BERNERS-LEE, 1997]. Discuss.
11. Does Facebook put the private sphere in jeopardy?
12. What are the functions of fashion?
13. Is there something inherently coarsening about sport?
14. Why doesn't Britain have a café culture?
15. What is the value of 'red top' journalism?
16. 'Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp. Or what's a heaven for?' [ROBERT BROWNING]. Discuss.
17. Has morality made progress?
18. Is it ethical to abort fetuses with Down's syndrome?
19. Is globalization just *Pax Americana*?
20. 'All political careers end in failure' [J. ENOCH POWELL]. Is this true?
21. Could there be a British Barack Obama?

[OVER]

22. Do the innocent have nothing to fear?
23. Why are face transplants more controversial than liver transplants?
24. Is a generation gap inevitable?
25. ‘Thus said Alfred: “If you have a sorrow, do not tell it to your minion. Tell it to your saddlebow, and ride forth singing”’ [‘Proverbs of Alfred’, thirteenth century]. Is a stiff upper lip a good thing?
26. Can you take the religion out of religious art?
27. Does it matter whether there is life elsewhere in the universe?
28. ‘There was a time when people simply wanted to sense the moon, but now they want to see it’ [GOETHE]. Discuss.
29. Should science be subject to democratic control?
30. What is the significance of binge drinking?
31. Is maternity leave good for women?
32. Should Jade Goody be in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*?
33. ‘Gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power’ [JOAN W. SCOTT, 1986]. Is this still the case?
34. ‘Wild law’: if animals have rights, can nature have rights too?