

Philosophy

an introduction for KS2 beginners



Teacher Notes

The Ancient Greeks are famous for developing and furthering philosophy – the seeking of answers to do with everything. This has helped inform the way the way we think, discuss and argue in the Western World.

Basic summary of 5 different branches of philosophy:

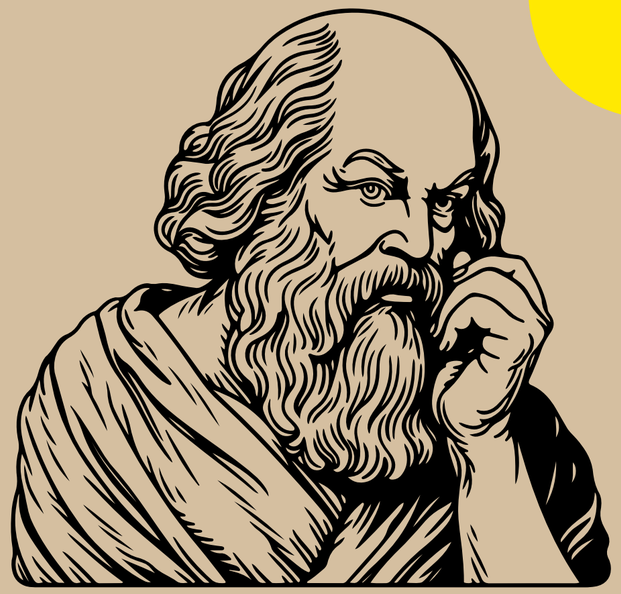
1. Metphysics – reality, existence, causality, ideas beyond the physical world
2. Epistemology – knowledge and how it is gained
3. Ethics - moral principles and values
4. Aesthetics - beauty, art, taste
5. Logic - valid reasoning and arguing



Metaphysics

Reality, existence, causality, ideas beyond the physical world. How do we know?

How do you know you are not dreaming?



Get a class discussion going on this and you will be replicating what the ancient greek philosophers were doing over 2000 years ago.

Epistemology

How do we know?

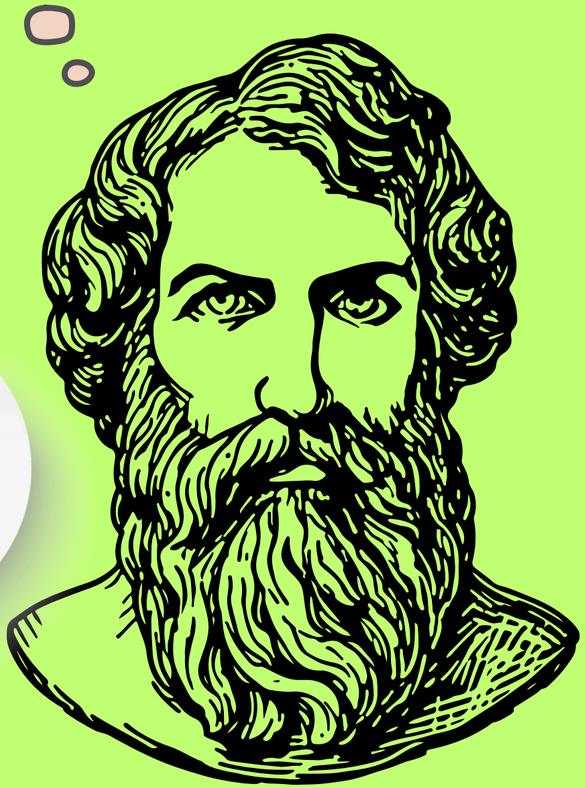
How do you know your friend when you see them?

How do you recognise somebody?

Do you store pictures of people in your head? How?

How do you know anything at all?

Where is everything that you know stored?



Good luck with this discussion, philosophers!

Ethics

What should you do?

- What does it mean to be a **good** person?
- Is good always good?
- Is **bad** always bad?
- Is the law always **right**?



If I steal your car I go to prison.

If I steal your bag, I pay a fine

.

If I steal one grain of sugar from the top of your doughnut you will probably laugh and not mind.

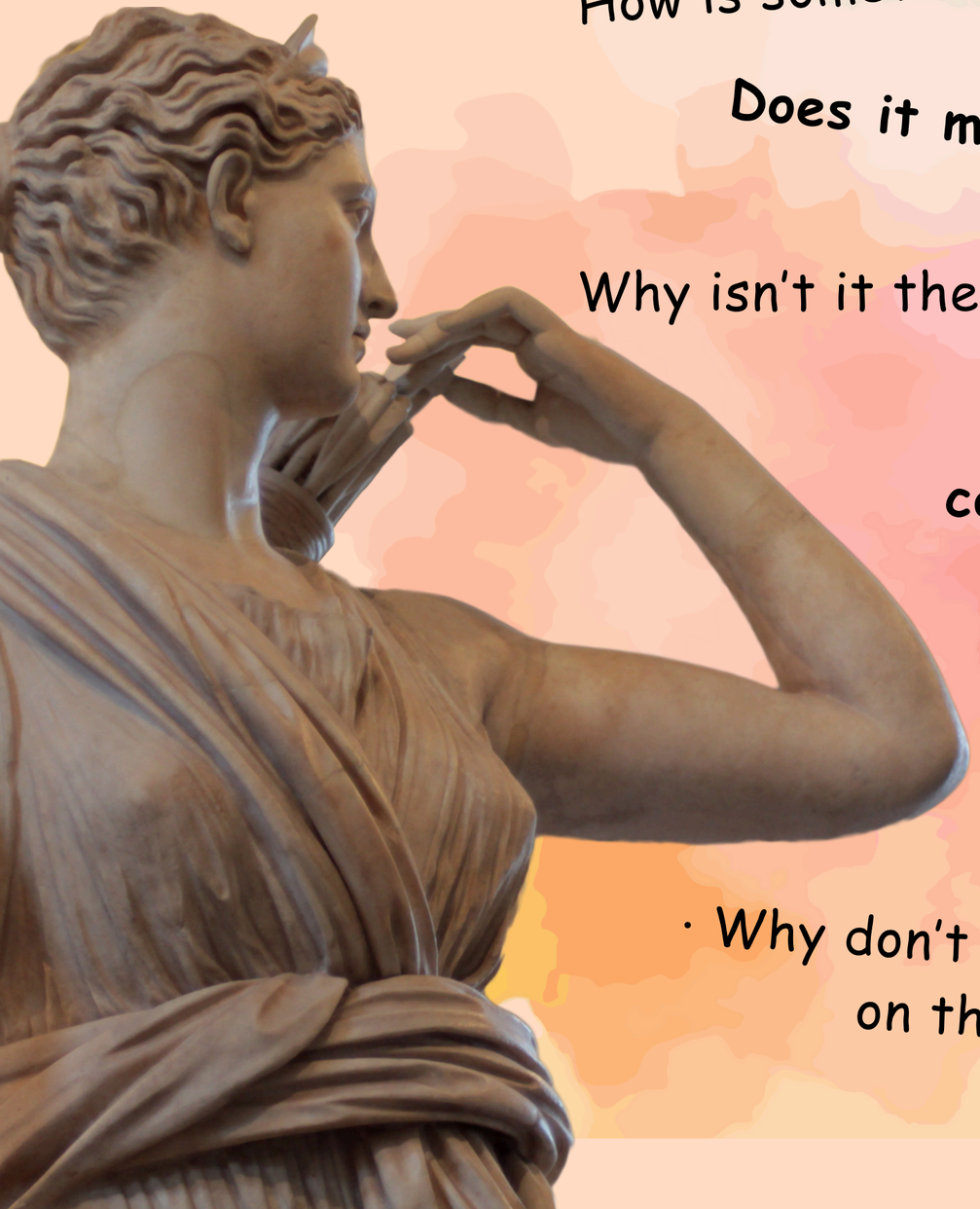
Why the difference?

Where are the dividing lines?

Who decides them? Why?

Aesthetics

Beauty, art, taste



How is something nice to look at?

Does it make a happy shape in your brain?

Why isn't it the same for everyone?

Is there any such thing as beauty if we can't agree on what it is or what it means?

How does art work?

How does art look nicer than rubbish?

· Why don't we just stick random bits of rubbish on the walls instead of art pieces?



Logic

Valid reasoning and argument

Arising from ancient Greek philosophy the skills in valid reasoning and arguing are probably more useful today than ever!

Especially given the vast array of unchecked sources from which we try and understand the world, previously known as **The News!**



Key Vocabulary

Premise = a statement

Conclusion = the answer, worked out from the premises.

The next slides give you some examples of logic.

Example 1. Valid and True argument

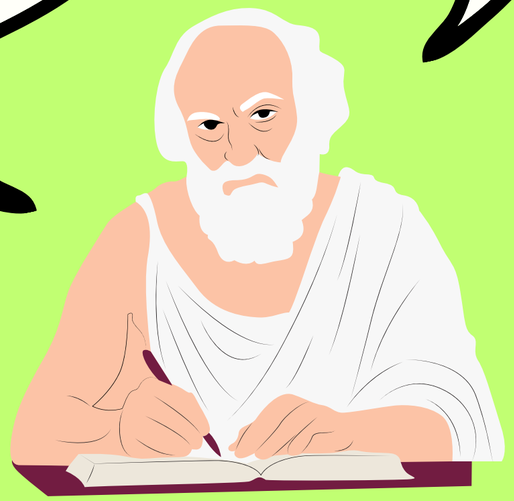
Premise 1 All cats are born as kittens.

Premise 2 Whiskers is a cat.

Conclusion Whiskers was born as a kitten.

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 lead to the Conclusion this is a VALID argument.

Because Premise 1 is true and Premise 2 is true then the Conclusion is also true this is also a TRUE argument.



Example 2. VALID but FALSE argument

Premise 1 All cats are born green.

Premise 2 Whiskers is a cat.

Conclusion Whiskers was born green.

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 lead to the Conclusion this is a VALID argument.

Because Premise 1 is FALSE, even though Premise 2 is true then the Conclusion must be FALSE.



Example 3. INVALID argument

Premise 1 All cats have four legs.

Premise 2 Whiskers has four legs.

Conclusion Whiskers is a cat.

Even if Premise 1 is TRUE, and Premise 2 is TRUE, they do not lead to the Conclusion.

Whiskers could be a dog or a hamster. Or a table!



Ready for a fun test?

Each argument is either:

Valid and True

or

Valid but False

or

Invalid



Premise 1 Children are human

Premise 2 Chester is a child

Conclusion Chester is human

1) What type of argument is this?





Answer = Valid and True

Premise 1 Children are human

Premise 2 Chester is a child

Conclusion Chester is human

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 lead to the Conclusion, this is a VALID argument.

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 are both true, this is also a TRUE argument.



2) What type of argument is this?

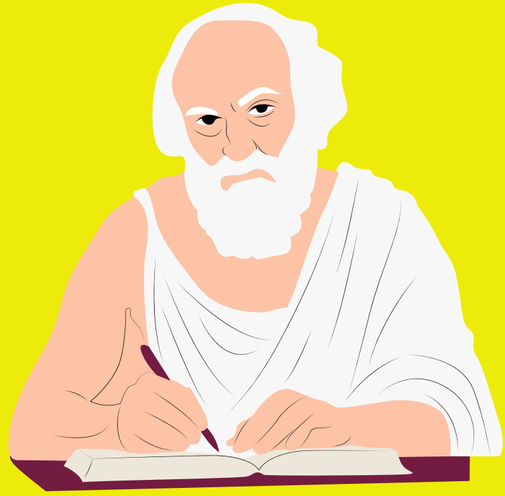
Premise 1 All teachers are annoying.

Premise 2 Miss Wright is a teacher.



Conclusion Miss Wright is annoying.





Answer: VALID and FALSE

Premise 1 All teachers are annoying.

Premise 2 Miss Wright is a teacher.

Conclusion Miss Wright is annoying.



However Premise 1 is false - most teachers are **not** annoying!

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 lead to the Conclusion, this is a VALID argument.

Because Premise 1 is FALSE this must be a FALSE argument, even though Premise 2 is true.



3) What type of argument is this?

Premise 1 Aliens love eating cabbage.

Premise 2 I love eating cabbage.

Conclusion I am an alien.



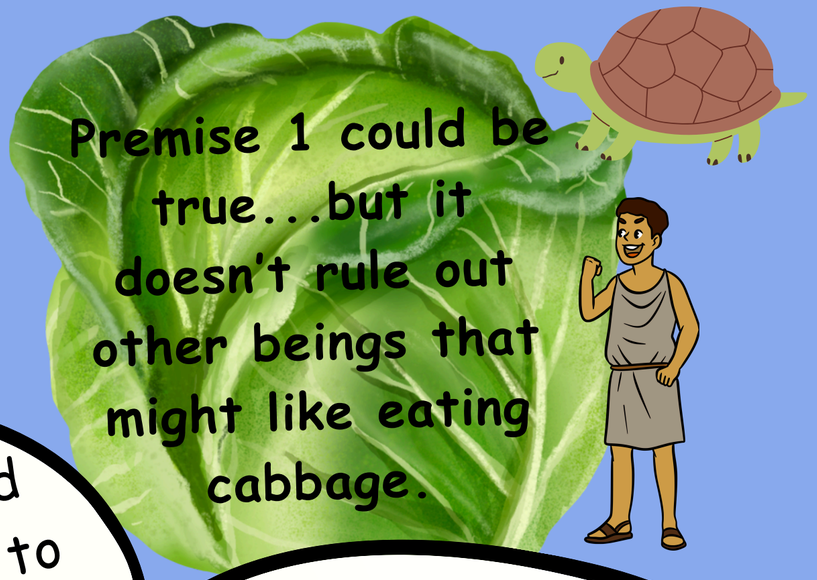


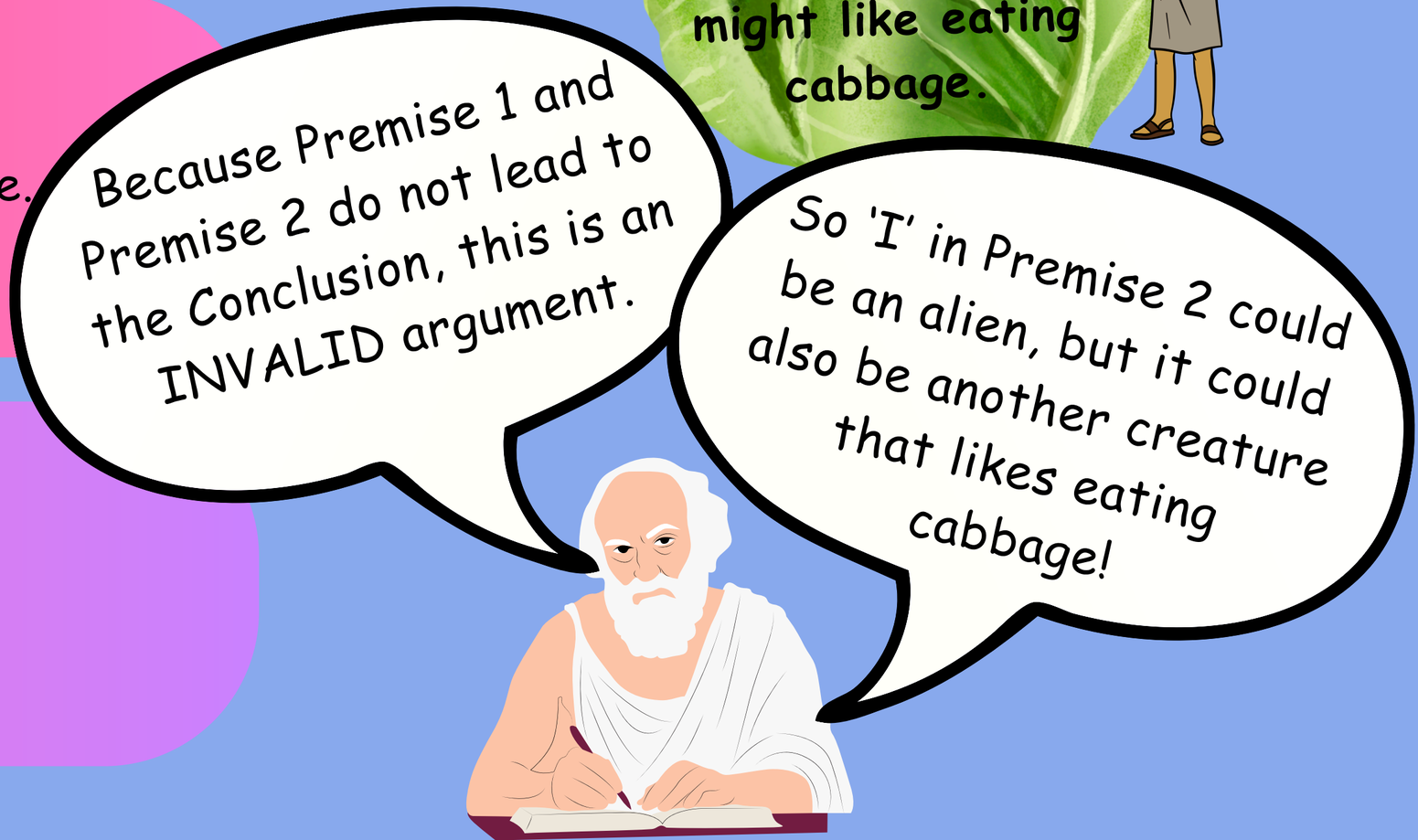
Premise 1 Aliens love eating cabbage.

Premise 2 I love eating cabbage.

Conclusion I am an alien.

Answer: INVALID





4) What type of argument is this?

Premise 1 Everyone in Brightland is bad.

Premise 2 Bridwald lives in Brightland.

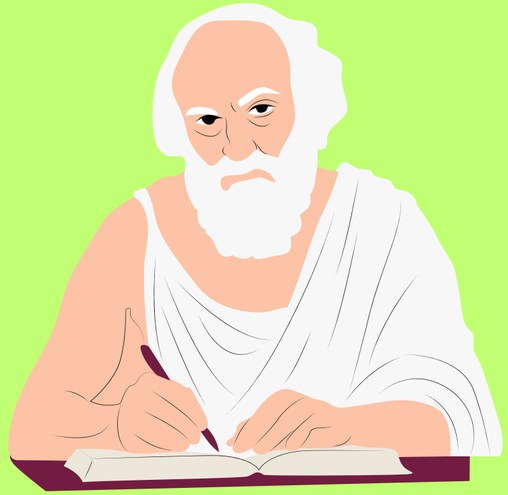
Conclusion Bridwald is bad.







Bridwald.



Premise 1 Everyone in Brightland is Bad.

Premise 2 Bridwald lives in Brightland.

Conclusion Bridwald is bad.

Answer: VALID but FALSE

However, it is not true that a country can have only bad people living in it, so Premise 1 is FALSE.

Because Premise 1 and Premise 2 lead to the Conclusion, this is a VALID argument.

Because Premise 1 is FALSE the Conclusion is FALSE. So this is a FALSE argument, even though Premise 2 is true.





Now, if your heads are not spinning too much...

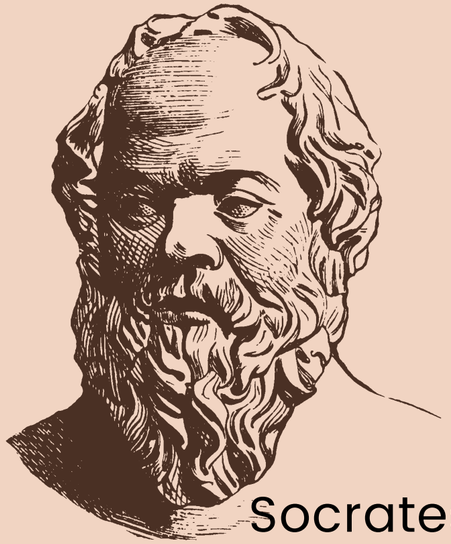
you could try creating your own argument structures - a bit like what the Ancient Greeks started over 2,500 years ago.

Good luck!



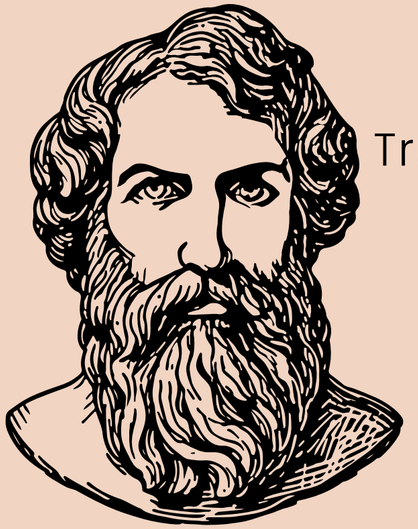
And finally...

four famous Ancient Greek philosophers



Socrates

Ask questions to find the truth.
Don't just believe things.
Encouraged people to ask 'why?'



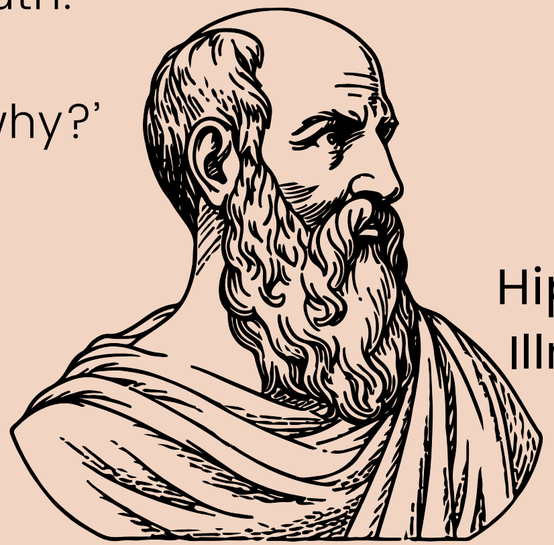
Plato (student of Socrates)

True knowledge is correct and can be proven.
What does it mean to be good?
How should societies be organised?



Aristotle (student of Plato)

Invented the study of Logic.
Many of our modern sciences are based on the studies of Aristotle.



Hippocrates (known as The Father of Medicine)

Illness is natural, not a punishment from the Gods.
Trained 'doctors' to look for symptons.
The body can heal itself.