

**BANQUE DE SUJETS**

# **ANGLAIS / PHILOSOPHIE**

**SECTION EUROPÉENNE**

**SESSION 2015**

BACCALAUREATS GENERAL ET TECHNOLOGIQUE  
SESSION 2015

EPREUVE SPECIFIQUE MENTION « SECTION EUROPEENNE OU DE LANGUE ORIENTALE »  
Académies de Paris-Créteil-Versailles

Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°1

**Thème : La philosophie**

**Question : Is it possible to get out of Plato's cave?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

Seated prisoners, chained so that they cannot move their heads, stare at a cave wall on which are projected images. These images are cast from carved figures illuminated by a fire and carried by people on a parapet above and behind the prisoners. A prisoner is loosed from his chains. First he sees the carved images and the fire. Then he is led out of the cave into 'the real' world. Blinded by the light of the sun, he cannot look at the trees, rocks and animals around him, but instead looks at the shadows and reflections (in water) cast by those objects. As he becomes acclimatized, he turns his gaze (1) to those objects and finally, fully acclimatized, he looks to the source of illumination, the sun itself.

Allan Silverman,  
The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014.

**Text 2 :**

Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation.

Bertrand Russell,  
*The problems of philosophy* (1912)  
Oxford University Press, 1985, p.91.

(1) *gaze*: a long steady look at somebody/something.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°2

**Thème : La philosophie**

**Question : Is philosophy only a questioning?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text :**

There are many questions—and among them those that are of the profoundest interest to our spiritual life—which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect unless its powers become of quite a different order from what they are now. Has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe (...) ? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man? Such questions are asked by philosophy, and variously answered by various philosophers. But it would seem that, whether answers be otherwise discoverable or not, the answers suggested by philosophy are none of them demonstrably true. Yet, however slight may be the hope of discovering an answer, it is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable (1) knowledge.

Bertrand Russell,  
*The problems of philosophy* (1912)

(1) *ascertainable*: verifiable.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°3

**Thème : Le réel**

**Question: Is the world only what we perceive?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

A cherry, I say, is nothing but a congeries (1) of sensible impressions, or ideas perceived by various senses: which ideas are united into one thing (or have one name given them) by the mind, because they are observed together. (...). But if, by the word "cherry", you mean an unknown nature, distinct from all those sensible qualities, and if, by its existence, you mean something distinct from its being perceived, then neither you nor I, nor anyone else, can be sure it exists.

George Berkeley  
*Three dialogues between Hylas et Philonous* (1713)

**Text 2 :**

There is no logical impossibility in the supposition that the whole of life is a dream, in which we ourselves create all the objects that come before us. But although this is not logically impossible, there is no reason whatever to suppose that it is true; and it is, in fact, a less simple hypothesis (...), than the common-sense hypothesis that there really are objects independent of us, whose action on us causes our sensations.

Bertrand Russell  
*The problems of philosophy* (1912)

(1) *congeries*: set, aggregation, collection of dissimilar items.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°4

**Thème : Le réel**

**Question : Can we prove the existence of the external world?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

The table I write on exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed—meaning thereby (1) that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odour, that is, it was smelt; there was a sound, that is, it was heard; a colour or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse is percipi* (2), nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.

George Berkeley  
*Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710)

**Text 2 :**

Our instinctive belief [is] that there *are* objects *corresponding* to our sense-data (3). Since this belief does not lead to any difficulties, but on the contrary tends to simplify and systematize our account of our experiences, there seems no good reason for rejecting it. We may therefore admit—though with a slight doubt derived from dreams—that the external world does really exist, and is not wholly dependent for its existence upon our continuing to perceive it.

Bertrand Russell  
*Problems of philosophy*  
(1912)

(1) *thereby*: in this way.

(2) “*esse is percipi*”: in Latin, “to be is to be perceived”.

(3) *sense-data*: information given by senses.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°5

**Thème : Le réel**

**Question : Do others help me to know my life is not a dream?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text :**

When we are trying to show that there must be objects independent of our own sense-data (1), we cannot appeal to the testimony of other people, since this testimony itself consists of sense-data, and does not reveal other people's experiences unless our own sense-data are signs of things existing independently of us. We must therefore, if possible, find, in our own purely private experiences, characteristics which show, or tend to show, that there are in the world other things than ourselves and our private experiences. In one sense it must be admitted that we can never prove the existence of things other than ourselves and our experiences. No logical absurdity results from the hypothesis that the world consists of myself and my thoughts and feelings and sensations, and that everything else is mere fancy (2).

Bertrand Russell  
*The problems of philosophy* (1912)

1) *sense-data*: information given by our senses.

2) *a fancy*: a fantasy.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°6

**Thème : Nature, culture, identité.**

**Question : Is gender nature or nurture?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

The male is, by nature, better fitted to command than the female (...) and the older and fully developed person than the younger and immature.

Aristotle  
*Politics* (IVth B.C.)  
Vrin, 1259 b.

**Text 2 :**

The term 'female' designates a fixed set of natural physical facts (...) and the term 'woman' designates a variety of characteristics through which those facts acquire cultural meaning. (...). If gender is the variable cultural interpretation of sex, then it lacks the fixity of simple identity. To be a gender, whether man, woman, or otherwise, is to be engaged in an ongoing (1) cultural interpretation of bodies and, hence, to be dynamically positioned within a field of cultural possibilities. Gender must be understood as a modality of taking on or realizing possibilities, a process of interpreting the body, giving it cultural form. In other words, to be a woman is to become a woman; it is not a matter of acquiescing to a fixed status.

J. Butler  
Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*  
1986

(1) *ongoing*: continuing to exist or develop.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°7

**Thème : Nature, culture, identité.**

**Question : Is it important to know if gender is caused by nature or by nurture ?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

The profoundest knowledge of the laws of the formation of character is indispensable to entitle (1) anyone to affirm even that there is any difference, much more what the difference is, between the two sexes considered as moral and rational beings; and since no one, yet, has that knowledge (for there is hardly any subject which, in proportion to its importance, has been so little studied), no one is thus far entitled to any positive opinion on the subject. Conjectures are all that can at present be made; conjectures more or less probable.

J.S. Mill

*The subjection of woman* (1869)

**Text 2 :**

Is nature or nurture the stronger influence on sex differences and similarities? If asked, most psychologists would probably reply that the question is misguided (2). Obviously, both are influential. Yet, (...) nature–nurture debates have remained highly contentious in the psychology of gender, and contemporary researchers only sometimes integrate the two causal influences. More commonly, researchers focus on one type of cause to the exclusion of the other or treat them as competing explanations.

A. H. Eagly and W. Wood  
Perspectives on Psychological Science  
2013

(1) *to entitle*: to give somebody the right to have or to do something.

(2) *misguided*: inappropriate.



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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°8

**Thème : Identité et liberté.**

**Question : Could we get rid of gender?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Most people feel deeply wounded if they are told that they exercise their manhood or womanhood improperly. Insofar as social existence requires an unambiguous gender affinity, it is not possible to exist in a socially meaningful sense outside of established gender norms. The fall from established gender boundaries initiates a sense of radical dislocation. If human existence is always gendered existence, then to stray (1) outside of established gender is in some sense to put one's very existence into question. In these moments of gender dislocation in which we realize that it is hardly necessary that we be the genders we have become, we confront the burden of choice (...) to living as a man or a woman or some other gender identity, a freedom made burdensome (2) through social constraint.

Judith Butler  
Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Witting, and Foucault. 1990.

- 1) *to stray*: to move away from the place where you should be, without intending to.  
2) *burdensome*: heavy.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 9

**Thème : Morale et devoir**

**Question : Is pleasure the only thing that matters in life?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

Pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and all desirable things (...) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.

J.S. Mill  
*Utilitarianism* (1861)

**Text 2 :**

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there is one to which all (or almost all) who have experience of both give a decided preference (...), that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with (1) both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent (2), and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing (3) to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality.

J.S. Mill  
*Utilitarianism* (1861)

(1) *acquainted with*: familiar with

(2) *discontent*: dissatisfaction, a feeling of being unhappy.

(3) *to ascribe*: to attribute.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°10

**Thème : Morale et devoir**

**Question : Should we always obey our moral conscience?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

To do a serious injustice to someone is a terrible thing. How terrible it must be for a man to know that he is about to be executed, or that he must stay in prison for many years. (...). It really is distressing even to think about such a case, let alone to be the victim oneself. And yet one can argue that our feelings of distress are due to looking at only one aspect of the situation. If the harm done to the victim really is (by hypothesis) much less than the harm that would have been caused by thousands of deaths (the fatherless and motherless children, and so on), then it ought to give us even more anguish if we contemplate this side of the story. (...).

I think that the utilitarian must be prepared to sacrifice the harmony of his own mind for the good of others. If, for example, the only way in which I can save twenty men from being wrongfully executed in the field by an army captain is to myself shoot the twentieth (who is to be executed anyway) then I must do it. No doubt I shall feel bad about it, and perhaps I shall not be able to bring myself to do it. But in this case the nineteen men who will otherwise be shot are unlikely to thank me for it.

J. J. C. Smart,  
“Utilitarianism and Justice”  
1978.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°11

**Thème : La liberté d'expression.**

**Question : Can freedom of speech go too far?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise des textes ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1:**

There ought to exist the fullest liberty of professing and discussing (...) any doctrine, however immoral it may be considered.

J.S. Mill  
*On liberty* (1859)

**Text 2:**

The United States is an exception among liberal democracies when it comes to hate speech. The most famous example of this is the Nazi march through Skokie (Illinois), something that would not be allowed in almost any other democratic society. The actual intention was not to engage in political speech at all, but simply to march through a predominantly Jewish community dressed in storm trooper (1) uniforms and wearing swastikas (although the Illinois Supreme Court interpreted the wearing of swastikas (2) as “symbolic political speech”). It is clear that most people, especially those who lived in Skokie, were outraged and offended by the march, but were they harmed? There was no plan to cause physical injury and the marchers did not intend to damage property.

van Mill, David, “Freedom of Speech”  
(2012)

- (1) *storm trooper*: a member of a private Nazi army notorious for violence and brutality.  
(2) *swastika*: symbol of the German Nazi party.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°12

**Thème : La liberté d'expression.**

**Question : Should we ban offensive opinions ?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text 1 :**

Joel Feinberg (1926-2004) suggests we need an *offense principle* that can act as a guide to public censure. The basic idea is (...) that we can legitimately prohibit some forms of expression because they are very offensive. Offending someone is less serious than harming someone, so the penalties imposed should be less severe than those for causing harm. (...). Such a principle is difficult to apply because many people take offense as the result of an overly (1) sensitive disposition, or worse, because of bigotry (2) and unjustified prejudice. A further difficulty is that some people can be deeply offended by statements that others find mildly amusing. The furore over the Danish cartoons brings this starkly to the fore (3). Despite the difficulty of applying a standard of this kind, something like the offense principle operates widely in liberal democracies where citizens are penalized for a variety of activities, including speech, that would escape prosecution (4) under the *harm principle*. Wandering around the local shopping mall naked, or engaging in sexual acts in public places are two obvious examples.

Van Mill, David  
"Freedom of Speech"  
2012

(1) *overly*: excessively.

(2) *bigotry*: dogmatism.

(3) *to bring something to the fore*: to make something become noticed by people.

(4) *prosecution*: the act or process of holding a trial against a person.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°13

**Thème : La liberté d'expression.**

**Question : Can every opinion legitimately ask for freedom of speech?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text :**

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. (...). The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent (1) from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived (2) of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose (...) the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

J.S. Mill  
*On liberty*

(1) *to dissent from* : to disagree with.

(2) *to deprive*: to prevent somebody from having or doing something.

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°14

**Thème : Liberté d'expression**

**Question : Why do we need freedom of speech ?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

**Text :**

The traditional defence of free speech in our culture, I think, is much too feeble. It comes from John Stuart Mill and it is essentially a utilitarian defence: that we're all better off and happier if there's freedom of speech. I think that's much too feeble. I think it's a basic human right and it's a basic human right precisely because we are speech act performing animals; it's like a right to move your body around. And so the question, "Why should we have free speech?" is not answered by saying, "Well, society is better off if we have free speech than if we don't have free speech." Because that means, in a situation where society isn't better off, it looks like we'd be justified in restricting free speech. I think, in fact, the justification for free speech has to do with us – and I should write something about this; I never have – but it has to do with us as speech act performing animals. It seems to me, it's a basic feature of us as biological human beings, as beasts of a certain kind, that we've got this capacity to talk. And I think a restriction of that is like a restriction of any other human capacity: it's a violation of a basic right.

John Searle  
*Philosophy now*  
2015

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Académies de Paris-Créteil-Versailles

Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°15

**Thème : politique, justice, morale.**

**Question : Is man by nature a political animal?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

From these things therefore it is clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and that man is by nature a political animal, and a man that is by nature and not merely by fortune citiless is either low in the scale of humanity or above it (like the “clanless, lawless, hearthless” man reviled by Homer, for one by nature unsocial is also ‘a lover of war’) inasmuch as he is solitary, like an isolated piece at draughts. And why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech. The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is painful and pleasant and to indicate those sensations to one another, but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state.

**ARISTOTLE (IVth c. B.C), *Politics*, I**



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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°16

**Thème : Pouvoir, liberté, subjectivité.**

**Question : Is there a way to fight the power?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

We are used to thinking of power as what presses on the subject from the outside, as what subordinates, sets underneath, and relegates to a lower order. This is surely a fair description of part of what power does. But if, following Foucault, we understand power as forming the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are. The customary model for understanding this process goes as follows: power imposes itself on us, and, weakened by its force, we come to internalize or accept its terms. What such an account fails to note, however, is that the "we" who accept such terms are fundamentally dependent on those terms for "our" existence. Are there not discursive conditions for the articulation of any "we"? Subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency.

**BUTLER Judith, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 1997**

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°17

**Thème : Identité, intérêt, morale.**

**Question : Is interest the only social tie?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

These are all, I believe, compelling practical reasons for the United Kingdom to stick together. But, pounds and pence, institutional questions – that’s not really what it’s about for me. [...] This is a country that stands for something. And this, really, is why I’m standing here today: our shared values. Freedom. Solidarity. Compassion. Not just overseas, but at home. [...]

So there is a moral, economic, geopolitical, diplomatic and yes – let’s say it proudly – emotional case for keeping the United Kingdom together. But still, however strongly we feel, we can be a reticent nation. It can seem vulgar to fly the flag. Some people have advised me to stay out of this issue, and don’t get too sentimental about the UK. But frankly, I care too much to stay out of it. This is personal.

I have an old copy of *Our Island Story*, my favourite book as a child, and I want to give it to my 3 children, and I want to be able to teach my youngest, when she’s old enough to understand, that she is part of this great, world-beating story.

**CAMERON David, *The importance of Scotland to the UK: David Cameron’s speech*, 2014**

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°18

**Thème : Politique, pouvoir.**

**Question : Is violence the most effective way to control people?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

This was how monarchical power operated. [...] A great expenditure of violence is made which ultimately only had the force of an example. It even becomes necessary to multiply violence, but precisely by doing so one multiplies revolts...

[...]

In contrast to that you have the system of surveillance, which on the contrary involves very little expense. There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost. When Bentham realizes what he has discovered, he calls it the Columbus's egg of political thought, a formula exactly the opposite of monarchical power. It is indeed the case that the gaze has had great importance among the techniques of power developed in the modern era, but, as I have said, it is far from being the only or even the principal system employed.

**FOUCAULT Michel, *Michel Foucault: Power /Knowledge. Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977 (1980)***

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°19

**Thème : politique, justice, Etat**

**Question : Can men live without any law?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. [...] For as the nature of foul weather<sup>1</sup> lies not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war consists not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is peace.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. [...]

The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions till they know a law that forbids them; which till laws be made they cannot know, nor can any law be made till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.

**HOBBS Thomas, *Leviathan* (1651)**

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<sup>1</sup> Bad weather

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°20

**Thème : Loi, injustice, désobéissance.**

**Question : Could it be legitimate to disobey?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

When men submit to the authority of others, it is to procure themselves some security against the wickedness and injustice of men, who are perpetually carried, by their unruly passions, and by their present and immediate interest, to the violation of all the laws of society. But as this imperfection is inherent in human nature, we know that it must attend men in all their states and conditions; and that those, whom we choose for rulers, do not immediately become of a superior nature to the rest of mankind, upon account of their superior power and authority. What we expect from them depends not on a change of their nature but of their situation, when they acquire a more immediate interest in the preservation of order and the execution of justice. But besides that this interest is only more immediate in the execution of justice among their subjects; besides this, I say, we may often expect, from the irregularity of human nature, that they will neglect even this immediate interest, and be transported by their passions into all the excesses of cruelty and ambition. Our general knowledge of human nature, our observation of the past history of mankind, our experience of present times; all these causes must induce us to open the door to exceptions, and must make us conclude, that we may resist the more violent effects of supreme power, without any crime or injustice.

**HUME David, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739)**

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°21

**Thème : liberté et éducation**

**Question : Is it in the government's interest to educate and inform the people?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government, or information to the people. This last is the most certain, and the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty. After all, it is my principle that the will of the majority should prevail.

**JEFFERSON Thomas to James Madison, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1787.**

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°22

**Thème : justice, travail**

**Question : What gives me the right to say something is mine?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a “property” in his own “person.” This nobody has any right to but himself. The “labour<sup>1</sup>” of his body and the “work” of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature has provided and left it in, he has mixed his labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it has by this labour something annexed to it that excludes the common right of other men. For this “labour” being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others.

**LOCKE John, *Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*  
(1689)**

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<sup>1</sup>« Labour » = labor

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Sujet n°23

**Thème : Justice, discrimination**

**Question : How can I belong to a society that excludes me?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Most people are totally unaware of the darkness of the cave in which the Negro is forced to live. A few individuals can break out, but the vast majority remain its prisoners. Our cities have constructed elaborate expressways and elevated skyways, and white Americans speed from suburb to inner city through vast pockets of black deprivation without ever getting a glimpse of the suffering and misery in their midst. But while so many white Americans are unaware of conditions inside the ghetto, there are very few ghetto dwellers who are unaware of the life outside. Their television sets bombard them day by day with the opulence of the larger society. [...] They realize that it is hard, raw discrimination that shuts them out. It is not only poverty that torments the Negro; it is the fact of poverty amid plenty. It is a misery generated by the gulf between the affluence he sees in the mass media and the deprivation he experiences in his everyday life.

**Martin LUTHER KING, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967)**



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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°24

**Thème : Loi et liberté.**

**Question : What gives the State the right to mind my own business?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. To justify that, the conduct from which it is desired to deter him, must be calculated to produce evil to someone else. The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

**MILL John Stuart, *On Liberty* (1869)**

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Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n°25

**Thème : Etat, justice, liberté.**

**Question : Can I oppose my rights to the state?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights). So strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do. How much room do individual rights leave for the state? The nature of the state, its legitimate functions and its justifications, if any, is the central concern of this book [...]

Our main conclusions about the state are that a minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contracts, and so on, is justified; that any more extensive state will violate persons' rights not to be forced to do certain things, and is unjustified; and that the minimal state is inspiring as well as right. Two noteworthy implications are that the state may not use its coercive apparatus for the purpose of getting some citizens to aid others, or in order to prohibit activities to people for their *own* good or protection.

**NOZICK Robert, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974)**

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Sujet n°26

**Thème : justice, société.**

**Question : Can we live together without common values?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

Let us assume, to fix ideas, that a society is a more or less self-sufficient association of persons who in their relations to one another recognize certain rules of conduct as binding and who for the most part act in accordance with them. Suppose further that these rules specify a system of cooperation designed to advance the good of those taking part in it. Then, although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict of interest as well as by an identity of interests. There is an identity of interests since social cooperation makes possible a better life than any would have if each were to live solely by his own efforts. There is a conflict of interests since persons are not indifferent as to how the greater benefits produced by their collaboration are distributed, for in order to pursue their ends they each prefer a larger to a lesser share. A set of principles is required for choosing among the various social arrangements which determine this division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive share. These principles are the principles of social justice: they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation.

**RAWLS John, *A Theory of Justice* (1971)**

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Sujet n°27

**Thème : Liberté d'expression et violence**

**Question : Is mockery a violence like any other ?**

*Pour répondre à cette question, vous proposerez une réflexion personnelle et construite appuyée sur une lecture précise du texte ci-dessous et sur votre culture philosophique.*

This universal capacity to use mockery as a form of social control is one of the main things that makes us human. Crucially, it's also in defiance of the primary need of the powerful to be taken seriously, often against all the external evidence of their innate absurdity.

In fact I suspect that throughout history that's how political and religious power gained its original heft, by terrorizing everyone else to suppress their giggles at the endless cavalcade of priest-kings, emperors, thrones, courts, burning bushes, virgin births, hidden imams, flying horses and all the rest of it.

But even then there appears to be something exquisitely intolerable to the serious mind about mockery when it is visual. Largely this is due to the way the visual is consumed: rather than nibbling your way through text, however incendiary, a cartoon floods the eyes and gets swallowed whole – and often makes the recipient choke. Worse, cartoons should be seen more as a kind of sympathetic magic than anything else: we steal our subjects' souls by recreating them through caricature and then mock them in narratives of our own devising. Worst of all, we then pretend that it's all just a good-natured laugh: it is a laugh, but it's also assassination without the blood.

**ROWSON Martin, "Charlie Hebdo: We must not stop laughing at these murderous clowns. Mockery is hated by the powerful and despotic – which is why it must continue."**

**In: *The Guardian*, January 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, [consulté le 11.01.2015],  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/08/charlie-hebdo-martin-rowson>**