

OCR A-Level Philosophy Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

- 1. How is God's knowledge of the future described in the context of the Bible?**
 - A. It is limited to present circumstances**
 - B. It is uncertain and changeable**
 - C. It was recorded before events transpired**
 - D. It only applies to spiritual matters**
- 2. What is the 'Theory of Opposites' as proposed by Plato?**
 - A. Opposites are unrelated and exist independently**
 - B. For each quality, there must be an opposite quality**
 - C. Every experience is an illusion based on perception**
 - D. Each object has a single perceived attribute**
- 3. In Cartesian dualism, how are the body and soul viewed?**
 - A. As completely independent and unrelated entities**
 - B. As interconnected but distinct substances**
 - C. As single aspects of a unified existence**
 - D. As identical and indistinguishable**
- 4. According to Irenaeus, what must humans do to reach their potential?**
 - A. Simply believe in God**
 - B. Respond to evil in life**
 - C. Isolate themselves spiritually**
 - D. Demonstrate loyalty to religious authority**
- 5. Who criticized the notion that a perfect world could have gone wrong?**
 - A. St. Augustine**
 - B. F.D.E. Schleiermacher**
 - C. Irenaeus**
 - D. Thomas Aquinas**

- 6. Which of the following is NOT one of the four criteria of religious experiences according to William James?**
- A. Ineffable**
 - B. Metaphysical**
 - C. Noetic**
 - D. Transient**
- 7. Which criticism hinges on the observation that nature causes suffering, suggesting a morally flawed creator?**
- A. Russell's critique**
 - B. Mill's critique**
 - C. Dawkins' observation**
 - D. Hume's argument**
- 8. What is a strength of corporate religious experiences?**
- A. They guarantee genuine connection with God**
 - B. They provide a wealth of testimonies and accounts**
 - C. They are entirely spontaneous**
 - D. They discourage personal interpretation**
- 9. What does the term 'ineffable' refer to in discussions of God's nature?**
- A. God's qualities are simple to explain**
 - B. God cannot be truly experienced**
 - C. God's nature cannot be expressed in words**
 - D. God can only be understood through scripture**
- 10. What is middle knowledge in relation to God's omniscience?**
- A. Knowledge of past events**
 - B. Knowledge of every possible outcome given particular choices**
 - C. Knowledge of all true propositions**
 - D. Knowledge of spiritual truths only**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. C
10. B

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Explanations

1. How is God's knowledge of the future described in the context of the Bible?

- A. It is limited to present circumstances**
- B. It is uncertain and changeable**
- C. It was recorded before events transpired**
- D. It only applies to spiritual matters**

The correct choice indicates that God's knowledge of the future is described as being recorded before events transpired. This perspective aligns with the theological viewpoint that God is omniscient, meaning He possesses complete knowledge of all things, including the future. In many biblical passages, such as in the prophetic texts, it is suggested that God has foreknowledge of events that will happen, and this knowledge is often articulated in a way that indicates a preordained plan. For instance, the Bible speaks of God's plans and purposes being established before the foundation of the world, which implies that He is not only aware of future events but has also determined their outcomes. The notion of prophetic writings also supports this understanding, where God conveys knowledge to His prophets about events that are yet to occur. Therefore, the concept that God's knowledge encompasses future events before they happen reflects a traditional theological view that emphasizes God's sovereignty and omniscience, making it the appropriate answer in this context.

2. What is the 'Theory of Opposites' as proposed by Plato?

- A. Opposites are unrelated and exist independently**
- B. For each quality, there must be an opposite quality**
- C. Every experience is an illusion based on perception**
- D. Each object has a single perceived attribute**

The 'Theory of Opposites' proposed by Plato emphasizes that for every quality or characteristic, there is a corresponding opposite quality. This idea is rooted in the belief that opposites are intrinsically connected and that understanding one quality necessitates an understanding of its opposite. For instance, you cannot comprehend the concept of 'hot' without also understanding 'cold,' as the existence of one quality inherently implies the existence of its counterpart. This theory supports Plato's broader philosophical views about the nature of reality, knowledge, and how opposites contribute to the formation of ideas. The contrast between qualities reveals the dual nature of existence, ultimately leading to a deeper investigation into the essence of things. By recognizing that qualities are defined through their opposites, one can achieve a more comprehensive grasp of the world and the forms that inhabit it. The other options offer perspectives that diverge from Plato's ideas. For example, stating that opposites are unrelated does not align with the interdependent nature of qualities, and claiming that every experience is an illusion oversimplifies the complexity of perception and knowledge. Moreover, the assertion that each object has a single perceived attribute contradicts Plato's understanding of forms and qualities, which are often multifaceted and interrelated through their opposites.

3. In Cartesian dualism, how are the body and soul viewed?

- A. As completely independent and unrelated entities
- B. As interconnected but distinct substances**
- C. As single aspects of a unified existence
- D. As identical and indistinguishable

In Cartesian dualism, the body and soul are understood as interconnected yet distinct substances, which is core to René Descartes' philosophical framework. This perspective posits that the mind (or soul) and body constitute two separate realms of existence: the mental and the physical. Descartes argued that the soul is a non-material, thinking substance, while the body is a material, extended substance. Despite their distinct natures, he proposed that they interact with one another, particularly through the pineal gland, where thoughts produced by the mind can manifest actions in the body and vice versa. This interaction highlights the complexity of their relationship, emphasizing that while they are fundamentally different in essence, they are still engaged in a dynamic connection where mental states can affect physical states and vice versa. The other options don't capture this dualistic interaction effectively. Viewing them as completely independent and unrelated would neglect the ways they influence one another. Considering them as single aspects of a unified existence or as identical and indistinguishable fails to recognize the distinction Descartes makes between the corporeal and the incorporeal. Thus, the understanding of body and soul as interconnected but distinct encapsulates the essence of Cartesian dualism accurately.

4. According to Irenaeus, what must humans do to reach their potential?

- A. Simply believe in God
- B. Respond to evil in life**
- C. Isolate themselves spiritually
- D. Demonstrate loyalty to religious authority

Irenaeus, an early Church Father, emphasized the importance of human experience, particularly the role of free will and the necessity of responding to challenges, including evil and suffering, as integral to spiritual growth and reaching one's potential. According to his theodicy, humanity is in a developmental stage where encountering difficulties serves a purpose. By facing and responding to evil, individuals develop virtues such as courage, patience, and compassion. This belief underscores the idea that growth comes from overcoming adversity, which is a central tenet of Irenaeus's thought. Therefore, reacting to and engaging with evil is essential for humans to fulfill their potential and achieve a deeper understanding of God and themselves.

5. Who criticized the notion that a perfect world could have gone wrong?

A. St. Augustine

B. F.D.E. Schleiermacher

C. Irenaeus

D. Thomas Aquinas

The notion that a perfect world could have gone wrong was notably criticized by F.D.E. Schleiermacher. He engages with the theological implications of human fallibility and the idea of a perfect creation. Schleiermacher is known for his emphasis on the personal relationship with God and the experience of religious consciousness. His perspective suggests that the presence of evil and suffering in the world does not necessarily negate a perfect creation but can instead be understood through the lens of human freedom and the limits of human understanding. This challenges traditional views that position the existence of imperfection or evil as contradictory to the idea of a perfect world created by an all-good deity. In contrast, St. Augustine, Irenaeus, and Thomas Aquinas have different interpretations regarding the problem of evil and the nature of a perfect world. Augustine, for example, emphasizes the role of human free will and original sin in explaining the imperfections of the world. Irenaeus proposes that the existence of evil serves a purpose in soul-making and moral development. Aquinas offers a more scholastic approach, arguing that God allows evil to exist for a greater good, ultimately leading to the fulfillment of divine justice. These differing philosophical and theological frameworks highlight the complexity of the discussion surrounding perfection and imper

6. Which of the following is NOT one of the four criteria of religious experiences according to William James?

A. Ineffable

B. Metaphysical

C. Noetic

D. Transient

William James outlined four criteria of religious experiences in his work "The Varieties of Religious Experience." These criteria are ineffable, noetic, transient, and passive. Understanding each term helps clarify why 'metaphysical' is not one of the criteria. 'Ineffable' refers to the idea that religious experiences often cannot be adequately expressed in words; they transcend ordinary language. 'Noetic' indicates that such experiences provide a kind of knowledge or insight that is unique and significant. 'Transient' highlights that these experiences are often temporary, lasting for only a short time but leaving a lasting impact on the individual's life. Lastly, 'passive' suggests that individuals do not actively create their religious experiences; rather, they are often seen as being influenced by a higher power or reality. The term 'metaphysical,' while related to discussions of reality and existence, is not one of the criteria James identified. Instead, it is a broader philosophical category related to the nature of reality and being, without the specific dimensions James emphasized regarding the nature of religious experiences. Thus, identifying 'metaphysical' as not one of the four criteria aligns with an accurate understanding of James's framework around the nature of religious experiences.

7. Which criticism hinges on the observation that nature causes suffering, suggesting a morally flawed creator?

- A. Russell's critique**
- B. Mill's critique**
- C. Dawkins' observation**
- D. Hume's argument**

The criticism that highlights how natural suffering suggests a morally flawed creator is fundamentally linked to the philosophical arguments put forth by Hume. Specifically, Hume examined the problem of evil and suffering in the context of a benevolent and omnipotent god. He argued that if a creator exists who is both all-good and all-powerful, the presence of suffering and evil in the world would be inconsistent with such a nature. Hume's argument essentially posits that if nature causes suffering, then the creator would have to be either unwilling or unable to prevent this suffering, which leads to the conclusion that the creator may not possess the attributes traditionally ascribed to a divine being. This critique directly addresses the logical tension between the existence of suffering and the conception of a benevolent creator, making it a profound challenge to theistic beliefs. While Russell, Mill, and Dawkins also discuss similar themes around suffering and the existence of God, their approaches differ. Russell often focused on the lack of evidence for God rather than directly linking suffering to a flawed creator. Mill engaged with utilitarian views but did not center his arguments specifically on the nature of suffering in relation to a morally flawed deity. Dawkins emphasized the improbability of God in light of biological evolution and suffering but

8. What is a strength of corporate religious experiences?

- A. They guarantee genuine connection with God**
- B. They provide a wealth of testimonies and accounts**
- C. They are entirely spontaneous**
- D. They discourage personal interpretation**

A strength of corporate religious experiences lies in the wealth of testimonies and accounts they provide. When individuals come together in a communal setting, they often share personal encounters and experiences that can affirm their faith, enhance a sense of belonging, and create a collective understanding of spirituality. These shared experiences can serve to build community, reinforce beliefs, and inspire others within the group. The collective nature of corporate experiences means that participants can feel supported in their beliefs, as they witness and hear about the faith journeys of others. This abundance of stories can validate individual experiences of God or the divine, creating a richer tapestry of understanding within the community. Such shared narratives can deepen faith, encouraging individuals to engage more deeply with their beliefs and practices. In contrast, the other options do not highlight strengths of corporate religious experiences. There is no guarantee of a genuine connection with God as personal experiences vary widely. While elements of spontaneity can be a feature of corporate experiences, they are not entirely unstructured and can often be influenced by established traditions and rituals. Additionally, discouraging personal interpretation runs counter to many theologies that encourage individual exploration of faith, suggesting that corporate experiences can be quite diverse in their interpretations instead.

9. What does the term 'ineffable' refer to in discussions of God's nature?

- A. God's qualities are simple to explain**
- B. God cannot be truly experienced**
- C. God's nature cannot be expressed in words**
- D. God can only be understood through scripture**

The term 'ineffable' is used in philosophical discussions about God's nature to describe the idea that God's qualities or essence cannot be adequately expressed or captured in human language. This notion emphasizes the limitations of human understanding and linguistic capacity when it comes to the divine. Many theologians and philosophers argue that God transcends human concepts and language, which means that any attempt to describe God is inherently insufficient and fails to encompass the full reality of God's being. The ineffability of God highlights the belief that divine experiences and attributes are so profound and complex that they elude precise articulation. Consequently, discussions surrounding God's nature often acknowledge that while people may have experiences of the divine or describe attributes attributed to God, these descriptions cannot fully convey the depth and fullness of who or what God is. This perspective finds resonance in various religious traditions, which often claim that God exists beyond the confines of human understanding and expression.

10. What is middle knowledge in relation to God's omniscience?

- A. Knowledge of past events**
- B. Knowledge of every possible outcome given particular choices**
- C. Knowledge of all true propositions**
- D. Knowledge of spiritual truths only**

Middle knowledge refers to the concept in theology, particularly within the framework of Molinism, which posits that God has a particular kind of knowledge that is distinct from both natural knowledge (knowledge of all possible worlds and their possibilities) and free knowledge (knowledge of what actually happens in reality). In this context, the correct answer identifies middle knowledge as God's awareness of every possible outcome that could result from the free choices of rational creatures. This means that God knows not only what choices individuals will make, but also the alternate scenarios that could unfold depending on those choices. This understanding allows for a reconciled view of divine foreknowledge and human free will, showing that humans have genuine moral freedom while God still possesses complete knowledge of all possible outcomes that stem from every conceivable decision. The concept emphasizes the interplay between divine omniscience and human agency, asserting that God's foreknowledge does not infringe upon human freedom. This makes God's middle knowledge crucial in understanding how divine sovereignty and human choice can coexist effectively.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://ocralevelphilosophy.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!