

# Foundations of Existentialist Philosophy

Philosophy · Answer Key · 25 Questions

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**1. Which French philosopher is famously associated with the statement 'Existence precedes essence'?**

- A) Jean-Paul Sartre**
- B) Albert Camus
- C) Friedrich Nietzsche
- D) Søren Kierkegaard

**2. Søren Kierkegaard, often cited as the 'father of existentialism', was from which country?**

- A) Germany
- B) Denmark**
- C) France
- D) Norway

**3. In Albert Camus's essay 'The Myth of Sisyphus', what activity does the main character perform for eternity?**

- A) Pushing a rock up a hill**
- B) Writing a book
- C) Walking through a maze
- D) Counting stars

**4. Which concept describes the existentialist view that humans are entirely responsible for their actions without a pre-written moral code?**

- A) Determinism
- B) Radical freedom**
- C) Fatalism
- D) Utilitarianism

**5. Friedrich Nietzsche used which famous phrase to describe the decline of traditional religious authority in modern society?**

- A) God is dead**
- B) Life is a dream
- C) Nature is cruel
- D) History is circular

**6. Simone de Beauvoir authored which influential 1949 work on the status of women, central to existentialist feminism?**

- A) The Second Sex**
- B) Being and Nothingness
- C) The Stranger
- D) Fear and Trembling

**7. Existentialism gained significant popularity as a formal intellectual movement in which decade?**

- A) 1850s
- B) 1910s
- C) 1940s**
- D) 1980s

**8. Which term refers to the feeling of dread or anxiety experienced when an individual realizes their absolute freedom of choice?**

- A) Angst**
- B) Euphoria
- C) Apathy
- D) Nihilism

**9. Martin Heidegger was a prominent German philosopher whose major work is titled:**

- A) Being and Time**
- B) The Rebel
- C) Beyond Good and Evil
- D) The Plague

**10. Existentialism is often contrasted with which philosophical framework that suggests all events are determined by past causes?**

- A) Determinism**
- B) Rationalism
- C) Humanism
- D) Empiricism

**11. Which of these works was written by Albert Camus?**

- A) The Stranger**
- B) Thus Spoke Zarathustra
- C) Either/Or
- D) Nausea

**12. According to existentialist thought, what provides meaning to an individual's life?**

- A) Biological fate
- B) Divine intervention
- C) The individual's own choices**
- D) Cultural tradition

**13. Which 19th-century philosopher focused heavily on the importance of 'subjective truth' and individual faith?**

- A) Søren Kierkegaard**
- B) Jean-Paul Sartre
- C) Karl Jaspers
- D) Gabriel Marcel

**14. Jean-Paul Sartre declined which prestigious international award in 1964?**

- A) Nobel Prize in Literature**
- B) Pulitzer Prize
- C) The Fields Medal
- D) The Booker Prize

**15. The term 'Bad Faith' (mauvaise foi) in Sartre's work refers to:**

- A) Deceiving oneself into believing one is not free**
- B) Lying to others
- C) Rejecting science
- D) Following societal laws

**16. What is the primary focus of existentialist ethics?**

- A) Maximizing utility
- B) Individual responsibility**
- C) Absolute obedience to the state
- D) Adhering to traditional religious dogmas

**17. Which city is historically considered the epicenter of the post-WWII existentialist intellectual scene?**

- A) Paris**
- B) Berlin
- C) Vienna
- D) London

**18. Nihilism, often associated with existentialism, is the philosophical belief that:**

**A) Life is inherently meaningless**

B) All humans are inherently good

C) Government is unnecessary

D) Art is the highest form of truth

**19. In 'The Stranger', who is the protagonist who exhibits profound detachment?**

**A) Meursault**

B) Roquentin

C) Zarathustra

D) Ivan Karamazov

**20. Which existentialist thinker was also a major contributor to the development of phenomenology?**

**A) Edmund Husserl**

B) John Locke

C) David Hume

D) Thomas Hobbes

**21. Existentialists believe that because there is no 'essence' defined by God or nature, humans are:**

A) Definitionally 'blank slates'

B) Predestined to fail

**C) Existing prior to having a defined purpose**

D) Biological robots

**22. Which of these is a central theme in many existentialist literary works?**

**A) The search for personal authenticity**

B) The quest for absolute scientific truth

C) The necessity of strict social hierarchy

D) The mathematical proof of the universe

**23. Karl Jaspers introduced the concept of 'Grenzsituationen' (limit situations), which refers to:**

**A) Moments of ultimate crisis that force self-awareness**

B) The physical limits of the universe

C) The boundary of human knowledge in science

D) The border between two countries

**24. Which existentialist writer was famously associated with the 'Café de Flore' in Paris?**

**A) Jean-Paul Sartre**

B) Friedrich Nietzsche

C) Søren Kierkegaard

D) Martin Heidegger

**25. The existentialist emphasis on 'the individual' is primarily a reaction against:**

**A) Systems that treat humans as mere objects or groups**

B) The study of ancient history

C) The lack of interest in mathematics

D) The over-reliance on artistic expression