

# 1. What is Philosophy? Why Philosophy?

## 1.1 The wonder-ful universe

## 1.2 The scope and characteristics of Philosophy

## 1.3 Methods of Philosophy

## 1.4 Definitions and Value of Philosophy

### Preface



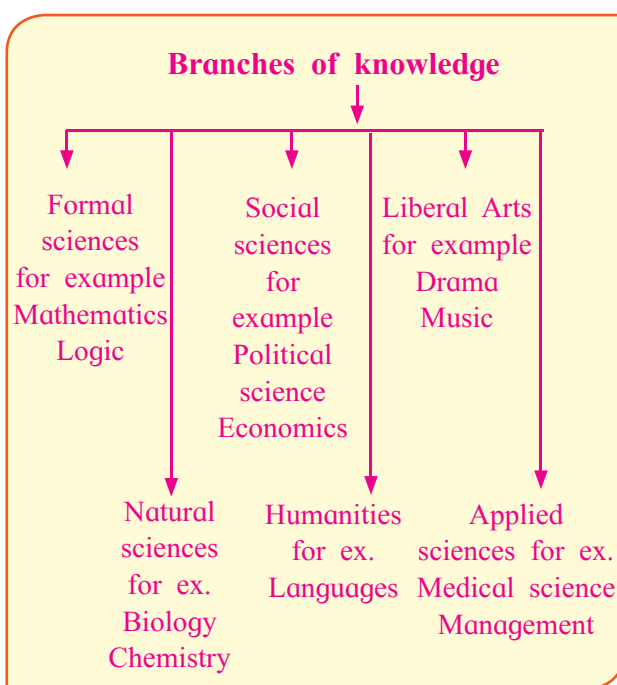
We have been introduced to various subjects at school so far but we have not yet been taught ‘Philosophy’. Nevertheless the word has often fallen on our ears. We criticize a person for sounding ‘philosophical’ when he/she addresses a topic in a grave, elaborate manner.

“I have a different philosophy of life. Keep yours to yourself,” one says. These remarks shape our notions, opinions on Philosophy. On such a basis we determine its value and whether it is worth being pursued. But one must be well acquainted with a subject before judging its significance and usefulness, don’t you think? In this chapter we shall acquaint ourselves a little with Philosophy.

Humans have felt a deep sense of wonder about the world around him for more than thousands of years, long before the contemporary branches of knowledge were founded.

### Branches of knowledge

Different study subjects are called as ‘branches of knowledge.’ Every branch of knowledge has its peculiar concepts, rules and theories. They can be classified as follows.



### Let's think!

Where would you place subject philosophy in this chart?

Human beings are involved in a constant struggle to know. In fact, every living being must acquire some knowledge of itself and its surroundings in order to survive. Man learnt a great many things

while striving to survive but his curiosity about the universe peculiarly surpassed the extent that was required to fulfill their basic needs.

Why do nightly stars disappear in daytime? Why do some beings walk, while some others crawl or fly? What does it mean to die? - Questions, questions, more questions! Humans continued to be perplexed by countless questions as they undertook the quest for answers. The prehistoric human was no different than a baby that has just learnt to utter its first fumbling words. His/her mind was brimming with such excited curiosity as can be seen in the gleaming eyes of a toddler. Thus emerged the enquiries about living and non-living beings: ‘What is

this?’ ‘Why is that so?’ ‘Why does it change?’ The development of intellectual, rational, linguistic abilities of human beings furthered with time.

### **The Responses to curiosity -**

1. Mythology
2. Religion
3. Philosophy
4. Science
5. Art

In various stages of this development humans came up with various kinds of answers. Some of them were rejected over the course of passing centuries, while some bear relevance still.

### **Do you know?**

Man’s inquisitive intelligence and his impressions of the world found vibrant expression in Mythology, Religious thinking, Philosophization, Sciences and the Art. These were the ways he used to try and understand his relationship with the universe, the Natural world and fellow human beings. Tales and stories flourished in every culture as they put to use brilliant creative imagination to unveil phenomena that could be witnessed but not easily explained.

Mythology is concerned with stories / fictional accounts that were prevalent in human societies a long long time ago. They are passed on through tales from generation to generation. These tales usually employ superhuman entities such as devata, asura, yaksha

to explain various phenomena that can be experienced and observed all around us. These tales also highlight certain ritualistic beliefs. e.g. it is an ancient belief that certain trees are abodes of deities. They must not be touched for human purposes and that one must first pray to the respective deity and obtain his/her consent in case one desperately needs to cut it.

Some tribal communities across the world follow such rituals to this date. Contemporary reading of the tales obviously prompts one to ask what must have caused them. Did they originate in a thought or a principle? Every society has its own mythology. Let’s take a quick look at two tales from two remarkably different parts of the world.

### Let's Read!

#### Thor's tale –

The tale of Thor, a warrior god, is widely known in northern European countries like Sweden, Norway, Denmark etc. (There also exists a superhit film based on this character.) Thor carries a hammer for a weapon the way Indra carries his vajra. The ancient tribes that inhabited this region two thousand years ago believed that Thor roams about in the skies in his chariot. The chariot is driven by two goats. The thunder we hear and lightning we see is the swinging of his hammer! In thunder we hear him roar! Thunder and lightning bolts announce the rains. And rains bring good harvests. So Thor was worshipped for fertility.

### Let's Read!

#### Indravrutra's tale

References in 'Rigveda' reveal that Indra was a very important deity in the ancient times. Indra was worshipped as the god of rains. Vrutra was Indra's chief enemy. Many sutras regarding feats of annihilation of Vrutra can be found in Rgveda. Tale of Indravrutra likens Vrutra to a monstrous giant and a dark cloud. Vrutra is a danava who obstructs the water channels and causes drought. Indra tears his belly apart and water comes out gushing.

### 1.1 The wonder-ful universe

Both the tales have been used to make sense of the rains, the lightning and

thunder. Both tales draw on the importance of water. It is probable that the ancient communities must have thought it necessary to worship a god of rains to ensure good harvests, abundance of drinking water and the resulting wellbeing of the people.

Although the stories originate in the material world, they simultaneously fabricate a fantastic, imaginary world. They popularized the beliefs that several supernatural forces control the happenings of the world, reward or punish humanity for its various deeds. Rites and rituals were devised in order to please or appease these forces.

### Let's talk!

Narrate and discuss mythological tales in class.

As humans went on to observe the world, they realized that things do not randomly occur. They are related to one another. They often have a fixed sequence. For example: in our type of climatic conditions; summer, monsoon and winter always arrive in the same order; water extinguishes fire but evaporates when heated. Thus they sensed that there is an order in the world. The what and how of existence of things is governed by certain laws. In the human world it is humans who lay out the laws. Philosophers assumed that there must be someone who lays out the laws, the system of the natural world too. Perhaps the universe has been created by someone. The power it took to create the universe must be tremendous, rather infinite. These postulations gradually led us to the idea of 'God'. Ideas concerning human beings

possible, fitting relationship to God laid the foundation of religious thinking. Intellect was equally engaged along with imagination in this discourse. Normally religious thinking put a lot of emphasis on faith. One was asked to have faith in the otherworldly, supernatural power and in persons who were said to possess knowledge of the nature of that power.

**Let's do!**

**Discuss the following and find suitable examples for each –**

- Work of imagination
- Work of intellect
- Superstition

All that humans sensed or understood about the world found expression in manifold ways. They also perceived beauty in worldly objects and events apart from their properties, co-relations. The beauty fascinated them and inspired them to create beauty in response. From this emerged music, dance, painting and several other art practices. Art offers us the opportunity to indulge in life without being occupied with utility or profitability. It delights both the creator and the appreciator. Creativity is essential for art.



**Stone age Cave painting from Bhimbetka**

The relationship between man and art and between various arts has been vividly discussed in Indian literary tradition since ancient times. Here is an example.

**Vishnudharmottar Purana** (Volume 3, Chapter 2)

A dialogue between king **Vajra** and **Markandeya Rushi** -

**King** : I would like to make sculpture.

**Rushi** : Only he who knows **chitra-sutra** (formulation of image) shall know **pratima-lakshana** (making of a sculpture).

**King** : Teach me **chitra-sutra**, o sage.

**Rushi** : That cannot be until you know **nrutta**.

**King** : Teach me **nrutta**, then.

**Rushi** : You can't be taught to dance until you are conversant with **atodya** (the ability to play a musical instrument).

**King** : Very well, teach me to play an instrument.

**Rushi** : For that you must learn **gayana** (vocal music).

**King** : Teach me to sing, o wise man.

**Rushi** : Music uses both **sanskrit** and **prakrit**. You must first learn the colloquial tongues.

**King** : Surely. Teach me language then.

**Rushi** : Not until you have learnt **vyakarana** (grammar).

The dialogue goes on to illustrate the interdependence and supplementary nature of all art forms.

Intellect is one of the faculties involved in the three aforementioned answers to questions arising out of man's curiosity about the world. But the answers provided by Philosophy and Science are entirely based on human intellect. That does not mean imagination is thrown out of the window here. Many thinkers used their imagination to find answers in the times when observation and experimentation were severely limited. But here imagination was regulated by intellect. Only the ideas that stood the test of Reason retained themselves in philosophical thinking. One realized that events taking place in this world aren't caused by otherworldly forces but by other events in this world itself.

One began to perceive cause and effect relations e.g. rivers flood not as a result of God's fury but as a result of excessive rainfall in some of their catchment areas. One began to recognize interesting facts such as the water in liquid state assumes the gaseous form when it evaporates and a solid form when it freezes. These initial considerations propelled philosophical thinking. The world is full of different things with different properties. Philosophers and thinkers realized that there is a similarity underlying apparent diversity. One began to contemplate that there might be something extra-sensory, imperceptible beyond the perceptible and sensory world. The quest for abstract principles began. The very early philosophers were eager to know the fundamental principle of the universe, the generative principle of the world. They pondered on the exact possible number of such principles and the nature of interplay that formed this

diversified world. Let's overview a list of fundamental principles of the universe declared by some of the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers –

<b>Philosopher</b>	<b>Fundamental principle</b>
Thales	Water
Anaximander	Apeiron (infinite)
Anaximenes	Air
Pythagoras	Number
Parmenides	Being
Heraclitus	Fire
Anaxagoras	Nous
Empedocles	4 elements - Fire, Air, Water, Earth

What is the relationship between these principles and the world as we experience it? World is always changing, but can there be something that does not change? Why do things change? How do changes occur? All these questions were deliberated and the resultant answers were called 'Philosophy'. Philosophy studies the experience of the world, its cognizance within the framework of Reason, the light it sheds on the overall meaning of human life and truths regarding how to live.

In a way, experience and reason are the two foundational pillars of science. The branches of science that we presently call Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Biology etc. came to exist in modern times. Modern science uses many instruments, equipments to investigate things that are beyond the grasp of our sensory abilities. These apparatuses highly augment our powers of perception. Such increased powers enable us to observe micro-organisms under a microscope, or to see distant objects through binoculars.



Experiments and observations carried out using these apparatuses are characteristic of the scientific method. Philosophy and Science ask similar questions but Philosophy relies only on ‘reason’ in looking for answers, whereas science supplements the reason with many material instruments and advanced technology. Philosophy paved the way for the questions and sciences followed in. That is why Philosophy is called the mother of all sciences.

### Let’s discover!

What are the new horizons of science?

## 1.2 The scope and characteristics of philosophy

With varying answers sciences branched out further and further. The state of man and the world started to become clearer. We do not know everything about the universe and its origins yet.

Scientific questions continue to interest philosophy but it mainly considers questions that fall out of the bounds of scientific enquiry. For instance, ‘knowledge’ becomes a subject of deliberation in philosophy. How do we know? How do we know that we know? What is knowledge, first of all? Is it merely information? Philosophy poses such questions regarding knowledge.

Science bears merely on facts. But values, norms, principles, ideas and concepts bear significance in philosophy. Facts describe ‘what is’, while values help us ascertain if it is right, ‘how should it be’. Science explains why we get to see the rainbow but when we say its

‘beautiful’, questions such as ‘what is beauty?’, ‘are there any conditions to beauty?’, ‘do arts create beauty?’ are not debated in science but in philosophy. Psychology explains ‘why do people lie?’ but philosophy ventures to find out if lying is good or bad, if it is right or wrong. In addition, philosophy also examines arguments that a person presents in order to support his views. In a wider perspective, philosophy studies four types of relationships. They are (1) Human and Nature relationship (2) Individual and Society relationship (3) One’s relationship with oneself. and (4) Human relationship with any being beyond the perceptible world if any. In a certain sense ‘human’ has a central place in philosophy. What is our potential as human being? What are our limitations? In what way can we realize our full potential and live a content and happy life? These questions are considered important in philosophy.

## 1.3 Methods of Philosophy

The scope of philosophy is very vast. But in a nutshell, philosophy poses three pivotal questions –

What is?

How do we know that which is?

How does that knowledge affect our life and behavior?

Philosophy digs deep and systematically into such questions. ‘Critical examination’ is the essence of philosophical method. To examine is to weigh and understand an opinion, a thought or an idea presented to us by posing multi-dimensional queries, without accepting it blindly. In order to examine democracy, for example, one must look

into its meaning, nature, types, history etc. Philosophy conducts such examination by analyzing concepts. Meaning, it studies various facets of the concept and their interrelations. The concept of Democracy involves ‘concept of government’ and ‘people’. So in order to understand the concept of democracy one must ask what exactly do ‘people’ comprise of? What is ‘government’? What is ‘State?’ One must study what, ‘government of the people’ actually means.

### Let's talk!

#### Group discussion on Democracy

The traditional purpose of philosophy has been to attain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. One must study it properly and consider various aspects of it. One must maintain a critical approach in the course of this study. Philosophy has used unique methods to attain this goal. Philosophy neither relies on faith, nor lets imagination run wild nor uses the empirical methods used by science as we saw. Intellect, especially the faculty of reason is the chief device employed by philosophy. Methods of philosophy guide us on the efficient use of this device.

### Method of Analysis

Philosophy has extensively employed the method of analyzing thoughts, ideas, concepts, theories, examples using logical reason since ancient times. To analyze is to identify various elements of a compound by segregating them, and to understand them. You must have learnt of the importance and analysis of chemical compounds in chemistry. However, unlike

empirical sciences philosophy does not require a laboratory set-up to use the analytical method, because it does not analyze material objects. It analyzes abstract concepts. The investigative set-up is already present in the brain. It won't be an exaggeration to say that our brain is a laboratory accessible to us 24x7. It keeps churning over information, thoughts, beliefs that we come across. We use analytical method when we consciously try to unearth roots and structure of all these things.

The word ‘man’ (a human being) does not have any constituent elements as such. But it points at a concept that is generally understood. The concept can be analyzed into other constituent concepts.

### Let's do!

Draw a concept-map.

e.g. 1. a concrete concept 2. an abstract concept 3. a human being

A human being is a bipedal, rational and social being. That is how this concept can be dissolved. It must have struck you that this is a definition of ‘man’. Ancient Greek thinker Socrates used this kind of analytical method in order to arrive at precise definitions of concepts.

A concept cannot be defined until we gain a clear understanding of it. Analytical method helps to bring about this clarity, refinement. It washes away the confusion, muddle of thought. Although this method often comes in handy, a trend of philosophical thinking called ‘analytical philosophy’ emerged in the twentieth century west. These philosophers proclaimed analysis to be the sole function of Philosophy.

## Method of Dialogue

All human beings are naturally endowed with intellectual faculty. But everyone's capabilities bear different limits. Everyone's intellect normally does not display equal efficiency in every field. Some of us excel in Mathematics, some excel in Languages. Some people's talents lay in the sports; some people's talents lay in the arts. The development of our intellect is also greatly affected by our socio-cultural environment. Evidently, one might not be able to conduct a holistic study of a particular subject. Collective thinking proves to be more fruitful in such a case because multiple dimensions

of a subject can be simultaneously studied. Also our thinking becomes more inclusive and well-balanced due to the awareness of diverse perspectives on a subject matter. Collective methods carry a greater weight for disciplines such as philosophy, which do not use empirical observation, experimentation and verification. In this way philosophization gets less influenced by personal judgments and prejudices.

Both Indian and Western philosophies profusely used the 'method of dialogue' in the ancient times. Ancient India had a tradition of obtaining knowledge by staying in the company of Guru (teacher).

### Do you know?



Socrates

Born in Athens (470 B.C.) with an ordinary familial background, Socrates is known today as 'the father of western philosophy'. In Greece, philosophical thinking existed even

before Socrates but he gave it a definitive turn. That is why he has come to be honored with this title.

Socrates did not possess a particularly charming personality but the cast of his genius and character were extremely radiant. Socrates was not interested in metaphysical questions. Enquiry into man's individual and social life-forms the core of his philosophy. His philosophization sought to discover truth and universal, eternal values so as to live in their light. He pursued this aim with dauntless diligence, paying no heed to material gains or losses.

Furthermore he calmly accepted death sentence in the wake of his search for truth. With torrents of questions, he carefully, critically examined the then popular notions regarding Virtue, Justice, Courage, Restraint etc. His manner of openly questioning people from all strata of the society offended many. He was accused with corrupting the youth and dismissing the state-sanctioned gods. Socrates therefore was imprisoned and sentenced to death by drinking poison.

Socrates resolutely faced his death without appealing the court for pardon, without making a bargain or trying to escape from prison even though it was in his power to do so. His maxim '**A life unexamined is not worth living**' is world renowned. He showed extreme integrity in his thought, speech and action. We shall remember him forever for his adherence to truth, love of wisdom and extraordinary moral fibre.



The chief medium for imparting knowledge in these times was dialogue amongst a teacher and his disciples (shishya). A teacher aided the disciples on the path of knowledge by answering their queries, questions, counter questions. ‘Upanishada’ are one of the most essential texts in Indian philosophy. In many upanishada philosophical thought is presented in the form of a dialogue. For example the dialogue between ‘Shwetaketu and Uddalaka’ from ‘**Chhandogya upanishada**’ or the one between ‘**Maitreyee and Yadnyavalkya**’ from ‘**Bruhadaranyaka upanishada**’. The buddhist text ‘Milindapahna’ (Milindaprashna) similarly wraps philosophy in dialogue. Bhagwadgeeta is also in the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

Socrates used the method of dialogue with remarkable effectiveness.

He asked various questions to the listener-participants on a range of topics – “What is virtue?” “What is Justice?” People confidently stepped forward to answer the seemingly simple questions. Socrates scrutinized their answers, pointed out the lacuna and prompted them to think further. At the end of this dialogue people realized their ignorance or intellectual inadequacies. They more or less moved from confusion to clarity. Plato, the disciple of Socrates also used the method of dialogue. He wrote his reflections down as dialogues instead of writing philosophical treatises or essays.

### Let's do!

Choose a topic for dialogue.  
Assume the roles of Guru-Shishya.  
Enact this dialogue in front of the class.

## Chhandogya Upanishada Khanda - 13

Uddalaka said to Shwetaketu.

1. ‘Place this salt in the water. In the morning come unto me.’

Shwetaketu did so.

Then Uddalaka said to him : ‘that salt you placed in the water last evening - please bring it hither.’

Then Shwetaketu grasped for it, but did not find it, as it was completely dissolved.

2. ‘Please take a sip of it from this end,’ said Uddalaka. ‘How is it?’

‘Salty.’

‘Take a sip from the middle,’ said Uddalaka.

‘How is it?’

‘Salty.’

‘Take a sip from that end,’ said Uddalaka.

‘How is it?’

‘Salty.’

‘Set it aside. Then come unto me.’

Shwetaketu did so, saying, ‘It is always the same.’

Then Uddalaka said to him: ‘Verily, indeed, my dear, you do not perceive Being here. Verily, indeed, it is here.

3. ‘That which is the finest essence - this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality. That is Atma (Soul).

That art thou, Shwetaketu.’ said Uddalaka

## Method of Debate

Along with dialogue, ancient Indian tradition also used the ‘method of debate’ **Vada**.

A ‘vada’ is not a verbal fight! It was an important, well-recognized truth-finding method used in ancient Indian philosophies. ‘Vadasabhas’ were organized (sort of a symposium) in order to conduct the discussion with the aid of this method. Two parties used to debate from opposing views on a subject matter.

A topic was selected to begin with. Then the ‘vadi’ (the party that chose to put forth his views first) presented his ‘paksha’ (his views). Then the ‘prativadi’ (the opposing party) challenged the vadi’s views by presenting counter-arguments and later put forth his own views. The vadi and the prativadi examined each other’s argument with a critical disposition. Even the spectators could participate by asking questions as ‘prashnika’. ‘Sabhapati’, or the chairperson of the symposium moderated the activities of the entire session. The paksha that succeeded in making a stronger appeal to reason was finally declared a winner.

This description might apparently sound like the debate competitions of today but that was not the case. The purpose of vadasabha was to discover the truth of a given matter by means of deliberation. Both the parties openly

conceded if they agreed with each other’s views. Agreement wasn’t considered a sign of defeat. Faulty arguments, unverified information if pointed out, were promptly withdrawn. Additionally, both parties were allowed to reappear in the vadasabha with better preparations.

**वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः।**

If opposing views are discussed open mindedly both the parties come to have an understanding of the principle. (Rambha-Shuka Samvad)

**Let’s talk!**

What kind of debate competitions your school had organized? On what topic would you like to talk in any debate competition?

Ancient Indian tradition acknowledged the fact that open-mindedness and an atmosphere of freedom are indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge. But some people participated in debates with a competitive ambition. They were more interested in winning against their opponents. Such competitive debates were called ‘jalpa’. Some others preferred to argue for its own sake. They enjoyed retorting to their opponents’ arguments without presenting their own. This kind of debate was called ‘vitanda’. But search for truth remained the central focus of a genuine ‘vada’.

**Let’s watch!**

Watch the debates on different news channels on the TV.

Categorize the debates into vada, jalpa or vitanda.

## Socrates Crito Dialogue

### Background:

Socrates was kept in a prison till the implementation of the death sentence given to him. Socrates's friend and disciple Crito, came to meet him in the prison the night before the day of implementation of the death penalty. He had planned a way to escape for socrates. What follows is a small part of the dialogue that took place between them at that time Crito expressed his opinion that the people who knew both Socrates and Crito, would speak ill of Crito if they would come to know that Crito did not help Socrates to escape from the prison, though it was possible for him to do so. Socrates, however, is of the opinion that, just as for physical fitness we consult a doctor or trainer, in the same manner as for as question of justice/injustice are concerned, we must consider only the expert's opinion and not the opinion of any tom, dick and harry.

**Socr.** You are right. And, Crito, to be brief, is it not the same in everything? In questions of justice and injustice and of the base and the honorable and of good and evil, which we are now examining, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and fear that, or the opinion of the one man who understands these matters (if we can find him), and feel more shame and fear before him than before all other men? For if we do not follow him, we shall corrupt and maim that part of us

which, we used to say, is improved by justice and disabled by injustice. Or is this not so?

**Crito.** No, Socrates, I agree with you.

**Socr.** Now, if, by listening to the opinions of those who do not understand, we disable that part of us which is improved by health and corrupted by disease, is our life worth living when it is corrupt? It is the body, is it not?

**Crito.** Yes.

**Socr.** Is life worth living with the body corrupted and crippled?

**Crito.** No, certainly not.

**Socr.** Then is life worth living when that part of us which is maimed by injustice and benefited by justice is corrupt? Or do we consider that part of us, whatever it is, which has to do with justice and injustice to be of less consequence than our body?

**Crito.** No, certainly not.

**Socr.** But more valuable?

**Crito.** Yes, much more so.

**Socr.** Then, my good friend, we must not think so much of what the many will say of us; we must think of what the one man who understands justice and injustice, and of what truth herself will say of us. And so you are mistaken, to begin with, when you invite us to regard the opinion of the multitude concerning the just and the honorable and the good, and their opposites.

## Khandana-Mandana

‘Khandana-mandana’ is one more method that reflects the ancient Indian tradition of treating antithetical views with respect. This method, used in the writing of texts, first systematically introduced the opinion of those who opposed the opinion of the author. This was called purvapaksha. The refutation of this paksha using proper argumentation was called ‘khandana’. Then in ‘uttarapaksha’ the views of the author

were put forth and supported with arguments. The ensuing conclusion was known as ‘siddhanta’.

The invention of a third, more fair, developed outlook from the collision of two contradictory outlooks was also used in Western tradition and was known as ‘dialectical method’.

There aren’t definitive, final answers to questions studied under Philosophy unlike Mathematics or sciences.

Purvapaksha → Khandan → Uttarapaksha → Siddhanta

### Do you know?



Rene Descartes

#### Method of Doubt:

Rene Descartes, a French philosopher, utilized the ‘method of doubt’ in modern western philosophy. We eye ‘doubt’ with negativity. Indulging in doubt is considered rude. One must however understand that in philosophy ‘doubt’ doesn’t bear a negative connotation. It is not a person that is doubted in a philosophical exchange. Instead, everything presented as knowledge and the supportive arguments are doubted. Descartes’ times were influenced by a trend in philosophy called ‘skepticism’. The skeptics used to vehemently reject the possibility of knowledge that is irrefutably held true at all times in all places. Being a student of Mathematics, Geometry and Science, Descartes was certain that such knowledge is possible. He set out to prove this possibility by using the method

of doubt. Descartes tried to find out if there is a truth that simply cannot be doubted. Questioning, one after the other, all truths he had hitherto experienced or learnt, he realized that all these can be disputed, why, even the existence of the world can be doubted and disputed. But by the end of this process he arrived at one truth that lay beyond doubt “I think, therefore I am.” – “Cogito, ergo sum” (Latin). Descartes indicated that everything can be doubted except the existence of the doubter. The act of doubting presupposes the existence of someone who doubts. He discovered many such truths and tried to fortify the foundations of knowledge.

History of Philosophy is indebted to the doubt incited by skeptics in so far that the doubtful, questioning attitude encourages us to be critical in our thinking. Blind belief in an experience, opinion, thought can deceive us. Occasional doubting is a healthy practice in the process of gathering knowledge.



Philosophical questions might have varying answers and none of them is rejected without enough research. Every answer is systematically examined, compared with the other possible answers. This process is endless.

### Let's talk!

Which methods do you use in order to find answers to different questions that you have?

Do you get answers to all your questions?

Do you verify whether the answers that you find are true or false?

Do you get satisfied with the answers that you get?

The questions change with changing times and circumstances, so do the answers. Thus, one cannot presume answers obtained by him/her to be the most perfect or final. Such rigid presumption would hinder the progress of Philosophy.

### Let's discuss!

What does it matter if Philosophy gets hindered, you might ask. Sciences now reveal the secrets of the universe for us. Technology makes life comfortable. Why do we need Philosophy?

## 1.4 Definitions and value of philosophy

If we would briefly see the prevalent definitions of philosophy, we will quickly understand the answer to the question “why do we need philosophy”? In the history of Indian philosophical tradition the word ‘Tattvajnana’ / ‘Tattvadnyana’ was used as a substitute to the word

‘philosophy’ in the period of British India. The meaning of the term ‘Tattvajnana’ is ‘jnana’ (knowledge) of ‘Tattva’ (principle). Tattva is a very broad term. In a sense, it is the fundamental, abstract principle underlying all existence. The intellect grasps it but the senses fail to experience it. All things of the same kind have a uniform ‘essence’ to them. For example, trees come in different shapes and qualities. Yet all trees are commonly called a ‘tree’ due to the constant essence of ‘tree-ness’ that they all share.

### Let's do it!

Create a concept-drawing on ‘essence’.

Philosophy explores the whether there are abstract principles that lie beyond the material world. The various systems of Indian philosophical tradition are individually called a ‘darshana’. The word ‘darshana’ signifies an all-inclusive understanding of all aspects of life. Many darshana originated in this tradition.

The English word ‘Philosophy’ derives from the Greek words ‘philo’, meaning ‘love’ and ‘sophia’, meaning ‘wisdom’. Philosophy means the ‘love of wisdom’. ‘Wisdom’ isn’t synonymous with ‘Intelligence’. Intelligence/intellect is a means to attain knowledge. Wisdom doesn’t mean ‘Knowledge’ either. An intelligent or knowledgeable person isn’t necessarily ‘wise’. It takes a lot of intelligence and know-how to design deadly weapons. But such an act cannot be said to be wise. Wisdom concerns our actions, our conduct. Wisdom consists of awareness of a situation, awareness of morality. Philosophers aspire to be wise. Which wise person would say that wisdom

isn't necessary for the welfare and flourishing of an individual, family, society and the entire world? The above mentioned definition is an etymological definition of Philosophy – it traces the roots of the word. There are many other definitions besides.

### Let's write!

Definitions of philosophy offered by some philosophers are given below. Find out and write definitions given by other philosophers.

1. Philosophy is a child of wonder. - Plato
2. The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point however is to change it. - Karl Marx
3. Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a body of doctrines but on activity. - Ludwig Wittgenstein
4. Philosophy keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect. - Bertrand Russell

Philosophy is a discipline that undertakes an all-encompassing study of life and world. It isn't averse to any arena of life. A specific branch of science normally restricts itself to a specific aspect of the world. Social sciences study society. Bio-sciences study living beings and physical-sciences study matter. Philosophy desires to unravel everything that is. Philosophy also questions presuppositions of science. Philosophical search is carried out by critically using the intellectual faculties. Even the most advanced sciences presuppose the verity of certain statements – they do not doubt

or question those. A statement or a hypothesis acts as the foundation of an edifice. The edifice stands on it. The building may appear sturdy and magnificent but it can come crashing down if the foundations are weak. So, philosophy finds it imperative to examine the postulates of science.

Philosophy might seem puzzling at the first glance, but all of us possess the faculties it requires. We are intelligent beings equipped with advanced thinking capacity. All of us are curious about things and happenings that surround us. All of us are faced with questions, like, what is the purpose of life? What is happiness? How can we be happy? We try to find the answers in our own ways, and to verify them. Questioning is as important as answering for how will answers come if we do not question? The study of philosophy trains and directs our innate ability to question. It elucidates our questions to us and indicates the possible answers. We tend not to accept a thought or a principle senselessly due to the stress philosophy gives on critical reasoning. We tend not to get misled. Philosophy teaches us to have informed opinions and to regard other people's opinions with respect. Intellectual sloth and intellectual arrogance are dangerous, philosophy empowers us to avoid them both. Ultimately all this affects our individual and social life. Philosophy makes us aware of our relationship with Nature, world, and ourselves. It guides us about how should this relationship be.

Philosophy helps us immensely in our effort to lead a good life.

So, let's study Philosophy further!

- Indra - इंद्र
- Vrutra - वृत्त
- Vajra - वज्र
- Vishnudharmottara - विष्णुधर्मोत्तर
- Purana - पुराण
- Markandeya - मार्कण्डेय
- Rushi - ऋषी
- Chitra-sutra - चित्र-सूत्र
- Pratima-Lakshan - प्रतिमा-लक्षण
- Nrutta - नृत्त
- Atodya - आतोद्य
- Gayan - गायन
- Sanskruta - संस्कृत
- Prakruta - प्राकृत
- Vyakarana - व्याकरण
- Shishya - शिष्य
- Upanishada - उपनिषद्
- Aaruni - आरुणि
- Uddalak - उद्दालक
- Shwetaketu - श्वेतकेतू
- Chhandogya - छांदोग्य
- Maitreyee - मैत्रेयी
- Yadnyavalkya - याज्ञवल्क्य
- Bruhadaranyaka - बृहदारण्यक
- Milindpanha - मिलिंदपन्ह
- Bhagwadgeeta - भगवद्गीता
- Krushna - कृष्ण
- Arjuna - अर्जुन
- Danava - दानव
- Devata - देवता
- Asura - असुर
- Yaksha - यक्ष
- Rugveda - ऋग्वेद
- Khanda - खंड
- Atma - आत्मा
- Vaada - वाद
- Vaadasabha - वादसभा
- Vaadee - वादी
- Paksha - पक्ष
- Prashnik - प्राश्निक
- Sabhapatee - सभापती
- Guru - गुरु
- Jalpa - जल्प
- Vitanda - वितंड
- Khandana-Mandan - खंडन-मंडन
- Purva Paksha - पूर्वपक्ष
- Siddhanta - सिद्धान्त
- Tattvajnana - तत्त्वज्ञान

### EXERCISE

#### Q.1 Fill in the blanks choosing the correct option from the bracket.

- (a) ..... is the fundamental principle according to Thales.  
(air, water, number)
- (b) ..... and ..... are foundational to the sciences.  
(experience, tales, intellect, faith)
- (c) ..... method was used in both Indian and Western philosophies.  
(khandana-mandana, dialogue, analysis)
- (d) ..... is the fundamental

principle according to Anaximenes.  
(apeiron, atom, air)

- (e) Objects of the same kind have a common .....  
(particularity, principle, essence)
- (f) A competitive debate is called .....  
(vada, jalpa, vitanda).

#### Q.2 Take the odd word out.

- (a) dialogue, debate, analysis, evaluation
- (b) air, water, mountain, fire
- (c) shishya, vadi, prashnika, prativadi

**Q.3 Write the terminological words from philosophy to describe the following.**

- (a) Refutation of the opponents' argument without offering one's own argument
- (b) The method of developing a third outlook out of the collision of two contradictory outlooks
- (c) The method that analyzes concepts
- (d) That which contains moral awareness along with intelligence and knowledge

**Q.4 Distinguish between.**

- (a) Philosophy and sciences
- (b) Vada and jalpa

**Q.5 Complete the concept chart.**

- (a) Process of khandana-mandana



- (b) [ ] ← Types of vada → [ ]



- (c) [ ]  
↑  
[ ] ← components of method of vada → [ ]  
↓  
[ ]

**Q.6 Write a short note on the following.**

- (a) Characteristics of Philosophy
- (b) Method of analysis
- (c) Method of dialogue

**Q.7 Write the answers in 20-25 words.**

- (a) What is Philosophy?
- (b) What is dialectical method?

- (c) What is essence?
- (d) What does wisdom consist of ?
- (e) What does religion ask us to have faith in?
- (f) What are the characteristics of art?
- (g) How does man's curiosity express itself?

**Q.8 Explain the following statements with examples.**

- (a) Science uses various equipments for the purpose of acquiring knowledge.
- (b) Critical attitude is the core of philosophization.

**Q.9 Write long answers.**

- (a) Describe the nature of philosophy using its various definitions.
- (b) What are the different methods of philosophy? Describe any two at length.
- (c) Try to explain any one of these concepts using the method of analysis - friendship/religion/society/beauty/faith.

**Q.10 Write a dialogue on following philosophical themes.**

- (a) Faith and superstition
- (b) Justice
- (c) Virtue

**Activity**

Perform a play based on a teacher student dialogue on Teacher's day in your school/college.

Introduce dialogue as a method of philosophy to your student friends on this occasion.

