



Philosophy and Ethics General Course Year 12

Selected Unit 3 syllabus content for the

Externally set task 2025

This document is an extract from the *Philosophy and Ethics General Course Year 12 syllabus*, featuring all of the content for Unit 3. The content that has been highlighted in the document is the content on which the Externally set task (EST) for 2025 will be based.

All students enrolled in the course are required to complete an EST. The EST is an assessment task which is set by the Authority and distributed to schools for administering to students. The EST will be administered in schools during Term 2, 2025 under standard test conditions. The EST will take 50 minutes.

The EST will be marked by teachers in each school using a marking key provided by the Authority. The EST is included in the assessment table in the syllabus as a separate assessment type with a weighting of 15% for the pair of units.

Unit 3 – Reason and persons

Unit description

This unit enables students to examine reasoning, inference, doubt, and proof; the construction of world views; ideas of mind, body and personhood; ideas of action, intention, motives, free-will and determinism; and the elements of a personal ethic.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

How do we know?

Critical reasoning

- recognising and evaluating the cogency of an argument written in natural language in terms of its premises, inferences and conclusions
- recognising statements in a variety of texts as either argumentative, descriptive, narrative or explanatory
- understanding modus ponens and modus tollens

Methods of inquiry

- the distinction between empirical evidence and rational proof
- inductive and deductive arguments
- observation and thought experiment
- types of inquiry: dialectic

Imagination and interpretation

- the relationship between reason and imagination
- the distinction between perception, rational reflection and various sources of imagination

Analysing, clarifying and evaluating concepts

- the concepts of mind, body and personhood
- the concepts of action, intention, will, motives and reasons
- the idea of free will

What is real?

Scientific world view

- science as a way of classifying the world and constructing our understanding of what is real in human nature
- different ideas of human nature

Conceptions of ultimate reality

- conceptual difficulties with free-will, determinism and agency (human action)
- the concepts of change and causation

Persons

- the concept of being 'an individual'
- the relationship between individuals and societies
- the social element in individual identity
- the ideas of personal identity, gender, race, class and ethnicity

How should we live?

Governance

- the distinction between contractual and non-contractual relationships

Communities and cultures

- the ideas of justice, fairness and power relations, including race, gender and class

Self and others

- the nature of virtues and vices and their relationship to the development of character and ethical action
- the concept of care, including care for, care about and taking care
- the role of principled decisions in ethics, including:
 - the Golden Rule
 - the greatest happiness principle
 - the categorical imperative