

STUDENT RECORD AND MARKING GRID

STUDENT NAME: [REDACTED] & [REDACTED]

School: [REDACTED]

Teacher: [REDACTED]

Date: 01/07/19

Consent

This project is the student's own work.

Permission is granted for this work to be used to exemplify School Philosophy Certificate work and in the examining and moderation process.

Student signature (Student should add initials)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Teacher signature (Teacher should add initials)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

STUDENT RECORD AND MARKING GRID

Grade 7 – 9	An impressively managed project, showing commitment and dedication throughout, with a clearly focused aim and careful thought about the choice of question. Sources are analysed carefully (not simply summarized) in connection with the chosen question. Sources are carefully and fully referenced and the bibliography is complete. The student shows care in their choice of sources and uses a good range (10 – 12; not simply easy to access websites but sources with good academic content). They explain the background to the question and summarize arguments for and against in a clear, logical manner. They state a clear conclusion which can be defended using the evidence provided.
Grades 4 – 6	Project management is reasonable, with some degree of commitment shown. There is a reasonably clear aim and some thought goes into the choice of question. There is some analysis of source material and it is largely relevant to their chosen question. There is a reasonable range of sources (7 – 9) and some of these have some reasonable academic content. The project includes some background and presentation of arguments for and against. There is a reasonably clear conclusion
Grades 1 – 3	There is some evidence of project management and a limited degree of commitment is shown. An aim for the project is discernible and a question is chosen. Most of the source material is collated rather than analysed and some of it is not useful or relevant to the chosen question. The source range is modest (3 – 6 sources) and the sources tend to be easy to access website with only limited academic content. There is some presentation of arguments and a conclusion is given.

TOTAL MARK AWARDED	9
---------------------------	---

Supporting evidence (Drawn from written evidence submitted, creative work and judgements based on oral presentations.)

Both [redacted] and [redacted] thoroughly and carefully chose their philosophical question. Initially they chose an ethics-based question but, upon further research, found their interest waning due to it being too 'easy'. Decision-making regarding project question is evidenced in Project Plan. From the offset, students chose three key philosophers (Locke, Plato and Leibniz) to study. Resources were varied (both internet and books) and academically relevant.

Highly organised plan from beginning to end of project with boys dividing into different roles, evaluating different ways they could present project and considering what would make their presentation effective (all evidenced in planner). Understanding, analysis and evaluation of range of philosophers. Presentation was clear, interesting and extremely well informed. Students had created a script to ensure full development, reasoning and confidence.

Overall, outstanding work.

School Certificate in Philosophy

Project

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

**Are we born knowing anything
innately?**

Contents

Contents	2
Project Plan	3
Introduction	5
Research	6
Discussion / Development	7
Conclusion	14
Bibliography	15

Project Plan

Project Question:

- We initially considered these questions:
 - ✓ Should we experiment on animals?
 - ✓ Should voluntary euthanasia be legalised?
 - ✓ Are we born knowing right and wrong? Is morality innate?
- Originally, we both decided on "Where do right and wrong come from?" and "Is morality innate?" as we had already studied experimenting on animals and euthanasia before in class and we both wanted to learn something new instead of repeating old topics.
- However, we realized that "Where do right and wrong come from?" was too difficult a question to answer as there was not enough research material on it for us to feel comfortable answering it.
- Instead, we asked "Are we born knowing anything innately?" as we were intrigued about innatism and wanted to learn more about the topic.

Selection of Q.

Form of project:

Microsoft PowerPoint, because we were already accustomed to how PowerPoint works, felt comfortable with formatting our presentation, and were happy working with it.

Topic areas to research

We need to research

- John Locke and his arguments against innatism
- Plato and his arguments for innatism
- Leibniz and his arguments for innatism

Initial ideas for resources

We started by searching the internet for websites that involved material linked to our philosophers. We also searched for books that we thought may give us an insight on the topic as a whole. We have booked some sessions in the computer rooms, so we will be able to spend time researching the topic online, as well as using the library. We thought it would be a good idea to

consult the philosophy department on books that they thought could provide information on the topic, and these are the books they suggested:

~~Where did you start? Cite all the resources you had to begin with and thought you'd use.
Did you think about interviewing people (consider who at the school would have been good to interview even if you didn't end up using them)?
Explain how you used the library, (do a library search for initial books with a screen shot of the books you could use and annotate what you will/won't use and why.
Could you have done a survey?~~

If you are part of a group project, list the roles and responsibilities for each group member

[redacted]: Group evaluation, John Locke, book research, design of presentation

[redacted] Plato, Leibniz, online research, scriptwriter and editor

)
Distribution of roles + responsibilities

Introduction

The question "Are we born knowing anything innately?" is important because it allows us to explore and understand our human nature and whether or not our actions and beliefs are rooted deep in our souls from another life, from birth, or even if they are instilled onto us by our parents. We have decided to present our project to the audience through Microsoft PowerPoint, because it is more immersive for the audience and having visual examples of key ideas will help the audience understand our different philosophers' beliefs. We will also write ourselves a script so that we do not oversaturate the screen with long paragraphs of text, as well as being able to speak more directly to the audience. Additionally, we plan to personally answer any questions related to the topic at the end of the presentation.

Our project will include key ideas from several philosophers we researched: John Locke, Leibniz and Plato, and explanations on their beliefs about innatism, plus evidence for each of them. We will also include our own opinions and finalise on a conclusion.

Our research will mostly be taken from philosophy books that we have found in the library, as we have discovered that research material on innatism is much harder to find and interpret from the internet.

*Rationale for
project*

Research (initial)

Book: AQA An Introduction to Philosophy for AS level

- We looked at pages 283- 320.
- Locke: We are not born with any innate knowledge at all; 3 types of knowledge, innate ideas should be held by everyone, but any supposed innate ideas that are usually put forward are not held by everyone such as 'children and idiots'. (Argument from Book1 of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)

Book: AQA A-level Philosophy Epistemology and Moral Philosophy

- We looked at pages 96-116
- Plato: We are born with innate knowledge from our soul that existed in a prior world, and are kept like forgotten memories. These can be realised through reasoning.
- Leibniz: We have innate ideas that are stored as tendencies. These are used to grasp certain necessary truths, which cannot be grasped and explained by senses alone.
- Locke: We aren't born with any innate knowledge at all. Innate knowledge is a pointless concept, because everything can explained and realised by using the senses, and if innate ideas were real, then everyone would hold them.

<http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Locke-Leibniz-innate-knowledge.pdf>

- Locke: As both of the previous sources say, Locke says we have no innate knowledge, as there is not a single idea that is universally accepted.
- Leibniz: Argues against this idea and suggests that we may have an idea, but are simply not conscious of it. Additionally, children and 'idiots' may know of the concept but are not able to articulate the idea properly. He argues that innate knowledge is a preformation in the mind, that allows us to understand certain concepts.

As we had managed to find all this information quite quickly, we started adding all our research and information into our script. We were also happy, because we had now found a topic where we believed that we could find enough sources and information to feel confident presenting it.

Discussion / Development

Choice of how to present findings
- Evaluation 7

Presentation Options

<u>Option</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
PowerPoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They engage the audience, as the audience have something to look at, as well as listening to us talk. • This is simple to use and does not require a great ability at computing to work with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can lead to the presenters reading it off the board, creating a very boring presentation. • Equipment such as a projector, computer and screen are needed for this to be used.
Google Slides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in the group can edit this at the same time, allowing quick progress, that everyone is able to see immediately. • This engages the audience, just as PowerPoint does, as it gives the audience something to look at. <p>We have decided to use google slides, because we believe that the way that we are all able to work on it at the same time is extremely beneficial. Also, it will allow us to create an interesting presentation, involving our audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can lead to the presenters reading it off the board, creating a very boring presentation. • Equipment such as a projector, computer and screen are needed for this to be used.
Flipchart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a very interactive presentation, as it forces the presenters to interact with the audience and the flipchart. • This can be written down before the presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a limit to the amount of information that can be written down. • Flipcharts can be flimsy, and may fall over, which can hinder the presentation.
Whiteboard lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are large, which allows a lot of information to be written. • This will cause the audience to focus more, as it is more like a normal lesson. • This does not rely on technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To write on this board, you must turn your back on the audience. • A presentation cannot be prepared in advance. • You may have to, or accidentally, rub out what has been previously written.

Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of detail can be fit into an essay, allowing a more thorough analysis of each argument. • This takes away the pressure of presenting in front of an entire class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays take a very long time to write and can be boring to write. • There is nothing to break up the large blocks of writing, which can be tiring for the reader.
Pre-filmed video documentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything can be done before the presentation and can be redone if a mistake is made. • Reduces the pressure on the day of presenting, because everything has already been done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos have to be edited, which can be very time consuming, especially if it is edited to a high standard. • Questions cannot be asked during the presentation, because everything has been pre-recorded.
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of information and evaluation can be included in a handout. • Allows everyone to read through it at their own pace, letting them understand everything completely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large blocks of writing on a handout can bore the readers, as there is not much interaction. • Some people may find it easier to understand when somebody teaches them; instead of having to read and interpret the handout.

Font Analysis

Test Calibri	This font is a very dull font and does not catch the audience's attention. It is also quite a thin font, so that could cause a few problems.
Test Lily UPC	This font is quite good; however, the letters differ in thickness, which is not very appealing for an audience.
Test Arial Narrow	This font makes a differentiation between upper and lower-case letters, and the thickness of all the letters are even. However, the letters look strangely stretched, which is weird to read.

<p>Test Kristen ITC</p>	<p>This font could be appealing, but it is too curly and looks too childish for a presentation on an intriguing topic. Additionally, the way in which the capital letters go both above and below the lower-case letters is off putting, and childish.</p>
<p>Test Castellar</p>	<p>This font has a nice design, but there is no distinction between the upper and lower-case letters. This could make it hard for the audience to understand the presentation.</p>
<p>Test Times New Roman</p>	<p>This is another dull font, and although it is easy to comprehend, the font does not jump out at you and make you want to read it.</p>
<p>Test Comic Sans MS</p>	<p>This is another curly, childish font that does not portray the professional effect that we are trying to create. This would decrease the effectiveness of the presentation.</p>
<p>Test Century Gothic</p>	<p>This font is aesthetically pleasing and helps the professional effect that we are trying to portray. Additionally, it is not really dull as well, so it captures and keeps the audience's attention. Therefore, we are going to choose this font, as we believe that it creates the effect that we want, and also helps to keep the audience captivated.</p>

1
Consideration of font for presentation

Timeline of Project

Organisation + planning

<p><u>7/1/19</u></p>	<p>██████ + ██████ Pick topic question</p>	<p>We discussed with each other and decided on "Where do right and wrong come from?" and "Is morality innate?" because it was an unknown area to us which we had never researched before.</p>
<p><u>14/1/19</u></p>	<p>██████ + ██████ Presentation planning + what makes a good presentation + font decisions</p>	<p>We successfully did our planning for every factor of a presentation we could think of, however our planning was not saved properly and we realised we lost it the week after</p>
<p><u>21/1/19</u></p>	<p>██████ + ██████ Initial research and find key philosophers online</p>	<p>We struggled to find any information on the internet and changed our question to focus solely on innatism: "Are we born knowing anything innately?", so that we would be able to create a more professional PowerPoint.</p>
<p><u>28/1/19</u></p>	<p>██████ + ██████ Initial research and find key philosophers online</p>	<p>We found 3 philosophers: Leibniz, Plato and John Locke We also found very good books on innatism and started to collect each philosopher's ideas</p>
<p><u>4/2/19</u></p>	<p>██████████ Research on Locke in book ██████████ Research on Plato</p>	<p>██████████: I found John Locke's 2 arguments and recorded them, as well as some of their weaknesses. ██████████: I researched Plato's 2 arguments and their weaknesses.</p>
<p><u>11/2/19</u></p>	<p>██████████ Start typing up information on Innatism and Locke into the PowerPoint ██████████</p>	<p>We built the first few slides in our presentation on John Locke and ██████████ researched on Leibniz's ideas/arguments, as well as the modern interpretation of Leibniz's</p>

	Research on Leibniz	argument.
<u>18/2/19</u>	██████████ + ██████████ Finish off creating our PowerPoint	We did type up more into our PowerPoint however we did not complete it like we wanted to, with aspects such as our conclusions and evaluations still having to be done.
<u>25/2/19</u>	██████████ Finish PowerPoint + bibliography ██████████ Start writing script	We finished the presentation and ██████████ made progress with the script, and agreed to finish this off at home.
<u>4/3/19</u>	██████████ + ██████████ Add the finishing touches to both the PowerPoint and the script, and make sure that the whole presentation flows smoothly.	Although it took longer than expected to make sure that everything was complete, the effort that we both put in during the lesson allowed the presentation to be finished just in time, with a few minor tweaks made after the lesson. Furthermore, we managed to reproduce the section of development that we lost earlier on in the process.

What makes a presentation good?

<u>Feature</u>	<u>How we will include this/factor this into our presentation</u>
Not simply reading off the PowerPoint, because the audience want to be engaged by the presentation, they aren't there just to be read to.	We will make sure that both of us in the group make sure that we understand the areas that we are explaining properly, and we will use a script to make sure that we are facing towards the audience.

)
Analysis of how
to present well.

<p>We will make sure not to talk over each other, and there will be smooth transitions between the slides.</p>	<p>The script that we are going to use will say who is going to talk about each slide, and will avoid the risk of speaking over each other. Also, when answering questions, we will take it in turns to answer them ,unless one of us feels that the other person will be better at answering it.</p>
<p>We do not want too many words on the slides, as this can overwhelm and bore the audience.</p>	<p>The use of the script allows less information to be put up on the screen. This information will be put on the screen in bullet points.</p>
<p>Font and colour of words- they need to be easy for the audience to see.</p>	<p>We are going to use a black background with white writing, making it very easy for the audience to read. Additionally, we are going to use a clear font, and due to the lack of words on the screen we can make the font size larger.</p>
<p>Everyone in the group needs to understand what each philosopher is arguing, and why this is a good/bad argument.</p>	<p>We will take time to explain to each other what each philosopher is putting forward as an argument. Additionally, key words will be portrayed at the beginning of the presentation, and everyone in the group will know them as well. For example, in our presentation the word 'idiots' means mentally disabled people.</p>
<p>Additionally, everyone in the audience needs to understand any technical terms that we use.</p>	<p>As previously stated, the key words will be mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, and will be referred to throughout the presentation. Additionally, if there are any questions during the presentation, the group will be happy to answer them, if they are asking the meaning of a word.</p>
<p>There must be a large amount of strong information.</p>	<p>This can be achieved by doing lots of research, by using a variety of sources, and types of sources (videos, books etc.). Furthermore, these must be obtained from credible sources; these can be verified by a teacher's approval.</p>

<p>There must be a strong structure, that is easy to follow.</p>	<p>We will set out the presentation in a way where an argument is presented, and then its strengths and weaknesses are presented; this will make it easy to follow, as only one argument will be discussed at a time, followed by an overall conclusion at the end of the presentation.</p>
<p>We must speak clearly and confidently.</p>	<p>This can be achieved by the use of a prompter (such as a script), as well as a thorough understanding of the topic. In addition, we will rehearse in a couple of lunchtimes in order to improve our ability in delivering ideas to an audience.</p>
<p>We must have a positive body language.</p>	<p>We can achieve this by making sure that we smile during the presentation and stand up straight, because, not only will this make the audience feel that we are more confident, it will make us feel more confident in delivering the presentation.</p>

Conclusion

█ I believe that Leibniz's arguments are the most persuasive, as he portrays, for me, the most realistic argument about innate idea. For example, I cannot believe Plato's argument that innate ideas are in us like a forgotten memory, and they are in us because our souls have previously existed. Additionally, Leibniz is a middle ground between Plato and Locke, because he accepts that the senses are needed in order to realise the innate ideas, because they are in us as tendencies, and are not immediately fully fledged ideas.

█ I also agree with Leibniz, especially with the modern interpretation that Noam Chomsky makes comparing innate tendencies to learning languages, as I don't think it is possible to learn such complex systems without an innate instinct to pick up language. The comparison between our minds and a block of marble makes a lot of sense to me, as it helps me to visualise how we learn based on innate tendencies that are already there. I really don't believe Plato's argument about innate concepts being learnt in our soul's prior existence ~~are already there.~~

Bibliography

Websites

- <http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Locke-Leibniz-innate-knowledge.pdf>
- <http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Knowledge-innatism.pdf>
- <https://www.the-philosophy.com/leibniz-philosophy-summary>
- <https://campus.aynrand.org/campus/globals/transcripts/platos-epistemology-from-innate-ideas-to-a-grasp-of-the-forms>
- <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/language-learning-tips/71728-noam-chomsky-language-acquisition-theories/>

Books

- AQA an introduction to philosophy for AS Level BY Gerald Jones, Jeremy Hayward and Daniel Cardinal
- AQA A-Level Philosophy Epistemology and Moral Philosophy BY Gerald Jones, Jeremy Hayward and Daniel Cardinal
- An Essay concerning Human Understanding BY John Locke
- New Essays on Human Understanding BY Leibniz

Videos

- Locke on Knowledge BY ProfessorZaldivar
- Locke and Leibniz on Innate Knowledge BY Timothy Jacobs

11 sources

script

Intro

- Our question asks whether we know certain things when we are born, or whether we gain all our knowledge through our senses.
- 'Idiots' means mentally disabled people.
- We started off with a different question, but we found that it didn't interest us enough, so we changed to this question that interested us both in different ways, as we were learning something new whilst we did the project as well. Also, we generally found the topic more interesting than our previous topic.
- We chose to work as a group because we believed that we would work well together, and we both had similar ideas about what topics interested us.

View points

- Locke: We aren't born with any innate knowledge at all.
- Plato: We are born with innate knowledge from our soul that existed in a prior world, and are kept like forgotten memories.
- Leibniz: We have innate ideas that are stored as tendencies to do something.

Locke: Argument

- John Locke was an English philosopher and physicist.
- One of his arguments against innate knowledge is that if there **were** ideas that everyone were somehow born understanding, then we could expect **everyone**, including children and 'idiots', to universally accept them.
- However, if you ask a young child who has **not been taught** geometry some questions on it, they would not be able to answer. Similarly for the idea of God and if something can be and not be. This shows, he argues, that such ideas cannot be innate.
- For example, if you ask a child whether something can be and not be at the same time, then they are very likely to look at you in a confused way.

Problems

- Children and idiots may actually have these innate ideas, they may simply not be able to articulate the idea. For example a child may not be able to express the idea of something not being able to be and not be at the same time, but they do know that they can't have their favourite teddy in their hand and in another room at the same time.
- Innate ideas may not have to be universally held, just as not all universal ideas are innate, for example, almost all nations adopted smoking tobacco very quickly, but this certainly isn't innate. Even if everyone in the world smoked it wouldn't be innate.
- Only certain people may have innate ideas.

Argument 2

- We are able to derive all our ideas from our senses, as shown in the "tabula rasa" (clean slate) argument.
- This says that all of our complex ideas can be broken down into simple ideas, that are derived from simple impressions.

- A unicorn would be classed as a complex idea, as it is something that you can't see, but you can break down your idea of a unicorn by linking it to things such as horses.
- If these can all be derived from experience then innatism is an unnecessary argument.

Problems 2

- The consequence of this argument is that it suggests that everything in our imaginations comes from an impression (like seeing the colour red).
- This is hard to grasp, as it says that our minds simply re-order the basic impressions to create crazy imaginings, and therefore nothing can be invented in our minds.

Plato Argument

- Innate ideas are 'in' us like a forgotten memory.
- These can be realised through reason.
- These innate ideas provide timeless truths.

Reasoning

- Plato argued that there were certain concepts that we know, but we never see the perfect forms of them. These include beauty, colour, circles and numbers.
- To explain how we come to know of these concepts, Plato argues that our souls are immortal, so the perfect concepts were picked up in a prior existence.
- We forget these forms, but they stay innately within us.
- If we reason, a perfect understanding can be reached.

Example

- Socrates is questioning a slave boy, in order to make the slave boy 'realise' what a square is through reasoning.
- There are certain facts that need to be made clear before the example begins: slave boy has no prior knowledge of geometry and Socrates only asks questions.
- The slave boy then grasps the timeless truth about squares.
- The truth didn't come from Socrates or prior knowledge, so it must have been innately within the slave.

Problems

- This example doesn't show that knowledge exists like a forgotten memory.
- The soul doesn't need to have existed in a previous realm.
- This could just show the faculty of reason in action.
- Even though he may not have been taught geometry, the boy will have prior knowledge of shapes, by seeing them in the world around him.

Argument 2

- The senses are only able to show us particular instances, which are often 'imperfect'.
- Perfect concepts can be grasped through reasoning.
- Therefore, these concepts cannot be derived from the senses, so they must be 'in' us before we realise them.

Problems

- Although this can be easily applied to geometric shapes, it is much harder to define the perfect concept of beauty.
- Also, with geometrical shapes, we are able to picture a perfect circle by thinking about a circle we have seen and then remove the imperfections

Leibniz: Argument

- Senses are only able to show us certain instances of things occurring, like the sun setting, and a stone falling to the ground after you have dropped it.
- Even if you see the sun set every day of your life, this doesn't prove that this will continue to happen forever.
- However we are still able to grasp certain necessary truths.
- These truths cannot be proven by senses alone, they must have been helped by the mind.
- These ideas must be innate!

Argument

- Our minds are like a block of marble with specific veins running through them, so when they are hit with a chisel, they are more likely to take a certain shape.
- We aren't born with fully formed innate ideas, instead they can be revealed through the use of our senses.
- Ideas are innate in us as inclinations not as fully fledged ideas.
- Senses are needed, but they cannot prove necessary truths alone.
- Additionally, there are concepts that are derived from being aware of ourselves, such as knowing that we are a singular thing and knowing that we exist in time.

Interpretation

- Noam Chomsky, gives an example and argument that it would be impossible for us to learn a language from simply hearing other people talk.
- There must be an innate tendency in our minds that allows us to learn a language, when we are exposed to other language speakers.

Problems

- Concepts that are derived from awareness of ourselves may not be gained by the use of our senses, but they are still gained from reflective experiences about ourselves. Therefore, you aren't born with this awareness.

- I think that Leibniz has the strongest argument, as he suggests that innate ideas aren't fully fledged ideas, they are tendencies that guide us in certain ways.
- Also, he recognises that senses are needed, but they aren't strong enough, alone, to create some of the ideas that we have, whereas Locke and Plato both argue that the other thing isn't needed.

- I also agree with Leibniz, especially with the point that Noam Chomsky makes about learning languages, as I don't think it

is possible to learn such complex systems without an innate instinct to pick up language.

- The comparison between our minds and a block of marble makes a lot of sense to me, as it helps me to visualise how we learn based on innate tendencies that are already there.

Evaluation

- Upon reflection we think that our group demonstrated good teamwork skills and showed each other respect by listening to each other's opinions and ideas.
- However we were not always completely focused on our task and one member of the group spent a large proportion of his time drawing a brain, before being brought back on to the task at hand.
- We encountered many obstacles, for example at first we lacked inspiration for our initial question, "Where does Right and Wrong come from?", so we changed to researching more about innate knowledge, which we were much more interested in, and therefore made a lot more progress.
- [REDACTED] was elected team leader
- To tackle the obstacle of the tough deadline, members of the group selflessly volunteered to do extra work at home.
- We found it difficult to find information on the internet so we found philosophy books on the subject
- Alex often helped correct most errors
- The workload was quite evenly distributed, but [REDACTED] selflessly did work at home
- Overall we did enjoy working as a group, probably because we both had a brilliant work ethic
- We wouldn't change much apart from maybe initially picking a better question that catches our attention.

4



ARE WE BORN KNOWING ANYTHING INNATELY?

By [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]



INTRODUCTION– KEY FACTS

- Our question asks whether we know certain things when we are born, or whether we gain all our knowledge through our senses.
- 'Idiots' means mentally disabled people.
- We wanted to learn something new whilst we did the project. Also, we generally found the topic more interesting than our previous question.
- We chose to work as a group because we believed that we would work well together, and we both had similar ideas about what topics interested us.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT VIEW POINTS?

- Locke: We aren't born with any innate knowledge at all.
- Plato: We are born with innate knowledge from our soul that existed in a prior world, and are kept like forgotten memories.
- Leibniz: We have innate ideas that are stored as tendencies to do something.



JOHN LOCKE- ARGUMENT

- One of his arguments against innate knowledge is that if there **were** ideas that everyone were somehow born understanding then we could expect **everyone to** accept them.
- However, if you ask a young child who has **not been taught** geometry some questions on it, they would not be able to answer. Similarly for the idea of God and if something can be and not be.
- For example, if you ask a child whether something can be and not be at the same time, then they are very likely to look at you in a confused way.



JOHN LOCKE- PROBLEMS 1

- Children and 'idiots' may actually have these innate ideas, they may simply not be able to articulate the idea.
- Innate ideas may not have to be universally held, just as not all universal ideas are innate.
- Maybe only certain people have innate ideas.



JOHN LOCKE- ARGUMENT 2

- We are able to derive all our ideas from our senses, as shown in the "tabula rasa"(clean slate) argument.
- A unicorn would be classed as a complex idea, as it is something that you can't see, but you can break down your idea of a unicorn by linking it to things such as horses.
- If these can all be derived from experience then innatism is an unnecessary argument.



JOHN LOCKE- PROBLEMS 2

- The consequence of this argument is that it suggests that everything in our imaginations comes from an impression (like seeing the colour red).
- This is hard to grasp, as it says that our minds simply re-order the basic impressions to create crazy imaginings, and therefore nothing can be invented in our minds.



PLATO- ARGUMENT 1

- Innate ideas are 'in' us like a forgotten memory.
- These can be realised through reason.
- These innate ideas provide timeless truths.

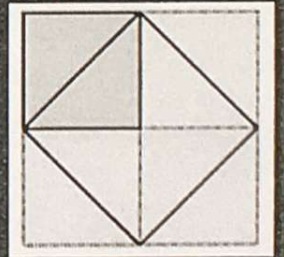


PLATO- HIS REASONING

- Plato argued that there were certain concepts that we know, but we never see the perfect forms of them. These include beauty, colour, circles and numbers.
- To explain how we come to know of these concepts, Plato argues that our souls are immortal, so the perfect concepts were picked up in a prior existence.
- We forget these forms, but they stay innately within us.

PLATO- EXAMPLE

- Socrates is questioning a slave boy, in order to make the slave boy 'realise' what a square is through reasoning.
- There are certain facts that need to be made clear before the example begins: slave boy has no prior knowledge of geometry and Socrates only asks questions.
- The slave boy then grasps the timeless truth about squares.
- The truth didn't come from Socrates or prior knowledge, so it must have been innately within the slave.





PLATO- PROBLEMS WITH ARGUMENT 1

- This example doesn't show that knowledge exists like a forgotten memory.
- The soul doesn't need to have existed in a previous realm.
- This could just show the faculty of reason in action.
- Even though he may not have been taught geometry, the boy will have prior knowledge of shapes, by seeing them in the world around him.



PLATO- ARGUMENT 2

- The senses are only able to show us particular instances, which are often 'imperfect'.
- Perfect concepts can be grasped through reasoning.
- Therefore, these concepts cannot be derived from the senses, so they must be 'in' us before we realise them.



PLATO- PROBLEMS WITH ARGUMENT 2

- Although this can be easily applied to geometric shapes, it is much harder to define the perfect concept of beauty.
- Also, with geometrical shapes, we are able to picture a perfect circle by thinking about a circle we have seen and then remove the imperfections.



LEIBNIZ- ARGUMENT

- Senses are only able to show us certain instances of things occurring, like the sun setting, and a stone falling to the ground after you have dropped it.
- Even if you see the sun set every day of your life, this doesn't prove that this will continue to happen forever.
- However we are still able to grasp certain necessary truths.
- These truths cannot be proven by senses alone, they must have been helped by the mind.



LEIBNIZ- ARGUMENT

- Our minds are like a block of marble with specific weak points running through them, so when they are hit with a chisel, they are more likely to take a certain shape.
- Ideas are innate in us as inclinations not as fully fledged ideas.
- Senses are needed, but they cannot prove necessary truths alone.
- Additionally, there are concepts that are derived from being aware of ourselves.



LEIBNIZ- MODERN INTERPRETATION

- Noam Chomsky, gives an example and argument that it would be impossible for us to learn a language from simply hearing other people talk.
- There must be an innate tendency in our minds that allows us to learn a language, when we are exposed to other language speakers.



LEIBNIZ- PROBLEMS

- Concepts that are derived from awareness of ourselves may not be gained by the use of our senses, but they are still gained from reflective experiences about ourselves. Therefore, you aren't born with this awareness.



CONCLUSION-

- I think that Leibniz has the strongest argument, as he suggests that innate ideas aren't fully fledged ideas, they are tendencies that guide us in certain ways.
- Also, he recognises that senses are needed, but they aren't strong enough, alone, to create some of the ideas that we have, whereas Locke and Plato both argue that the other argument isn't needed.



CONCLUSION-

- I also agree with Leibniz, especially with the point that Noam Chomsky makes about learning languages, as I don't think it is possible to learn such complex systems without an innate instinct to pick up language.
- The comparison between our minds and a block of marble makes a lot of sense to me, as it helps me to visualise how we learn based on innate tendencies that are already there.
- I really don't believe Plato's argument about innate concepts being learnt in our soul's prior existence.



GROUP EVALUATION

- Upon reflection we think that our group demonstrated good teamwork skills and showed each other respect by listening to each other's opinions and ideas.
- However we were not always completely focused on our task and one member of the group spent a large proportion of his time drawing a brain, before being brought back on to the task at hand.
- We encountered many obstacles, for example at first we lacked inspiration for our initial question, "Where does Right and Wrong come from?", so we changed to researching more about innate knowledge, which we were much more interested in, and therefore made a lot more progress.
- No one was elected team leader.
- To tackle the obstacle of the tough deadline, members of the group selflessly volunteered to do extra work at home.
- We found it difficult to find information on the internet so we found philosophy books on the subject
- [redacted] often helped correct most errors
- The workload was quite evenly distributed, but [redacted] selflessly did work at home
- Overall we did enjoy working as a group, probably because we both had a brilliant work ethic
- We wouldn't change much apart from maybe initially picking a better question that catches our attention.



THANK
YOU