

Dear sir or madam essay example

[Philosophy](#)



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[Client's Name]

[Client's Professor]

[Client's Subject]

2. One day you receive the following letter:

I am in the process of putting together a must-read list of great philosophers. Some of the works that have been recommended to me are Plato's Phaedo, Descartes' Meditations, Berkeley's Three Dialogues, Kant's Prolegomena, and Schlick's "Positivism and Realism." I understand that you have recently studied these works in depth, and I would value your opinion. Please choose one of these works and tell me whether you think its philosophical content justifies putting it on my list. Explain five reasons why it should or shouldn't be on my list, discussing particular details of the text. Here are some questions you might consider. Was it an important philosophical work? Was the view it put forward particularly interesting or distinctive, and in what ways? Were its arguments compelling in their details? Why or why not? What is its relation to other philosophical works you have read? What personal impact did it have on you? Would you recommend it to other people interested in exploring philosophy? Why or why not? I would especially appreciate if you could explain what particular aspects of the work are the basis for your assessment. (Please focus on philosophical content and ignore difficulties you had with the philosopher's writing style or language. I already know that philosophical works aren't easy to read!) All information you can give me would be much appreciated!

Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely yours,

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Phil O. Sopher”

Write a letter to Phil in which you fully answer his questions.

Dear Phil,

I appreciate that you turned to me for help and I hope by the end of this letter, you will be able to get valuable insights for what you are working on. After reading your question, I would suggest that you make Descartes’ Meditations a priority in your list. Written in this letter are the reasons why I came to that conclusion.

Most people know Descartes for his statement ‘ Cogito ergo sum’ (I think therefore I am). But there is more to Descartes than just this famous line. In his work Meditations in particular, Descartes challenged the long-standing idea of skepticism. He did this by stating that there are some truths that simply cannot be doubted.

Also, he put forward the idea of mind-body dualism which explained that the mind and body do not completely rely on each other. His argument was stated in Meditation VI in which it was written, “ I have a clear and distinct idea of myself as a thinking, non-extended thing, and a clear and distinct idea of body as an extended and non-thinking thing. Whatever I can conceive clearly and distinctly, God can so create. So, Descartes argues, the mind, a thinking thing, can exist apart from its extended body. And therefore, the mind is a substance distinct from the body, a substance whose essence is thought.” The details by which Descartes explained his argument was compelling because it gives rise to ideas that are mind are not restricted to our bodies at all and therefore, we can do many more things with this freedom. Also, Descartes explained that the body is an extension of the mind, therefore what the mind can think about, the body can bring to life.

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This point is decidedly the favorite among many young people who studies Mediations.

Descartes went on to explain that our senses act a double edged sword. That is, as true as our senses do not deceive us all the time, we cannot also be sure that it is giving us the true perception of things at that given moment. He stated this in Meditations by saying, " But I cannot forget that, at other times I have been deceived in sleep by similar illusions; and, attentively considering those cases, I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep, that I feel greatly astonished; and in amazement I almost persuade myself that I am now dreaming." This view is particularly interesting because it teaches us not to trust in a wavering fact. Of course, this had prompted some people to label Descartes as an atheist as the quote is oddly in line with believers having blind faith.

However, philosophically speaking, he was a genius in his own right, even breaking down Aristotle's doctrines which taught that the senses deliver knowledge. Meditations in this way had prompted modern Western Philosophy. This is of course another reason why Meditations is the one out of the other choices given that students of Philosophy should study in depth. Descartes' Meditations impacted me in that he emphasized deductive reasoning while most philosophers practiced inductive reasoning. Also, Descartes discarded all belief until he was certain that he is able to prove it by having sufficient support and evidences. I was able to make use of his approach, for example, when I examined a business outline that a friend had presented to me. Just as Descartes would have approached the matter at hand, I first looked for the " soft spots" of the foundation of the business idea

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I was analyzing and then worked from there.

Needless to say, I would definitely recommend to anyone who wishes to explore philosophy simply because most of the philosophical questions that are still being debated and discussed in modern times are based on Meditations' framework.

Good luck on your paper!

Sincerely,

Brandon Krawitz

3. Explain Kant's views about the possibility and limits of synthetic a priori knowledge. In your essay, take account of the following questions. What is synthetic a priori knowledge? Why is Kant so concerned about how it is possible for us to have knowledge of this kind? What sorts of things, according to Kant, can we have synthetic a priori knowledge about? How can we have this knowledge? What are the limits of our synthetic a priori knowledge? How does Kant establish those limits? What are the consequences of his view for the projects of philosophers like Descartes and Plato?

Synthetic a priori knowledge is knowledge that comes from thought. When you break up the semantic in the phrase 'synthetic a priori', you get two terms - 'synthetic' and a 'a priori'. 'Synthetic' means not true by definition and 'a priori' means known by means other than sensory experiences.

Synthetic judgments can be regulated without developing a self-contradicting statement. A priori refers to judgments not being justified by sensory experiences at all. Kant establishes that a priori knowledge is possible by arguing the mind structures experiences (spatially, temporally, <https://assignbuster.com/dear-sir-or-madam-essay-example/>

and conceptually) and we can come to know things from this structure. By using the knowledge of synthetic a priori in the concept of geometry, Kant explained that space is nothing but a form of the faculty of intuition. This thought shows an example of how Kant believes we can have synthetic a priori because of what our minds contribute to our sensory experiences. Basically, what he is trying to say is that we can make judgments true from how our minds contribute to these judgments. For something to be a necessary truth, Kant claims we must know it a priori. He believes that our minds contribute to the 3D sensory experiences of space. He thinks that space is the structure from which our minds organize our sensory experiences which contribute to our synthetic a priori knowledge. Kant claims that much of what we perceive as real life and reality is shaped by our minds. Philosophers seek this kind of knowledge but Kant says certain requirements must exist to ensure the knowledge is obtainable.

There are certain things which we can have synthetic a priori about. Space is contributed from the structures of the mind. Every object a person can experience will be in space. Kant claims you cannot even make sense of how an object would exist non-spatially. He also adds that we can have prior knowledge of an object before we experience it and recognize that it is in space, but we understand that an object can only successfully have some property without a person experiencing it yet if the object comes from a person and not from the object itself. With this conclusion, we understand that space is nothing but the minds contribution to experience. Kant believes that since he can know in advance that an object must exist in space, it cannot be a quality that is derived from the object. Rather, it is the person who bring that quality - and in effect, the object itself - into being. He argues <https://assignbuster.com/dear-sir-or-madam-essay-example/>

the same argument for time with the same general conclusion.

An example of Kant's synthetic a priori can be seen in its usage in mathematics and geometry. This example is seen with the mathematical equation $5+7= 12$. Kant claimed that this particular equation is a priori because $5+7$ is the universal truth and no sensory experience is required to determine that $5+7= 12$. It is synthetic because he says that while we may understand the concepts of addition, we still must go through its process to achieve the answer that we need.

Now that we have discussed the example of synthetic a priori in mathematics and geometry, let us go into another example which is the statement of the soul as an immortal entity. The soul being immortal exemplifies synthetic a priori because first, there are no senses which directly convince us that the soul is immortal. It is formed without a self-contradicting statement which makes it a synthetic thought. Also, the absence of the self-contradicting statement causes the theory of soul immortality to fail. Another example is the way Kant focused on one of Descartes philosophical outlooks which states that something can't come from nothing.

The consequences of his view for the projects of philosophers like Descartes and Plato is that they all recognize sense as the main sense of experience, not thought. Both Plato and Descartes would say that true and reliable knowledge is innate. This makes them both rationalist philosophers, while Kant is an idealist. Both Plato and Descartes would reject the idea that the materialistic world is providing us with reliable knowledge. All three of them - Plato, Descartes and Kant - believe that our reliable knowledge comes from our capacity to reason. However, Kant's outlook is different in that he

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believes that everything needs to be justified by reason and that we determine things with our mind.

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