

Foundations of Existentialist Philosophy

Philosophy · Practice Test · 25 Questions

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