

IB Philosophy Core Theme Revision

Paper 1: Stimulus Paper structure

What follows is a suggested routine for structuring the Core Theme essay. This is not meant to encourage a formulaic or tick-box approach, but it does offer a description of the main elements one would expect to find in a good stimulus response.

Section 1: Engage with Stimulus

- Describe and summarise the Stimulus: what is going on? What's being discussed or shown? What are the issues being raised in the mind of the author?
- As you describe it, lead the reader towards a philosophical concept, create clear links between the stimulus and the issue you want to discuss.

Section 2: Brief Description of the Philosophical Issue

- Describe and explain the philosophical issue you've decided to discuss. What is the motivating question? what is the significance? why is it an important issue to raise?

Section 3: Close analysis of the First Approach to the PI

- What are the distinguishing elements of the approach?
- What are the particular motives behind the approach?
- What specific technical vocabulary does the approach make use of?
- What is the primary argument utilised by this approach?

Section 4: Close analysis of the Second Approach to the PI

Section 5: Analysis of the relative merits and weaknesses of both approaches

- by 'relative' i suggest that you consider the merits and weakness of the approaches *in relation to each other and the main philosophical issue*.
- you will show better thinking by linking the two approaches in this part of the analysis - you don't want these sections just to sit separately from one another.
- create comparative links between the approaches
- remember to relate the analysis back to what you said the stimulus was about (sections 1 and 2)

Section 6: Statement of preference for one approach over another.

- offer an evaluation of the approaches by stating clearly which approach *best* answers the issue raised in section 2.
- Give clear reasons why this approach is *better* than the other: to do this you will have to be clear what the issue is and what a better response will look like.
- finish off with a sentence or two using the approach to re-evaluate the stimulus: what new ideas have been brought to bear on your understanding of the stimulus?.