



Philosophy & Reason 2025 v1.2

IA2: Sample assessment instrument

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers in planning and developing assessment instruments for individual school settings.

Student name	sample only
Student number	sample only
Teacher	sample only
Issued	sample only
Due date	sample only

Marking summary

Criterion	Marks allocated	Provisional marks
Using and Explaining	7	
Interpreting and Analysing	7	
Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	8	
Creating and Communicating	3	
Overall	25	

Conditions

Technique	Analytical essay
Unit	Unit 3: Moral philosophy and schools of thought
Topic/s	Topic 2: Philosophical schools of thought
Duration	Approximately 15 hours of the time allocation for Unit 3
Mode / length	Written: up to 2000 words
Individual / group	Individual
Other	Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time
Resources	See attached stimulus material

Context

You have been exploring how the fundamentals of reason are used to engage with and evaluate ideas associated with existentialism as a philosophical school of thought. Key philosophical concepts such as freedom and authenticity have been considered, as well as philosophical arguments, ideas and information about existential ontology and what it means to be an authentic human being.

Task

Using the fundamentals of reason, arrive at a conclusion about the applicability of claims, arguments and ideas inherent in existentialism (as represented by Nietzsche, Sartre and de Beauvoir) to discussions about gender equality and the freedom of women to live authentically in the Australian context.

To complete this task, you must:

- use terminology of argumentation and of existentialism as a philosophical school of thought
- interpret and explain concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to existentialism and its application to discussions about gender equality and the freedom of women
- determine relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to existentialism
- deconstruct relevant arguments relating to existentialism and gender equality
- evaluate relevant claims, arguments, theories and views from the specified existentialist thinkers
- construct a philosophical argument on the applicability of claims, arguments and ideas inherent in existentialism to discussions about gender equality and the freedom of women
- ensure the provided stimulus material is used in your response
- adhere to the genre conventions of an analytical essay in Philosophy & Reason, including language and referencing conventions.

Stimulus

See attached stimulus material.

Checkpoints

- ☐ At approximately 3 of 15 hours — initial planning check
- ☐ At approximately 7 of 15 hours — second progress check
- ☐ At approximately 12 of 15 hours — draft due
- ☐ At approximately 15 of 15 hours — final submission due

Authentication strategies

- You will be provided class time for task completion.
- Your teacher will conduct interviews or consultations as you develop the response.
- You must acknowledge all sources.
- Your teacher will collect and annotate a draft.
- You will use plagiarism-detection software to submit your response.

Instrument-specific marking guide (IA2): Analytical essay response (25%)

Using and Explaining	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • astute understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought • sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation • comprehensive and accurate descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought 	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought • sustained and accurate use of terminology of argumentation, with minor errors or omissions • comprehensive descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought that are accurate in most key aspects 	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing relevant terminology of the philosophical school of thought • some accurate use of terminology of argumentation • descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought are evident, but with inaccuracies or omissions 	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rudimentary understanding of meaning demonstrated through employing some terminology of the philosophical school of thought • use of terminology of argumentation is limited • significant inaccuracies or omissions in descriptions and explanations of concepts, methods, principles and theories relating to the philosophical school of thought are evident throughout the response. 	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Interpreting and Analysing	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed and perceptive interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought • precise and accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • insightful determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought 	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informed interpretation of significant ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought • accurate deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • effective determination of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought 	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought • deconstruction of relevant arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • identification of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought 	2–3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplistic interpretation of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought • partial deconstruction of arguments relating to the philosophical school of thought • minimal identification of relationships within or between ideas, arguments and/or theories relevant to the philosophical school of thought. 	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Organising, Synthesising and Evaluating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coherent and thorough synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which all key aspects have been considered and resolved insightful evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using discerning criteria constructs a sophisticated argument relating to the philosophical school of thought 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which most key aspects have been considered and resolved considered evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using appropriate criteria constructs an effective argument relating to the philosophical school of thought 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic in which some key aspects have been considered and resolved evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought using criteria constructs a feasible argument relating to the philosophical school of thought 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> superficial synthesis of ideas and information relating to the philosophical school of thought and the selected issue/topic superficial evaluation of claims, arguments, theories and views of the philosophical school of thought provides a conclusion relating to the philosophical school of thought with simplistic justification. 	1–2
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Creating and Communicating	Marks
The student work has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully and fluently consistently demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre minimal errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys relevant ideas and arguments purposefully generally demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre some errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys ideas and/or arguments sporadically demonstrates features of the analytical essay genre frequent errors in spelling, grammar and/or punctuation impede communication of ideas and arguments. 	1
The student work does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Stimulus

Source 1: What is existentialism?

Existentialism is a catch-all term for those philosophers who consider the nature of the human condition as a key philosophical problem and who share the view that this problem is best addressed through *ontology* ...

Philosophy should not be thought of *primarily* either as an attempt to investigate and understand the self or the world, or as a special occupation that concerns only a few. Rather, philosophy must be thought of as fully integrated within life. ...

Freedom ... is in part defined by the isolation of my decisions from any determination by a deity, or by previously existent values or knowledge. Many existentialists identified the 19th and 20th centuries as experiencing a crisis of values. This might be traced back to familiar reasons such as an increasingly secular society, or the rise of scientific or philosophical movements that questioned traditional accounts of value (for example Marxism or Darwinism), or the shattering experience of two world wars and the phenomenon of mass genocide. It is important to note; however, that for existentialism these historical conditions do not create the problem of anguish in the face of freedom, but merely cast it into higher relief. Likewise, freedom entails something like responsibility, for myself and for my actions. Given that my situation is one of being on its own — recognised in anxiety — then both my freedom and my responsibility are absolute.

[I]solation...means that there is nothing else that acts through me, or that shoulders my responsibility. Likewise, unless human existence is to be understood as arbitrarily changing moment to moment, this freedom and responsibility must stretch across time. Thus, when I exist as an authentically free being, I assume responsibility for my whole life, for a 'project' or a 'commitment'. We should note here that many of the existentialists take on a broadly Kantian notion of freedom: freedom as *autonomy*. This means that freedom, rather than being randomness or arbitrariness, consists in the binding of oneself to a law, but a law that is given by the self in recognition of its responsibilities.

•*Ontology*: the study of the type of things that exist and what this means, including the type of thing human beings are, i.e. soul united to body; rational animal; free; determined; and so on.

Burnham, D. & Papandreopoloulos, G. (2017). *Existentialism*. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. www.iep.utm.edu/existent. Used with permission.

Source 2: Existential authenticity

... the norm of authenticity refers to a kind of 'transparency' with regard to my situation, a recognition that I am a being who can be responsible for who I am. In choosing in light of this norm I can be said to recover myself from alienation, from my absorption in the anonymous 'one-self' that characterizes me in my everyday engagement in the world. Authenticity thus indicates a certain kind of integrity — not that of a pre-given whole, an identity waiting to be discovered, but that of a project to which I can either commit myself (and thus 'become' what it entails) or else simply occupy for a time, inauthentically drifting in and out of various affairs. Some writers have taken this notion a step further, arguing that the measure of an authentic life lies in the integrity of a narrative, that to be a self is to constitute a story in which a kind of wholeness prevails, to be the author of oneself as a unique individual (Nehamas 1998; Ricoeur 1992). In contrast, the inauthentic life would be one without such integrity, one in which I allow my life-story to be dictated by the world...

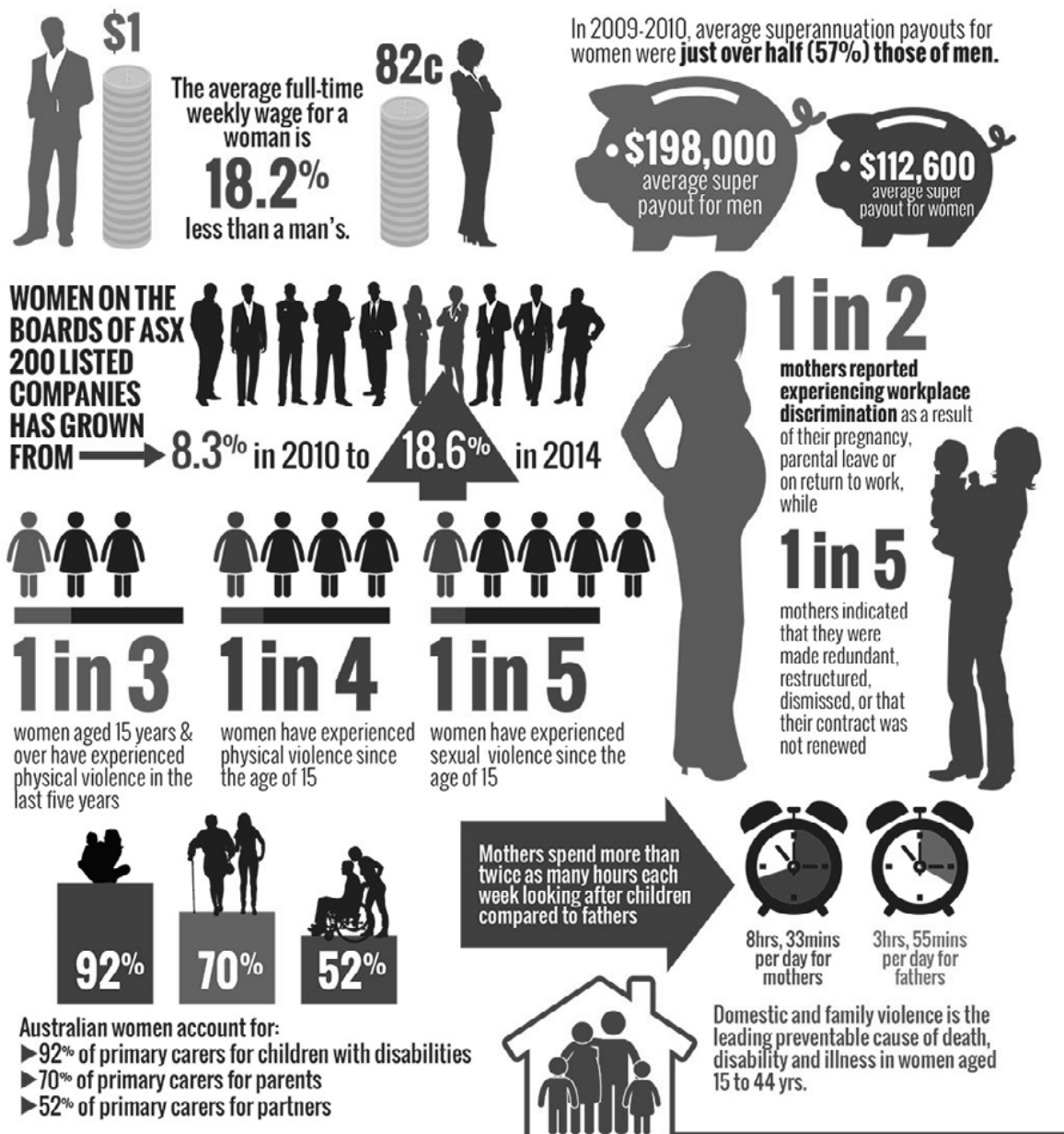
Authenticity defines a condition on self-making: do I succeed in making myself, or will who I am merely be a function of the roles I find myself in? Thus, to be authentic can also be thought as a way of being autonomous. In choosing 'resolutely' — that is, in committing myself to a certain course of action, a certain way of being in the world — I have given myself the rule that belongs to the role I come to adopt. The inauthentic person, in contrast, merely occupies such a role, and may do so 'irresolutely', without commitment. Being a father authentically does not necessarily make me a better father, but what it means to be a father has become explicitly my concern. It is here that existentialism locates the singularity of existence and identifies what is irreducible in the first-person stance. At the same time, authenticity does not hold out some specific way of life as a norm; that is, it does not distinguish between the projects that I might choose. Instead, it governs the manner in which I am engaged in such projects —either as 'my own' or as 'what one does', transparently or opaquely.

Thus, existentialism's focus on authenticity leads to a distinctive stance toward ethics and value-theory generally. The possibility of authenticity is a mark of my freedom, and it is through freedom that existentialism approaches questions of value, leading to many of its most recognizable doctrines.

Crowell, S. (2017). *Existentialism*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2017 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/existentialism>. Used with permission.

Source 3: Gender equality in Australia

Gender Equality



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Australian Human Rights Commission. (2014). *Gender equality: 2014 Face the Facts*.

https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018_Face_the_Facts_Gender_Equality.pdf. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Source 4: Various extracts from Nietzsche's writings on master morality, freedom and women

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. 'Whither is God?', He cried; 'I will tell you. *We have killed him* — you and I. All of us are his murderers ... Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us — for this sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto'.

Nietzsche, F. (1882). *The Joyful Wisdom*, Book III, Section 125. (T. Common, Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

Every elevation of the type 'man' has been the work of an aristocratic society — a society believing in gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form. Let us acknowledge how every higher civilization has originated! Men with a natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, still in possession of unbroken strength of will and desire for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more moral, more peaceful races. The noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their superiority did not consist first of all in their physical, but in their psychical power — they were more complete men (which implies 'more complete beasts').

Nietzsche, F. (1886). *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 257. (H. Zimmern, Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

A virtue must be *our own* invention, *our* most necessary self-expression and self-defense: any other kind of virtue is merely a danger. Whatever is not a condition of our life harms it: a virtue that is prompted solely by a feeling of respect for the concept of 'virtue' as Kant would have it, is harmful ... The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite — that everyone invent *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative ... Let us not underestimate this: *we ourselves*, we free spirits, are nothing less than a 'revaluation of all values'.

Nietzsche, F. (1888). *The Anti-Christ*, Sections 11 and 13. (H.L. Mencken Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

Active men are usually lacking in higher activity — I mean individual activity. They are active as officials, businessmen, scholars, that is, as generic beings, but not as quite particular, single and unique men... Today as always, men fall into two groups: slaves and free men. Whoever does not have two-thirds of his day for himself, is a slave, whatever he may be: a statesman, a businessman, an official, or a scholar.

Nietzsche, F. (1878). *Human, All Too Human*, Section 5 Part 283. (H. Zimmern, Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

Can women be at all just, when they are so accustomed to love and to be immediately biased for or against? For that reason they are also less interested in things and more in individuals ... Thus there arises a danger, by no means small, in entrusting politics and certain portions of science to them (history, for instance).

Nietzsche, F. (1878). *Human, All Too Human*, Section 7 Part 416. (H. Zimmern, Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

In the three or four civilised countries of Europe, it is possible, by several centuries of education, to make out of women anything we like, — even men, not in a sexual sense, of course, but in every other. Under such influences they will acquire all the masculine virtues and forces, at the same time, of course, they must also have taken all the masculine weaknesses and vices into the bargain ... But how shall we endure the intermediate state thereby induced, which may even last two or three centuries, during which feminine follies and injustices, woman's original birthday endowment, will still maintain the ascendancy over all that has been otherwise gained and acquired?

From: Nietzsche, F. (1878). *Human, All Too Human*, Section 7 Part 425. (H. Zimmern, Trans.). (Public domain in Australia)

Source 5: Sartre's justification for human freedom and responsibility

This source has been redacted due to copyright restrictions.

Sartre's philosophical arguments on human freedom and responsibility may be accessed from Sartre, J.P. (1957). *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (H. Barnes, Trans.). Citadel Press. pp. 12–16.

Source 6: Simone de Beauvoir on the conditions that constrain the freedom of women

This source has been redacted due to copyright restrictions.

De Beauvoir's philosophical arguments on the conditions that constrain the freedom of women may be accessed from de Beauvoir, S. (2009). *The Second Sex*. (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). Jonathan Cape. (Original work published 1949). pp. 10, 17, 740, 780.

Source 7: Comments on Beauvoir and situated freedom

Beauvoir would have appreciated the fact that her current philosophical status reflects our changed understanding of the domain of philosophy and the changed situation of women, for it confirms her idea of situated freedom—that our capacity for agency and meaning-making, that whether or not we are identified as agents and meaning-makers, is constrained, though never determined, by our situation. She would also have appreciated the fact that while her works were instrumental in effecting these changes, their lasting effect is a tribute to the ways that others have taken up her philosophical and feminist legacies; for one of her crucial contributions to our ethical and political vocabularies is the concept of the appeal — that the success of our projects depends on the extent to which they are adopted by others.

Bergoffen, D. (2018). *Simone de Beauvoir*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/beauvoir>. Used with permission.



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