# Philosophy – Option 1: Epistemology



Contents

[Focus 2](#_Toc121937971)

[Outcomes 2](#_Toc121937972)

[Introduction 2](#_Toc121937973)

[Rationale 3](#_Toc121937974)

[Aim 3](#_Toc121937975)

[Purpose and audience 3](#_Toc121937976)

[When and how to use this document 4](#_Toc121937977)

[Learning sequence 1 5](#_Toc121937978)

[Definitions and sources of knowledge 5](#_Toc121937979)

[Learning sequence 2 10](#_Toc121937980)

[Views of knowledge 10](#_Toc121937981)

[Learning sequence 3 13](#_Toc121937982)

[Limitations of knowledge 13](#_Toc121937983)

[Learning sequence 4 16](#_Toc121937984)

[Philosophical thinking on epistemology 16](#_Toc121937985)

[Learning sequence 5 18](#_Toc121937986)

[Community of inquiry 18](#_Toc121937987)

[Assessment task: The most important philosopher of knowledge 20](#_Toc121937988)

[Outcomes 20](#_Toc121937989)

[Content 20](#_Toc121937990)

[Task instructions 20](#_Toc121937991)

[Marking criteria 22](#_Toc121937992)

[Additional information 23](#_Toc121937993)

[Assessment for learning 23](#_Toc121937994)

[Differentiation 24](#_Toc121937995)

[About this resource 25](#_Toc121937996)

[References 28](#_Toc121937997)

## Focus

In this elective option, students will study the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge. They will examine philosophical thinking on epistemology and consider key questions in communities of inquiry.

### Outcomes

A student:

* **PH5-1** examines key philosophical thinkers, problems, and arguments
* **PH5-3** explores the role of philosophy as an agent of personal or social change
* **PH5-4** researches and assesses information using a variety of sources
* **PH5-6** constructs logical arguments based on critical reasoning
* **PH5-7** communicates ideas effectively using a variety of modes
* **PH5-8** reflects on values, beliefs, and assumptions
* **PH5-9** works independently and in communities of inquiry to explore philosophical questions

Outcomes referred to in this document are from the [Philosophy course document](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/philosophy#/asset2) © NSW Department of Education for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales (2021).

### Introduction

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge. It explores the nature, origins, and limits of knowledge. It answers questions like, ‘How do we know?’ and explores the connection between our minds and reality. In this resource, students will start by exploring the definitions of knowledge and the many sources of knowledge. They will then explore different views, philosophical thinking, and limitations of knowledge, before participating in a community of inquiry on the question of, ‘Is it possible that I am in a dream?’

To meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students in the cohort, activities may be adapted or adjusted for the local context. When selecting alternate stimuli or issues for study, it is important to ensure compliance with the [Controversial Issues in Schools Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045).

### Rationale

Philosophical thought shapes what people think, value, and how they engage with others and the world around them. Philosophy is concerned with questions of ethics, knowledge, aesthetics and reality. It seeks to shed light on life’s big issues, such as the nature of reality, how we should live and what it means to be human. Philosophy also grapples with the problems that lie at the foundation of issues of public debate such as artificial intelligence, human rights and freedom of speech.

In this course, students are actively engaged in exploring authentic ethical, social and political dilemmas in philosophy. They are challenged to think rigorously and discuss these issues in communities of inquiry. This engagement in philosophical discussion encourages students to think creatively, critically and collaboratively.

Philosophy equips students with the skills essential for active citizenship in today’s complex global society. Through the study of philosophy, students will develop the skills to think deeply and formulate sound arguments. A study of philosophy will also encourage an open-minded disposition and a willingness to challenge existing beliefs and values.

### Aim

The aim of philosophy is to develop student knowledge of key philosophical thinkers, problems and arguments. By applying this knowledge to social dilemmas through communities of inquiry, students will challenge assumptions and beliefs and build their capacity for critical reasoning and ethical decision making.

### Purpose and audience

This teaching resource is for teachers delivering or planning to deliver the course. The learning sequence demonstrates how a combination of outcomes can be used to develop teaching and learning activities. It also suggests a range of resources to support teachers when planning and/or teaching the course.

### When and how to use this document

Use this resource when designing learning activities that align with the course outcomes and content. The activities and resources can be used directly or may be adapted based on teacher judgment and knowledge of their students. Core modules must precede options in the delivery of the course, consult the course document for further details on timing of core and options.

## Learning sequence 1

Students:

* explore definitions of knowledge
* describe sources of knowledge, for example
* reason
* emotion
* intuition
* sense perception
* memory
* imagination
* faith.

### Definitions and sources of knowledge

**Note:** As some of the language of philosophy is complex, enhancements will need to be made to suit the needs of EAL/D students. For example, in the third activity, students may need to be provided with a simple definition of knowledge and belief, rather than researching and constructing their own. They may also benefit from reading the transcript of the video. Further, students should be provided with a glossary of key terms at the start of the learning sequence.

Hold a class discussion on the following questions:

* What is knowledge?
* What is the point of knowledge?
* Are we born with knowledge?

On a class [Google Jamboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/593) or whiteboard, take 60 seconds to write down as many facts or things that you ‘know’ as you can.

Use [Wikipedia – Knowledge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge), [Cambridge Dictionary – knowledge](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/knowledge), [Merriam-Webster – belief](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/belief) and [PHILOSOPHY – Epistemology: Introduction to Theory of Knowledge (6:10)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_Y3utIeTPg) (from 2:38 to 5:20) to complete the following:

* Write a brief definition for knowledge that includes an example.
* Write a brief definition for belief that includes an example.
* Write one to two sentences explaining the difference between knowledge and belief.
* Revisit the list of class ‘facts’ and reassess whether everything on the board is ‘knowledge’ or simply a ‘belief’.

Use a [Think-Pair-Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645#.YZMlTssODoI.link) strategy and a common fact like, ‘the sun rises every morning’ to discuss the following:

* What knowledge do you have about whether the sun rises every morning?
* How do you know this?
* How do you know that you’re right?

**Note:** For the following task, display a coffee cup at the front of the class for all students to see. If a coffee cup is not available, it can be replaced with another simple item, such as a stapler. Open the class discussion by asking students, ‘What is this?’ and ‘How do you know this?’

EAL/D strategies – While teaching the sequence, it is important to ensure that students understand target vocabulary, for example, proposition, justify, alternate, and contradict. For video resources, use of closed captions and transcripts may be beneficial to support the understanding of EAL/D students. Teachers may also need to demonstrate the facial expression described in the activity about emotions and provide a model [PEEL paragraph [PDF 570 KB]](https://shalvey-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/doe/sws/schools/s/shalvey-h/localcontent/PEEL_Paragraph.pdf) for students to review.

Discuss the following questions about the item shown by the teacher:

* What is this?
* How do you know this?

Plato defined the 3 necessary conditions for knowledge as being a ‘justified true belief.’ As a class, use the criteria to assess whether the proposition that the item ‘is a coffee cup’ is knowledge.

Table – Conditions for knowledge

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Conditions for knowledge | Notes |
| Belief: Do you really believe the proposition? |  |
| Truth: Can you find any alternate ideas that would contradict your knowledge or indicate that the proposition is false? |  |
| Justify: Can you support your proposition with good reasons? Are you justified in believing it is a coffee cup? |  |

Based on the assessment, write a short paragraph explaining whether the item is a coffee cup. You could use a PEEL paragraph structure for this response.

In small groups, determine which of the following factual claims are most likely to be knowledge, that is, a justified true belief:

* Michelle thinks that Western Australia is one of the states of Australia because her geography teacher told her so.
* Sam thinks that New Zealand is one of the states of Australia because she was watching an old documentary about federation.
* Raj thinks that Tasmania is a state of Australia because he saw it on a map.

Edmund Gettier questioned Plato’s definition of knowledge by providing examples of where a justified true belief is not knowledge. Watch [The Meaning of Knowledge: Crash Course Philosophy #7 (10:11)](https://thecrashcourse.com/courses/the-meaning-of-knowledge-crash-course-philosophy-7/) (from 5:50 to 8:55) and use this to:

* complete a [storyboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/559#.Yi6s9MfIq0A.link) for one of the Gettier cases
* think of your own example where someone may arrive at a right answer by a means other than using knowledge
* explain to a partner how it is possible to have justified true belief that is not knowledge.

One source of knowledge is through emotions, for example, surprise, confusion, awe, and interest. For each scenario in Table 2, complete the following:

* suggest the emotion that may be involved
* predict 3 actions that may result, leading the person to gain knowledge.

Table – Emotions leading to knowledge

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Scenario | Emotion (for example surprise, confusion, interest, awe) | Actions that may result |
| Example: You hear thunder. | Surprise or fear | You go outside to look at the sky, you see large storm clouds, you check the weather report. You gain knowledge about the weather. |
| Your uncle is passionate about old Holden cars. |  |  |
| You are doing your homework when you hear a loud crash. |  |  |
| A teacher is presenting and notices that most of the students’ faces are scrunched up, their eyebrows are lowered, and their lips are pursed as they watch her speak. |  |  |

For each of the possible sources of knowledge listed in Table 3, identify an example where a person may use this source.

Table – Using various sources of knowledge

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Source of knowledge | Definition | Example |
| Reason | The deduction of truths from existing knowledge. |  |
| Testimony | Where others acquire information and communicate it to us. |  |
| Intuition | What you think will happen based on your beliefs, feelings, or ‘gut instinct’. |  |
| Sense perception | Using sight, touch, hearing, smell, or taste to develop knowledge. |  |
| Memory | Memory records experiences of the past. |  |
| Faith | Cultural beliefs or beliefs in a god or religion. |  |

Use all that you have learnt about epistemology so far to write a one-paragraph response to the following question: ‘How do I know what I know?’ You could use a PEEL paragraph structure for this response.

## Learning sequence 2

Students explain different views of knowledge, for example:

* theoretical versus practical
* rationalism versus empiricism
* cultural views of knowledge, for example, traditional Aboriginal learning through Elders.

### Views of knowledge

**Note:** In this learning sequence, students will explore different views of knowledge and theories of how we obtain knowledge.

EAL/D strategies – Because a lot of the information available on philosophy is complex, significant scaffolding of research and ideas may be required. For some cohorts, teachers may need to use resource examples to provide students with a summary of information to work from. For video resources, use of closed captions and transcripts may be beneficial to support the understanding of EAL/D students. For activities requiring justification, students may need to be provided with common sentence starters or phrases, or have the option of responding orally.

In groups of 4, assign one person to each of the following views of knowledge:

* theoretical knowledge
* practical knowledge
* empiricism
* rationalism.

Conduct a class [jigsaw](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/546#.YjECgSAkt9U.link). Each person assigned to the same view of knowledge will work together in expert groups to research that view of knowledge and complete the summary table (Table 4). Once completed, students will return to their home groups and teach the home group about their view of knowledge. Resources for this task may include [Theoretical vs Practical Knowledge](https://medium.com/@amandaposthuma/theoretical-vs-practical-knowledge-86cab1113abd) and [Rationalism vs Empiricism (3:29)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcfOI-zTps8).

Table – View of knowledge

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| View of knowledge | Definition | Examples | Benefits of this approach? |
| Theoretical knowledge |  |  |  |
| Practical knowledge |  |  |  |
| Empiricism |  |  |  |
| Rationalism |  |  |  |

In your group, discuss which view of knowledge appeals to you most and why.

Watch the thought experiment, [Mary’s Room (4:51)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGYmiQkah4o). Use this to hold a class discussion on the following questions:

* Do you agree that Mary will learn something new? Why?
* What does this tell us about using senses to obtain knowledge?

As a class, discuss the following questions:

* How is knowledge passed from one generation to another?
* How might technology and culture impact on how knowledge is passed on?

Read [Language, culture and environmental knowledge](http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/culture.shtml) on Aboriginal learning through Elders. Use this research to complete the following:

* Explain in one or two sentences how traditional Aboriginal knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next.
* Compare this to how knowledge has been passed on in other cultures, for example, European or Asian cultures.
* Discuss how historical knowledge passed on by Aboriginal Elders and The Dreaming may be critical in managing contemporary problems like climate change.

Complete [The great social media misinformation quiz](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-16/the-great-social-media-misinformation-quiz/100540586). Use this experience and your own knowledge to join a small group discussion of the following questions:

* Do individuals and society form opinions and make decisions based on misinformation?
* How might society change if everyone studied the philosophy of knowledge?

Use the discussion to write a one-paragraph response to the following question: ‘To what extent could the study of philosophy and knowledge be an agent of social or personal change?’ You could use a PEEL paragraph structure for this response.

## Learning sequence 3

Students:

* discuss problems or limitations of knowledge, for example, scepticism
* analyse the use of knowledge in society, for example
* equality of access to knowledge
* relationship between knowledge and power.

### Limitations of knowledge

**Note:** In this learning sequence, students will explore limitations of knowledge. The sequence will start with the class viewing optical illusions. These optical illusions can be selected from sites like [30 optical illusions that will make your brain hurt](https://www.rd.com/article/optical-illusions/). Students will then examine sceptical arguments and consider whether it is possible to know anything with certainty.

EAL/D strategies – Because a lot of the information available on philosophy is complex, significant scaffolding of research and ideas may be required. For some cohorts, teachers may need to use resource examples to provide students with a summary of information to work from. While teaching the sequence, it is important to ensure that students understand target vocabulary, for example, sceptic, sceptical, scepticism, and allegory.

Sceptics argue that it may not be possible to know anything with certainty. Optical illusions support sceptical arguments. As a class, view the optical illusions provided by your teacher. Use these to discuss the following:

* What can you see?
* Why do you think you see what you see?
* Is what you see different to what others see?
* What does this experience tell us about whether we can always trust our senses to provide us with accurate empirical knowledge?

Watch [Plato’s Allegory of the Cave (4:32)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RWOpQXTltA). Use this to complete the following:

* With a partner, discuss the big idea about knowledge illustrated by this allegory.
* Use the discussion to write a paragraph explaining Plato’s big idea about knowledge in the Allegory of the Cave.

Watch [Thought experiment – Brain in a vat (3:11)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zO0sSJB1TrI) and use this to complete the following:

* Complete a [fishbone diagram](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599) of the experiment’s big ideas.
* Using a [T chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599), summarise the arguments for and against everyone in the class being a brain in a vat rather than actually present today.

In small groups, use your fishbone diagram and T chart to discuss the following questions:

* How can you be sure that you are not a brain in a vat?
* How can you be sure that all your beliefs about life, reality, and experiences are not false?

Use the scaffold provided in Table 5 to record 5 situations in which senses may not be able to provide us with accurate knowledge.

Table – Summary of research ideas

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ****No.**** | ****Source**** | ****Big ideas**** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |

Use the research in Table 5 to place yourself on a continuum from 1-5, with 1 representing absolute trust in your senses to provide accurate information, and 5 representing absolutely no trust in your senses to provide accurate information. Be prepared to place yourself along a physical line in the class and justify your position.

As a class, complete a [5 Whys](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/638) learning activity based on the following starter statement: ‘The powerful have all the knowledge in society.’

Work with a partner to research one factor that limits equal access to accurate information. Use this to develop a [Canva](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/653) poster to educate your peers about this. Factors that you might like to consider are:

* social media like Twitter or Facebook
* disability, for example, colour vision deficiency or hard of hearing
* inequality in education.

## Learning sequence 4

Students examine philosophical thinking on epistemology, for example:

* René Descartes
* John Locke
* Plato
* Edmund L Gettier
* David Hume.

### Philosophical thinking on epistemology

**Note:** In this learning sequence, students will work in groups to research a specific philosopher and their views on knowledge. They will present their overview of this philosopher in a short animation or video for the class. Where video technology is unavailable or the animation is not suitable for the cohort, these options could be replaced by a skit or a [storyboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/559). Students should be encouraged to be creative in the presentation of their findings.

EAL/D strategies – Because a lot of the information available on philosophy is complex, significant scaffolding of research and ideas may be required. For some cohorts, teachers may need to use resource examples to provide students with a summary of information to work from. Students may also be encouraged to conduct their research in their home language.

In your small team, research an assigned philosopher who was known for their ideas relating to knowledge. Use this research to step into the shoes of this philosopher and prepare a short [iMovie](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/617) or [narrative comic](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/559) from their perspective to be presented to the class. The following sentence stems can guide your response:

* I am …
* In my life I …
* My big idea or philosophy on knowledge is …
* This philosophy is important to the world because …

Resources for this task may include:

* [René Descartes, "I think, therefore I am" (1:56)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pdc6n)
* [PHILOSOPHY, René Descartes (8:48)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAjWUrwvxs4)
* [John Locke on Personal Identity, ‘What makes me human?’ (1:46)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02h73cx) and [What is empiricism? (3:08)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCIbr9IBkZA)
* [George Berkeley’s Idealism (8:58)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-lDlxVQy4c)
* [PHILOSOPHY – Epistemology: Hume’s Skepticism and Induction, Part 1 (4:33)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QpUrSn3cWU)
* [Ethics Explainer: Plato's Cave](https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-platos-cave/)
* [PLATO, Knowledge and the Analogy of the Divided Line (8:10)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcdIXZFwNYA).

## Learning sequence 5

Students participate in at least one community of inquiry that examines philosophical issues or questions on epistemology.

### Community of inquiry

**Note:** Developing an understanding of how to participate in a Community of Inquiry (COI) is critical to the study of philosophy. A COI is a student-directed group activity where students discuss a stimulus, question, or story. It is not an adversarial process, and the purpose is not to win the argument. A COI should follow the inquiry where it leads, and the discussion makes the pathway, not the facilitator or teacher. In a COI, students are seated in a circle and reminded of group rules or protocols. In the discussion, students listen respectfully to each other, use their notes to challenge unsupported opinions or assumptions, build on each other’s ideas, and work together to form inferences from what has been said. At the conclusion of the discussion, it is important to engage students in a process of self-reflection for them to evaluate their understanding of the concept or value discussed and how well the group functioned. A useful teacher resource for ideas on the phases of the COI may include [Values Education for Australian Schooling: Philosophy in the Classroom © Commonwealth of Australia 2006 [PDF 58.6KB]](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Cocurricular_Philosophy_in_the_classroom.pdf).

Generally, students would require 2 lessons to prepare for the COI and another lesson for the COI itself. The scaffold provided below will allow students to self-assess in the lesson after the COI is held. In some contexts, students may need adjustments, additional scaffolding, and support to ensure that they are able to actively participate in the COI.

In this activity, the class will participate in a community of inquiry. The question for discussion will be, ‘Is it possible that I am in a dream?’ To prepare for the task, you should:

* ensure that you understand the question
* review notes from this topic and consider logical arguments in response to this question
* prepare examples, analogies, or thought experiments that may support your argument
* consider counter arguments that may be presented.

Use the self-assessment criteria provided in Table 6 to consider your participation in the COI. Use the questions provided to assist you to make notes in the following table:

Table – Self-assessment of participation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Questions to consider | Notes |
| Preparation for the COI | Did I have a clear understanding of the question?  Did I prepare logical arguments?  Did I prepare thought experiments and analogies to use? |  |
| Communication skills | Did I contribute ideas?  Were my ideas logical?  Was I able to support my ideas with examples, thought experiments, or analogies?  Did I actively listen to others?  Was I respectful?  Did I support and encourage others? |  |
| Engaging with the thoughts of others | Did I build on or extend the ideas of others?  Was I able to link the ideas of group members or make inferences from what had been said?  Did I challenge group members to clarify their meaning?  Did I respectfully challenge the reasoning of others? |  |

Complete an individual reflection on your participation, using your self-assessment responses. Use this to write one paragraph on how your preparation, participation, or communication could be improved.

## Assessment task: The most important philosopher of knowledge

**Note:** The task involves students working individually to write an extended response. Students should be explicitly taught the meaning of the directive term, ‘assess’. It would also be useful to provide scaffolding on how to draft an extended response, structure paragraphs, and conduct research. Because materials are complex, simple websites should be provided for students, as well as ideas on how to break things down and keep it simple. Ideas to assist students with structuring their writing are included in the department’s [Teaching strategies: Paragraphing](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/student-assessment/smart-teaching-strategies/literacy/writing/stage-3/paragraphing).

### Outcomes

* **PH5-1** examines key philosophical thinkers, problems, and arguments
* **PH5-4** researches and assesses information using a variety of sources
* **PH5-6** constructs logical arguments based on critical reasoning

### Content

Students examine philosophical thinking on epistemology.

### Task instructions

Write an extended response to the following question: ‘Who is the most important epistemology philosopher for our world?’

In your response you should include the following:

* an introduction, body, and conclusion
* clear structure for paragraphs, for example, PEEL
* your own ideas
* arguments and links between ideas
* a discussion of a variety of philosophers and their big ideas on knowledge
* justification of why your chosen philosopher is important, now and in the future.

To get you started on this task, you may consider the following questions:

* Which philosophers have you have studied in this unit?
* What are the big ideas of these philosophers?
* How may the ideas of these philosophers be useful in today’s society?
* How may the ideas of these philosophers be useful in the future?
* Which philosopher’s ideas may be most useful? Why?

## Marking criteria

Table – Assessment marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Criteria |
| **A** | * Demonstrates extensive knowledge of philosophers * Constructs well considered, logical arguments that are supported by creative examples, analogies, or thought experiments * Uses comprehensive and fluent communication skills and structure |
| **B** | * Demonstrates thorough knowledge of philosophers * Constructs thorough and logical arguments that are supported by examples, analogies, or thought experiments * Uses high level communication skills and structure |
| **C** | * Demonstrates sound knowledge of philosophers * Constructs sound arguments that are supported by examples * Uses sound communication skills and structure |
| **D** | * Demonstrates basic knowledge of philosophers * Constructs basic arguments and may include examples * Uses basic communication skills and structure |
| **E** | * Demonstrates elementary knowledge of philosophy or philosophers * May comment on the arguments or ideas of philosophers, or refer to examples * Uses limited communication skills and structure |

## Additional information

**Resource evaluation and support**: Please complete the following [feedback form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=muagBYpBwUecJZOHJhv5kbKo2q_ZUXlHndJMnh2Wd8NUOUk0VTIzUDVVSlVFQVM5MkdOMkJGTjVKNCQlQCN0PWcu) to help us improve our resources and support.

The information below can be used to support teachers when using this teaching resource for Philosophy.

### Assessment for learning

Possible formative assessment strategies that could be included:

* Learning intentions and success criteria assist educators to articulate the purpose of a learning task to make judgements about the quality of student learning. These help students focus on the task or activity taking place and what they are learning and provide a framework for reflection and feedback. [Online tools](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/622) can assist implementation of this formative assessment strategy.
* Eliciting evidence strategies allow teachers to determine the next steps in learning and assist teachers in evaluating the impact of teaching and learning activities. Strategies that may be added to a learning sequence to elicit evidence include all student response systems, [exit tickets](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/543), mini whiteboards (actual or [digital](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/575)), [hinge questions](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/557), [Kahoot](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/621), [Socrative](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/587), or quick quizzes to ensure that individual student progress can be monitored and the lesson sequence adjusted based on formative data collected.
* Feedback is designed to close the gap between current and desired performance by informing teacher and student behaviour (AITSL 2017). AITSL provides a [factsheet to support evidence-based feedback](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/improve-practice/feedback#:~:text=FEEDBACK-,Factsheet,-A%20quick%20guide).
* [Peer feedback](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/549) is a structured process where students evaluate the work of their peers by providing valuable feedback in relation to learning intentions and success criteria. It can be supported by [online tools](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?cache_id=1d29b).
* Self-regulated learning opportunities assist students in taking ownership of their own learning. A variety of strategies can be employed and some examples include reflection tasks, [Think-Pair-Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645), [KWLH charts](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/562), [learning portfolios](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/583) and [learning logs](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/564).

The primary role of assessment is to establish where individuals are in their learning so that teaching can be differentiated and further learning progress can be monitored over time.

Feedback that focuses on improving tasks, processes and student self-regulation is the most effective. Students engaging with feedback can take many forms including formal, informal, formative, summative, interactive, demonstrable, visual, written, verbal and non-verbal.

[What works best update 2020](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/research-reports/what-works-best-2020-update) (CESE 2020a)

### Differentiation

Differentiated learning can be enabled by differentiating the teaching approach to content, process, product and the learning environment. For more information on differentiation go to [Differentiating learning](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/teacher-quality-and-accreditation/strong-start-great-teachers/refining-practice/differentiating-learning) and [Differentiation](https://education.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/inclusive-practice-hub/primary-school/teaching-strategies/differentiation).

When using these resources in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider the needs of all students in their class, including:

* **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**. Targeted [strategies](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-in-nsw-public-schools) can be used to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal students in K-12 and increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal histories and cultures. Teachers should utilise students’ Personalised Learning Pathways to support individual student needs and goals.
* **EAL/D learners**. EAL/D learners will require explicit English language support and scaffolding, informed by the [EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/resources-for-schools/eald/enhanced-teaching-and-learning-cycle) and the student’s phase on the [EAL/D Learning Progression](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/planning-eald-support/english-language-proficiency). In addition, teachers can access information about [supporting EAL/D learners](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/planning-eald-support/english-language-proficiency) and [literacy and numeracy support specific to EAL/D learners](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/resources-for-schools/eald).
* **Students with additional learning needs**. Learning adjustments enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers. Teachers can use a range of [adjustments](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/disability-learning-and-support/personalised-support-for-learning/adjustments-to-teaching-and-learning) to ensure a personalised approach to student learning. In addition, the [Universal Design for Learning planning tool](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/universal-design-for-learning) can be used to support the diverse learning needs of students using inclusive teaching and learning strategies. Subject specific curriculum considerations can be found on the [Inclusive Practice hub](https://education.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/inclusive-practice-hub/primary-school/teaching-strategies/differentiation).
* **High potential and gifted learners**. [Assessing and identifying high potential and gifted learners](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/high-potential-and-gifted-education/supporting-educators/assess-and-identify#Assessment1) will help teachers decide which students may benefit from extension and additional challenge. [Effective strategies and contributors to achievement](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/high-potential-and-gifted-education/supporting-educators/evaluate) for high potential and gifted learners help teachers to identify and target areas for growth and improvement. In addition, the [Differentiation Adjustment Tool](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/high-potential-and-gifted-education/supporting-educators/implement/differentiation-adjustment-strategies) can be used to support the specific learning needs of high potential and gifted students. The [High Potential and Gifted Education Professional Learning and Resource Hub](https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/sites/HPGEHub/SitePages/Home.aspx) supports school leaders and teachers to effectively implement the High Potential and Gifted Education Policy in their unique contexts.

All students need to be challenged and engaged to develop their potential fully. A culture of high expectations needs to be supported by strategies that both challenge and support student learning needs, such as through appropriate curriculum differentiation. (CESE 2020a:6).

### About this resource

All curriculum resources are prepared through a rigorous process. Resources are periodically reviewed as part of our ongoing evaluation plan to ensure currency, relevance and effectiveness. For additional support or advice contact the Teaching and Learning Curriculum team by emailing [secondaryteachingandlearning@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:secondaryteachingandlearning@det.nsw.edu.au).

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs**:

This resource aligns to the School Excellence Framework elements of curriculum (curriculum provision) and effective classroom practice (lesson planning, explicit teaching).

This resource supports teachers to address Australian Professional Teaching Standards 2.1.2, 2.3.2, 3.2.2, 7.2.2

This resource has been designed to support schools with successful implementation of new curriculum, specifically the NSW Department of Education approved elective course, Philosophy © 2021 NSW Department of Education for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

The resource is produced to assist schools with promoting and implementing the course for the first time. As the course may be taught by teachers from a range of key learning areas, the resource is designed to support teachers from a variety of KLA expertise.

**Department approved elective course**: Philosophy

**Course outcomes**: PH5-1, PH5-3, PH5-4, PH5-6, PH5-7, PH5-8, PH5-9

**Author**: Curriculum Secondary Learners

**Publisher**: State of NSW, Department of Education

**Resource**: Teaching resource

**Related resources**: Further resources to support Philosophy can be found on the Department approved elective courses webpage including course document, sample scope and sequences, assessment materials and other learning sequences.

**Professional Learning**: Join the [Teaching and Learning 7-12 statewide staffroom](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/statewide-staffrooms) for information regarding professional learning opportunities.

**Universal Design for Learning Tool**: [Universal Design for Learning planning tool](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/universal-design-for-learning). Support the diverse learning needs of students using inclusive teaching and learning strategies.

**Consulted with**: Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships, Inclusion and Wellbeing, EAL/D

**Reviewed by**: This resource was reviewed by Curriculum Secondary Learners and by subject matter experts in schools to ensure accuracy of content.

**Creation date**: 16th May 2022.

**Rights**: © State of New South Wales, Department of Education

**Evidence Base**:

‘The long-term vision is for a curriculum that supports teachers to nurture wonder, ignite passion and provide every young person with knowledge, skills and attributes that will help prepare them for a lifetime of learning, meaningful adult employment and effective future citizenship’ (NESA 2020:xi).

The development of the course and the course document as part of department approved electives aims to respond to the goals articulated in NESA’s curriculum review. Consistent messages from the review include:

* ‘flexibility’ was the word most used by teachers to describe the systemic change they want
* teachers need more time to teach important knowledge and skills
* students want authentic learning with real-world application.

This teaching resource provides teachers with some examples of explicit and authentic learning experiences. The option to adjust these learning sequences leads to ‘increased local decision making in relation to the curriculum’ as this ‘is associated with higher levels of student performance’ (NESA 2020:52).

The suggested strategies for teaching and learning align with the principles of explicit teaching. ‘The evidence shows that students who experience explicit teaching practices perform better than students who do not. Explicit teaching reduces the cognitive burden of learning new and complex concepts and skills, and helps students develop deep understanding’ (CESE 2020a:11).

## References

**Links to third-party material and websites**

Please note that the provided (reading/viewing material/list/links/texts) are a suggestion only and implies no endorsement, by the New South Wales Department of Education, of any author, publisher, or book title. School principals and teachers are best placed to assess the suitability of resources that would complement the curriculum and reflect the needs and interests of their students.

If you use the links provided in this document to access a third party's website, you acknowledge that the terms of use, including licence terms set out on the third party's website apply to the use which may be made of the materials on that third-party website or where permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). The department accepts no responsibility for content on third-party websites.

All material [© State of New South Wales (Department of Education), 2021](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/copyright) unless otherwise indicated. All other material used by permission or under licence.

AITSL (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2017) ‘[Feedback Factsheet](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/improve-practice/feedback#:~:text=FEEDBACK-,Factsheet,-A%20quick%20guide)’, AITSL, accessed 09 December 2022.

NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) (2020) [*Nurturing Wonder and Igniting Passion, designs for a new school curriculum: NSW Curriculum Review* [PDF 1.12MB]](https://nswcurriculumreform.nesa.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/phase-3/final-report/NSW_Curriculum_Review_Final_Report.pdf), NESA, accessed 09 December 2022.

State of New South Wales (Department of Education) and CESE (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation) (2020a) ‘[What works best: 2020 update](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/research-reports/what-works-best-2020-update)’, CESE, NSW Department of Education, accessed 09 December 2022.

State of New South Wales (Department of Education) and CESE (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation) (2020b) ‘[What works best in practice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/practical-guides-for-educators-/what-works-best-in-practice)’, CESE, NSW Department of Education, accessed 09 December 2022.

Alvarez B and Laliberte M (20 August 2021) ['30 Optical Illusions That Will Make Your Brain Hurt'](https://www.rd.com/article/optical-illusions/), Brain Games, Reader's Digest website, accessed 14 December 2022.

Baker N and Aedy R (16 October 2021) ['The great social media misinformation quiz'](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-16/the-great-social-media-misinformation-quiz/100540586), RN Presents: This Much is True, ABC News website, accessed 14 December 2022.

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) (17 April 2015) ['René Descartes – "I think therefore I am"' [video]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pdc6n), *BBC Radio 4:* *A History of Ideas*, BBC website, accessed 14 December 2022.

BBC (19 January 2015) ['John Locke on Personal Identity: What makes us human?' [video]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02h73cx), *BBC Radio 4: A History of Ideas*, BBC website, accessed 14 December 2022.

Carneades.org (1 November 2015) ['Rationalism vs Empiricism' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcfOI-zTps8), *Carneades.org*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

Commonwealth of Australia (2006) [*Philosophy in the Classroom: Oxenford State School [58.6 KB]*](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Cocurricular_Philosophy_in_the_classroom.pdf), Values Education for Australian Schooling: Philosophy in the Classroom, accessed 14 December 2022.

Crash Course (2022) ['The Meaning of Knowledge: Crash Course Philosophy #7' [video]](https://thecrashcourse.com/courses/the-meaning-of-knowledge-crash-course-philosophy-7/), *Crash Course Philosophy*, Crash Course website, accessed 14 December 2022.

D'Olimpio L (18 March 2019) ['Ethics Explainer: Plato’s Cave'](https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-platos-cave/), *Ethics Explainers*, The Ethics Centre website, accessed 14 December 2022.

Delaney D (2015) ['Language, culture and environmental knowledge'](http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/culture.shtml), *Indigenous Weather Knowledge*, Bureau of Meteorology website, accessed 14 December 2022.

Demizmue (15 January 2021) ['PLATO, Knowledge and the Analogy of the Divided Line' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcdIXZFwNYA), *Demizmue*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

PHILO-notes (4 June 2020) ['What is Empiricism' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCIbr9IBkZA), *PHILO-notes*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

Philosophy Vibe (24 April 2016) ['George Berkeley's Idealism' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-lDlxVQy4c), *Philosophy Vibe*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

Posthuma-Coelho A (25 November 2016) ['Theoretical vs Practical Knowledge'](https://medium.com/@amandaposthuma/theoretical-vs-practical-knowledge-86cab1113abd), Medium, accessed 14 December 2022.

SRF Kultur (14 October 2016) ['Thought experiment BRAIN IN A VAT' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zO0sSJB1TrI), *SRF Kultur*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

TED-Ed (18 March 2015) ['Plato’s Allegory of the Cave – Alex Gendler' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RWOpQXTltA), *TED-Ed*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

TED-Ed (25 January 2017) ['Mary’s Room: A philosophical thought experiment – Eleanor Nelsen'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGYmiQkah4o) [video], *TED-Ed*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

The School of Life (11 September 2015) ['PHILOSOPHY – René Descartes' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAjWUrwvxs4), *The School of Life*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

Wikipedia contributors (2022) [*Knowledge*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge), Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, accessed 14 December 2022.

Wireless Philosophy (13 February 2016) ['PHILOSOPHY – Epistemology: Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_Y3utIeTPg), *Wireless Philosophy*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.

Wireless Philosophy (21 November 2014) ['PHILOSOPHY – Epistemology: Hume's Skepticism and Induction, Part 1' [video]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QpUrSn3cWU), *Wireless Philosophy*, YouTube, accessed 14 December 2022.