**Philosophical Debates Student Guide**

You are expected to produce a presentation and a summary notes based on at least 4 research sources to introduce your topic. This research may form the basis of your main Philosophy project, though you may decide that you would prefer to study a different topic.

**Choosing a topic**

Select one of the philosophical debates listed below. You may have an alternative idea for your mini project – discuss this with your teacher. You may also choose to do this as a group project.

**Researching**

* Your aim is to find out arguments on both sides of the debate you are studying.
* You should also explore the meaning of the ideas in your question – look for definitions.
* Write a series of headings to help you organise your research (perhaps similar to the **questions to explore** in this guide)
* Summarize information from your sources ***in your own words.***
* Make a list of sources at the end of your research notes. This should have the title of the source, the weblink and the date of access.

**Preparing to present**

You will be asked to present your chosen topic, talking for 3 minutes. Remember to keep the text on the slides to a minimum.

Produce a presentation with at least 6 slides:

* + An introductory slide explaining your question and defining words
	+ A summary of arguments on one side
	+ A summary of arguments on the other side
	+ A conclusion in which you evaluate which side you think wins the debate.
	+ A review of the project in which you explain what you have learned and how you might develop the project further
	+ Questions for your audience to discuss

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Philosophical Debate** | **Questions to explore** | **Resource links** |
| Is beauty in the eye of the beholder? | What does the expression ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ mean?What does the scientific evidence suggest?What arguments do people give for and against objective beauty?Does society promote the ideal of beauty in a way that can harm people? | <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/beauty-is-in-the-eye-of-the-beholder><https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/10/151001125637.htm><https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2015/10/why-beauty-eye-beholder><https://youtu.be/GYYnL9J7eaw>  |
|  |
| What is truth? | Is truth the same for everyone?What does ‘true’ mean?Is truth the same in different subjects?What makes statements true? | <https://www.philosophynews.com/post/2015/01/29/What-is-Truth.aspx><https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/true><https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2019/02/how-can-we-teach-objectivity-post-truth-era> <https://youtu.be/cR8262MtvMw>  |
|  |
| Is there a God? | What does the word ‘God’ mean?Does the idea of God make sense?Is there evidence for or against the existence of God?Why do people believe in God? | <https://www.closertotruth.com/topics/meaning/existence-god><https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/talking-apes/201808/why-do-people-believe-in-god> <https://youtu.be/Xby9b2pvB68>  |
|  |
| Is there life after death? | Is there evidence of an afterlife?Do humans have souls?What makes people believe in an afterlife? | <https://www.closertotruth.com/topics/consciousness/persons/life-after-death><https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zn6ncdm/revision/1><https://www.historyextra.com/period/ancient-history/history-afterlife-meaning-what-happens-when-we-die/> |
|  |
| Is the mind the same as the brain? | What is the mind?Could there be a mind without a brain?Is consciousness a brain process? | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SJROTXnmus><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjfaoe847qQ><https://www.closertotruth.com/topics/consciousness/consciousness> |
|  |
| Do animals think? | Do animals have minds?What is the evidence that animals think?Can you think without a language? | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvehvv9ZOdQ><https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/articles/199911/do-animals-think><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDJ8xyQjyhM> |
|  |
| Is the world made by language? | What is the link between language and the world?Is reality something that changes when our language changes?Is there a single true description of reality?Are there aspects of reality we cannot grasp because of the limitations of our language? | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKK7wGAYP6k><https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/29/how-words-influence-thought><https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/magazine/29language-t.html> |
|  |
| Is it ever OK to cheat? | What is the definition of cheating?Why do we have rules in games?Is winning the most important thing even if it means cheating?Is using drugs to enhance performance ever allowable?What makes people cheat? | <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2013/11/mike-tomlin-pittsburgh-steelers-field-interference-brooklyn-nets-jason-kidd><http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/sport/debate/drawingline_1.shtml> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/sport/aspects/effect.shtml> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/anti-doping/youth-space/why-do-people-cheat/>  |
|  |
| Is it ever OK to lie? | What is a lie?Why is it important to tell the truth?If the only way to save someone’s life was to tell a lie, should you?Is there such a thing as a ‘white lie’?Why do people tell lies? | <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/lying/lying_1.shtml><https://aeon.co/videos/can-a-lie-ever-be-noble-why-kant-believed-even-a-life-saving-fib-was-immoral> <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-ethics-of-lying-2670509>  |
|  |
| Should we experiment on animals? | What is the purpose of animal experimentation?Do animals have rights?What are the arguments for and against animal experimentation?Are there alternatives? |  <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/animals/using/experiments_1.shtml>. <https://youtu.be/y3-BX-jN_Ac> <https://youtu.be/av22cRQNBiQ>  |
|  |
| Is it more important to be good than to be happy? | What is a good life? What is happiness?How do we make decisions about values? | <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-good-life-4038226> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1ysKz9ZnlddzkHGZMMLHFBJ/aristotles-guide-to-the-good-life> <https://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2015/07/pursuit-happiness-what-happiness-and-how-can-we-make-ourselves-happier>  |
|  |
| Do we have free will? | What do we mean by ‘free will?’Are our actions pre-determined?If are actions are pre-determined, does this mean they are not free? | <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04bwydw/topics/Free_will> <https://youtu.be/vCGtkDzELAI> <https://www.closertotruth.com/topics/consciousness/free-will>  |
|  |
| Do we need governments? | What is the function of a government?Could human beings exist without some form of government?What alternative forms of government have there been in history?What have been their strengths and weaknesses? | <https://www.channel4.com/news/do-we-really-need-a-government><https://www.thoughtco.com/why-do-people-need-government-721411> <https://youtu.be/vdh9xo47OWM>  |
|  |
| What is the point of school? | Is school a preparation for life, or work, or both?Are some subjects more important than others and why?Should school be compulsory?Should students have more choice about what they learn?Are there any alternatives to school? | <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-aim-of-education-8417> <https://mystudentvoices.com/whats-the-point-of-school-e06f510bf10d> <https://fee.org/articles/why-is-school-compulsory/> <https://permaculturenews.org/2014/04/16/really-need-compulsory-schooling-interview-peter-gray/> <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/jul/03/teaching-compulsory-schooling-post-16>  |
|  |
| Should sport be compulsory in schools? | What is the point of sport in schools?What are the arguments for and against compulsory sport?If sport is compulsory for children, should it be for adults too? | <https://www.scmp.com/article/742424/should-physical-education-be-compulsory-schools> <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/rendezview/sport-should-be-compulsory-in-schools/news-story/093644d0c5a1b2ec8abd405577e951c4>  |
|  |
| Is my blue the same as your blue? | Do we all see colours in the same way?Can I know what is going on inside someone else’s mind?As we learn more about the brain, do we know more about the mind?How do I know other people are conscious at all? | <https://youtu.be/evQsOFQju08> <https://youtu.be/mGYmiQkah4o> <https://youtu.be/3SJROTXnmus>  |
|  |
| Can machines think? | What is the Turing test?What is the Chinese Room argument?What is the evidence for and against artificial intelligence? | <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-17547694> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-27762088> <https://youtu.be/TryOC83PH1g>  |
|  |
| Does the mind control the body? | How is the mind related to the brain?Is there a physical cause for all mental events?Are our choices pre-determined by events in our brains?Is consciousness a by-product of brain activity? | <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind%E2%80%93body_problem> <https://www.closertotruth.com/topics/consciousness/mind-body-problems> <http://theconversation.com/the-psychology-of-believing-in-free-will-97193>  |
|  |
| What is time? | How is time related to change?Is there such a thing as the flow of time?What is the difference between past, present and future?Is it possible to change the past?Is time an illusion? | <https://www.closertotruth.com/series/what-time> <https://youtu.be/R3tbVHlsKhs> <https://youtu.be/iB7xZR-1L5M>  |
|  |
| What makes me me? | What is the self?Is a person the same as a soul, a brain, a mind or a body?Am I the same person that I was when I was born?Is there something within me that makes me who I am? | <https://youtu.be/LSYmEhRG8_o> <https://youtu.be/gh-6HyTRNNY> <https://youtu.be/Q80MfH7xPPE>  |
|  |
| Does everything happen for a reason? | Is there a purpose behind things or do they happen by chance?Is there a cause for every event?Is instinct more the source of our actions than reason? | <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/hot-thought/201002/does-everything-happen-reason-0> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/principle-of-sufficient-reason> <http://www.informationphilosopher.com/freedom/determinism.html>  |
|  |
| What is the difference between right and wrong? | How do you define right and wrong?Are there some things that are always right or always wrong?Does right and wrong vary from culture to culture?Is it the consequences of an action that make it right or wrong? | <https://youtu.be/kBdfcR-8hEY> <https://youtu.be/FOoffXFpAlU><https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/moral-relativism>  |
|  |
| Is gender fixed or chosen? | What is the definition of gender?How is gender related to sex?What are arguments for saying that gender is fixed?What are the arguments for saying that gender is chosen?Are there alternatives to gender being fixed or chosen? | <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gender-identity> <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2019/02/20/is-gender-identity-fluid-or-fixed-what-we-know-about-other-animals-might-help-inform-the-debate/> <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/13/living/gender-fluid-feat/index.html>  |
|  |
| What is fairness? | What is the definition of fairness?How do we decide what is fair?What would a fair society look like? | <https://youtu.be/EfdJQLyyhTA> <https://youtu.be/H0CTHVCkm90> <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/justice-and-fairness/>  |
|  |
|  Does the earth have rights? | What is the basis for being concerned about the environment?Does the earth have a value in itself, or just because of how we view it?Should we limit our own lifestyles in order to protect the earth? | <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-should-we-take-care-o_b_12170852> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_philosophy> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/09/we-can-save-the-earth-heres-how/>  |
|  |
| What is art? | How do we define art?What counts as a work of art?Is the value of art purely subjective? | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ5duzln2wI> <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-definition-of-art-182707><https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/06/what-is-art-a-few-famous-definitions-from-antiquity-to-today/258871/> |