

Landmarks in Philosophical Thought

Philosophy · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Who is credited with the first systematic formulation of the theory of Forms, a cornerstone of early metaphysics and epistemology?

- A) Aristotle
- B) Socrates
- C) Plato**
- D) Pythagoras

2. Which ancient Greek philosopher is widely regarded as the first to systematically investigate the principles of logic and argumentation, laying the groundwork for formal reasoning?

- A) Parmenides
- B) Heraclitus
- C) Zeno of Elea
- D) Aristotle**

3. The concept of 'Cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am') is famously attributed to René Descartes. What innovation in philosophical methodology did this statement represent?

- A) Empirical observation as the sole source of knowledge.
- B) Radical doubt to establish certainty.**
- C) The primacy of sensory experience.
- D) Dialectical reasoning as the path to truth.

4. Who is considered the first philosopher to explicitly develop a comprehensive system of transcendental idealism, arguing that our experience of reality is shaped by the mind's inherent structures?

- A) G.W.F. Hegel
- B) Arthur Schopenhauer
- C) Immanuel Kant**
- D) Friedrich Nietzsche

5. Which philosopher's work, particularly 'Leviathan,' is often cited as the first major attempt to establish a comprehensive theory of political philosophy based on a secular, materialistic worldview and the concept of a social contract?

- A) John Locke
- B) Thomas Hobbes**
- C) Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- D) Niccolò Machiavelli

6. The development of the 'principle of utility' as the foundation for ethics is most famously associated with which Enlightenment thinker, marking a significant shift towards consequentialist moral theories?

- A) David Hume
- B) Adam Smith
- C) Jeremy Bentham**
- D) John Stuart Mill

7. Who is credited with the first articulation of the concept of 'existential angst' in his philosophical writings, predating later existentialist thinkers?

- A) Søren Kierkegaard**
- B) Friedrich Nietzsche
- C) Martin Heidegger
- D) Jean-Paul Sartre

8. Which philosopher is recognized for proposing the first rigorous formalization of the concept of 'nothingness' (sunyata) within Buddhist philosophy, profoundly influencing its metaphysical and epistemological doctrines?

- A) Shankara
- B) Nagarjuna**
- C) Buddha
- D) Vimalakirti

9. The initial systematic exploration of the concept of 'dialectic' as a method for understanding historical change and the development of ideas is most prominently associated with which philosopher?

- A) Karl Marx
- B) F.W.J. Schelling
- C) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**
- D) Johann Gottlieb Fichte

10. What philosopher introduced the notion of the 'tabula rasa' (blank slate) to describe the human mind at birth, a foundational idea for empiricist epistemology?

- A) Thomas Hobbes
- B) George Berkeley
- C) John Locke**
- D) David Hume

11. Who is widely considered the first major philosopher to systematically apply scientific methods to the study of ethics, attempting to establish moral principles on a factual, observable basis?

- A) Aristotle
- B) Thomas Aquinas
- C) David Hume**
- D) Baruch Spinoza

12. The philosophical concept of the 'will to power' (Wille zur Macht) as a fundamental driving force in human behavior and the universe was first extensively developed by which philosopher?

- A) Arthur Schopenhauer
- B) Friedrich Nietzsche**
- C) Max Stirner
- D) Karl Jaspers

13. Which philosopher is credited with the first systematic critique of pure reason, thereby inaugurating a new era in epistemology and metaphysics by examining the limits and conditions of human knowledge?

- A) Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz
- B) Baruch Spinoza
- C) Immanuel Kant**
- D) David Hume

14. The formulation of the 'Categorical Imperative' as a central principle of deontological ethics is a hallmark of which philosopher's groundbreaking work?

- A) John Stuart Mill
- B) Jeremy Bentham
- C) Immanuel Kant**
- D) G.W.F. Hegel

15. Who is generally recognized as the first philosopher to systematically articulate the concept of 'alienation' in the context of industrial labor and capitalist society, laying groundwork for critical theory?

- A) Max Weber
- B) Friedrich Engels
- C) Karl Marx**
- D) Georg Lukács