

How to do well at the exams

document preparat pel Dr. Pablo Rychter per l'assignatura

**Pensament en la cultura anglòfona,
grups A i B, curs 2012-13**

How to do well at the exams.

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Working hard during the course is a **necessary condition** for doing well at the exam. It is unlikely that you will get a good grade if you did not read the required readings in a timely manner and if you did not think about the philosophical issues raised by them. However, working hard during the course is not a **sufficient condition** for doing well at the exams. **It sometimes happens that students that work hard during the course have nevertheless a poor performance at the exams, and therefore get low grades.** This is often because they fail to understand the exam questions and the criteria of evaluation. The present document is intended to help you avoid this problem.

We will proceed as follows: we will first discuss the issues at a relatively abstract level. Then we will look at the particular exam that students from the group A took in the course 2011-12, and finally we will discuss some of the answers that students from this class gave. Let's get started...

I usually make **two kinds of questions**. Questions of the first kind have the following form:

-Explain briefly and with your own words the contents of the following text. You may make reference to ideas of the author that do not feature in the text (or to ideas of other authors) provided that those ideas are relevant for explaining what the author is saying in this text.

There are three points that you should keep in mind when answering questions of this first sort:

1. You are being asked to explain what an author is saying in a short passage. Typically, it will be a passage that is not self-contained. That is to say, it will be a passage that you will be able to understand properly *only if you know the context from which it is taken, and only if you are familiar with the philosophical problem discussed*. That means that in order to make clear to your readers what the text is saying, **you may have to provide them with that context**. That is to say, you will have to explain some ideas that are not explicitly stated in the passage but which are necessary to understand it.

2. However, **it is very important that you select the information that is relevant**. Do not attempt to write everything you know about the author, or about the topic. I do not want a general explanation of the whole of the author's philosophy. That will make your grade go down, even if what you say is a nice, correct description of the author's thought. You have to show me that you **understand** the passage I give you by being **selective** about what really matters for understanding it.

3. It is also very important that you make an effort to explain what the author says **with your own words**. Do not just repeat what the author is saying with his or her words. Try to give **your own examples** to make the reader understand the author's point. Make as if your reader does not know anything about the topic, and try not to take anything for granted. It may be useful to make as if you are explaining the topic to a friend or relative.

Let us now turn to questions of the second sort. These will have the following form:

-Do you agree or disagree with the following claim? Justify your answer.

With respect to this kind of questions, there are four points that you have to keep in mind:

1. **State your position right at the beginning.** Either if you agree or not (or even if you are undecided), say it clearly as the first step of your answer. Then, it is important that rest of your answer be coherent with your initial statement.

2. **Sometimes (but not always) both positions are equally defensible.** These are not “true/false” questions in which there is only one correct answer. When I evaluate your answer, I do not care much whether you said “yes, I agree” or “no, I do not agree”. What I care about is **how well you argue for your position**. The fact that sometimes there is no just one right position to take has to do with the nature of philosophy. As you will see, most interesting philosophical questions are open questions, questions about which you will find two or more interesting and reasonable but *opposed* theories. (That does not mean that both theories are true, or that there is no truth in philosophy. It is just that it is hard to know which theory is true).

3. **Give good arguments for your position.** You have to convince your reader that your position about the claim in question is right. Make as if your readers held a different opinion. What could you say in order to convince them? Make an effort at showing that your position is right. Try to think what reasons your readers could have for holding an opinion different from yours, and show them that those reasons are wrong. Give them examples that help to make your points more convincing. In arguing for your position, **you may have to take into account theories and arguments discussed in the course**. Suppose, for instance, that the claim in question is “all of our actions are completely determined by factors outside our control”, and suppose that you start by saying “No, I do not agree!”. Then, as part of your argument, you will have to say something about why you think Hume was wrong in believing otherwise. After all, Hume is one of the philosophers studied in the course who addressed this topic. So if you are defending a position at odds with his, you have to say something about why you think he was wrong. The better you can counter-argue against the opposite camp, the stronger your position will be.

4. You are being asked whether you agree or not with a particular claim, and then give your reasons for your position. **Read carefully the claim in question. It may have the form “according to author X, blah” or simply “blah”**. The difference between these two sorts of claims is very important. Consider, for instance, the following two questions:

(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following claim? Justify your answer.

My decision to take this course was completely determined by factors outside my control.

(2) Do you agree or disagree with the following claim? Justify your answer.

Hume would have said that my decision to take this course was completely determined by factors outside my control.

In both cases, you have to argue for your position. The form of the question is very similar, but the content is different. Question (1) is mainly **about free will**, and question (2) is **about Hume's views on free will**. In answering question (1) you have to tell me your reasons for taking a side on the claim, and in so doing you **may** indeed mention Hume (see previous point). But in answering question (2) you **must** mention Hume. A good answer to question (2) could be something like this:

“Yes, I agree. Hume argues for determinism, the view that blah blah... According to this view, my decision blah blah... So, in conclusion, Hume would say that blah blah....”.

On the other side, a good answer to question (1) could be something like this:

“Yes, I agree. I do so because I think determinism is true, and it follows from determinism that my decision was blah blah. I think that determinism is true because I find very convincing the argument for determinism offered by Hume. According to this argument.... blah blah blah. However, it may seem that determinism is false, and indeed some philosophers think so. They rather think that blah blah.... If they were right about this, my position would in fact be wrong. However, these philosophers are not right because blah blah...”.

Bear in mind that this is only a suggestion, and there are many other ways of structuring your answer. What matters is offering a good, convincing argument. And for so doing you have to take into account the views and arguments studied in the course which are relevant for your position.

Finally, let me make **two more points that apply to all the questions in the exam**:

-Do not confuse an author's views with the things I say in class in order to explain those views. For instance, when explaining Hume's compatibilism I use the example of a child who is surprised to see her father crying. That is *not* an example that Hume himself uses. That is an example that *I* use in order to explain the view. Do not attribute it to Hume! That sort of mis-attribution is evidence that you did not read Hume's text carefully.

-Do not attempt to write everything you know about the topic! Be concise, and select the information that is relevant. Writing everything you know is not a good way of showing that you know a lot. It only shows that you have good memory storage, and that you spent some time filling it. I want to be shown that you **understand** the views and arguments, and that you are able to apply them in solving the tasks posed by the questions.

Ok. We are now ready to look at last year's exam. Here you have it:

Primer examen parcial de la asignatura *Pensamiento en la Cultura Anglófona*

Apellidos:

Nombre:

You may answer in Spanish, *Valencià*, or English. Your language choice will not affect the evaluation.

QUESTION 1. Explain briefly and **with your own words** the contents of **TEXT 1**. You may make reference to ideas of the author that do not feature in the text (or to ideas of other authors) provided that those ideas are relevant for explaining what the author is saying in this text. (2.5 points)

QUESTION 2. Explain briefly and **with your own words** the contents of **TEXT 2**. You may make reference to ideas of the author that do not feature in the text (or to ideas of other authors) provided that those ideas are relevant for explaining what the author is saying in this text. (2.5 points)

QUESTION 3. Imagine that, in the near future, medical and biological science develop so much that human life-expectancy increases radically. In fact, you will live for at least 230 years, and therefore you will not die before 2242. However, as time passes, you start losing your memories, and by year 2110 you can't remember that you took this exam today. Do you agree or disagree with the following claim? **Justify your answer.** (2.5 points):

*About a situation like the one described **Locke** would have said that in 2110 I am no longer the same man that I am now.*

QUESTION 4. Do you agree or disagree with the following claim? **Justify your answer.** (2.5 points)

My choice to register in the English Studies program was already fixed or determined ten years ago, and therefore my decision to register was not free.

TEXT 1

I shall farther add, that, after the same manner as modern philosophers prove certain sensible qualities to have no existence in Matter, or without the mind, the same thing may be likewise proved of all other sensible qualities whatsoever. Thus, for instance, it is said that heat and cold are affections only of the mind, and not at all patterns of real beings, existing in the corporeal substances which excite them, for that the same body which appears cold to one hand seems warm to another. Now, why may we not as well argue that figure and extension are not patterns or resemblances of qualities existing in Matter, because to the same eye at different stations, or eyes of a different texture at the same station, they appear various, and cannot therefore be the images of anything settled and determinate without the mind? Again, it is proved that sweetness is not really in the sapid thing, because the thing remaining unaltered the sweetness is changed into bitter, as in case of a fever or otherwise vitiated palate. Is it not as reasonable to say that motion is not without the mind, since if the succession of ideas in the mind become swifter, the motion, it is acknowledged, shall appear slower without any alteration in any external object? (**Berkeley, Principles, 14**).

TEXT 2

(...) the essences of the sorts of things, and, consequently, the sorting of things, is the workmanship of the understanding that abstracts and makes those general ideas.

(...) They are the workmanship of the understanding, but have their foundation in the similitude of things. I would not here be thought to forget, much less to deny, that Nature, in the production of things, makes several of them alike: there is nothing more obvious, especially in the race of animals, and all things propagated by seed. But yet I think we may say, the sorting of them under names is the workmanship of the understanding, taking occasion, from the similitude it observes amongst them, to make abstract general ideas, and set them up in the mind, with names annexed to them, as patterns or forms, (...) to which as particular things existing are found to agree, so they come to be of that species, have that denomination, or are put into that classis. (**Locke, Essay, 3.3.12 and 3.3.13**)

That was not so difficult! Or was it? We are now going to examine some sample questions from the students of the course 2011-12. But before that, let us discuss briefly each of the four questions:

Q1: in this fragment, Berkeley argues against the distinction between primary and secondary qualities that "modern philosophers", such as Locke, made. Berkeley understands these philosophers as saying this: primary qualities exist independently the mind, secondary qualities do not. (This is perhaps not the best understanding of what Locke says, but this is how Berkeley understands him.) Berkeley argues that the kind of reasons that lead this philosophers to say that flavors or temperatures (which they take to be secondary qualities) do not exist without a perceiving mind, are also good reasons for thinking that shape and motion (which they take to be primary qualities) do not exist without a perceiving mind. So, Berkeley concludes, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities is ill-conceived.

A good answer to this question should take into account the following points: (a) that Berkeley is arguing against Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities; (b) that Berkeley's conclusion is that all qualities exists only in the mind; (c) how Berkeley argues for that conclusion.

Q2: A good answer to this question should take into account the following points: (a) Locke presents his views on classification, which are generally at odds with Aristotelian essentialism: the essences or sorts of things are a product of human classificatory practices; (b) in the second part of the passage, Locke acknowledges that those practices are shaped by some objective patterns of similarity that exist in Nature, independently of any human practice.

Q3: This question is about what Locke would have said about a particular situation. There is a trick: the question has to do with Locke's view on *man-identity*, not with his view on *personal identity*. You have to say if you agree or not with the italicized claim, and argue for your answer. Your argument here *must* allude to Locke

Q4: This question is about free will. Again, there is a trick: the italicized claim seems to assume (by using the expression "therefore") that freedom is incompatible with determinism. A good answer is expected to identify this fact, and to clarify the situation. It is expected that a good answer to this question makes reference to Hume's compatibilism, although it is not absolutely indispensable.

Ok, now let's see what people did...

Here is an example of a nice answer to Q1, from student #1.

<p>En este extracto Berkeley en crítica la visión de filósofos como Locke que diferenciaban entre cualidades primarias y secundarias, de argumentando que todas debían ser consideradas como secundarias, es decir, -en términos de Berkeley y no de Locke- que ^{estas} estas cualidades no pueden existir ^{existen} en una realidad independiente de la mente. Para ello, Berkeley se pregunta si del mismo modo que otros filósofos -como Locke- aceptan que el gusto -la dulzura- de de algo no está propriadamente ^{propriadamente} presente en ese algo -pues una fiebre puede hacer que una misma cosa nos sepa de forma distinta -¿por que estas ^{no ocurre lo mismo con} estas cualidades primarias o propias de los cuerpos como la forma, la extensión ^o o el movimiento ^o o que al fin y al cabo tan bien son percibidos ^o o por nuestros sentidos?</p>	<p>Positive points: -In the first three lines, the student puts the text in its appropriate context, in a way that shows s/he understands the general problem (that s/he has the background knowledge needed for understanding the passage). -But s/he also goes straight to the point, telling us what is Berkeley's main point in this passage. No unnecessary detours. -Having identified, in the first paragraph of the answer, Berkeley's main thesis in the passage, the student goes on, in second paragraph, to explain quite clearly how Berkeley argues for that thesis. (Although here s/he could have done better). -Notice that a good answer may be brief. No need to write a lot, only that which is clearly relevant for explaining the passage.</p>
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Here is how student #1 answered Q2, also getting close to 100% of the score

<p>2. En este extracto Locke expone dos aspectos fundamentales de su teoría del conocimiento relacionados con los con el lenguaje y la clasificación del mundo. En el primer párrafo, en contra del esencialismo Aristotélico que defendía que la esencia de los seres u objetos es una en particular ^{objetiva y} determinada, Locke opina que las ^{dichas} esencias y su clasificación son producto del entendimiento humano. Sin embargo - como explica en el segundo párrafo - estas clasificaciones hechas por los hombres no son completamente arbitrarias pues es cierto que la Naturaleza ha hecho que ciertas cosas o seres se parezcan entre ellos, en particular los animales y las plantas. El último ^{forma} explica cómo De estas similitudes naturales el hombre extrae ^{forma} una idea abstracta consistente en patrones y formas, enformando lo que conocemos como especies: el conjunto de seres que cumplen esas pa características.</p>	<p>-In lines 3-4, the student makes reference to Aristotelian essentialism, showing that s/he has the background that is required for understanding the main issue in the passage. S/he also explains what Aristotelian essentialism is, not taking for granted that the reader will know it. Good!</p> <p>-Also in these first few lines, the student makes reference to a specific part of the fragment (first paragraph). S/he is clearly addressing the passage, not talking about Locke in general.</p> <p>-Notice that the student does not attempt to say everything s/he knows about Locke. S/he brings up elements that are not explicitly mentioned by Locke in the passage, but all of them are relevant for explaining the content of the fragment.</p> <p>-Of course, there are many aspects in which the answer could be better. For instance, the student does not go far enough in explaining the text with his/her own words. In the last few lines, s/he follows Locke too closely and does not give examples of his/her own.</p>
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Let us now have a look at the answer that student #2 gave to Q1

<p>En el primer texto Berkeley nos habla sobre su teoría anti-materialista, la cual indica que no existe un mundo exterior. El mundo que concebimos se encuentra tan solo en nuestra mente a modo de ideas, por lo que los objetos en sí y las cualidades de la materia no existen a no ser que alguien las esté concibiendo. Es decir, según Berkeley, Dios es el encargado de poner las ideas del mundo exterior (fuera de nosotros) en nuestra mente, de modo que podamos concebirlo. Pero, si ninguna mente no está concibiendo la idea de algo en particular, ese objeto es inexistente ya que se afirma la teoría anti-materialista y la no existencia de un mundo exterior que por contra afirmaba Locke en su teoría atomista.</p> <p>Por todo ello, Berkeley nos explica que todo lo que percibimos se encuentra en nuestra mente en forma de ideas que pone Dios (en nuestra mente) para que creemos el mundo exterior que erróneamente creemos que existe tal y como lo vemos.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">fours ↓</p>	<p>Everything the student #2 says about Berkeley is more or less ok. S/he does know the basics of Berkeley's philosophy. But s/he is not answering the question at all! S/he is not telling us what Berkeley says in this passage. So s/he does not show us that she really understands the passage. S/he only shows that s/he was able to learn a speech (un "rollo") about Berkeley that s/he would reproduce as an answer to any question about Berkeley, never mind what the question is. Perhaps learning this speech took time and effort, and a generous marker may choose to reward it with some minor score. A strict marker would probably give 0 points. After all, #2 is not answering the question</p>
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Let us look at a third sample, the answer from student #3

<p>➔ <u>QUESTION 1</u></p> <p>En este fragmento de "Principios" de Berkeley, explica como la materia es inexistente como tal, ya que es un concepto empírico-materialista.</p> <p>Para él la materia existe solamente en nuestra mente, y sus cualidades sensibles no existen en la materia porque somos nosotros los que creamos esas cualidades a partir de nuestros ideas y la existencia de éstas en nuestra mente "certain sensible qualities to have no existence in matter" (línea 2)</p> <p>Estos a cualidades las podemos percibir únicamente como ideas en nuestra mente, y cada uno de nosotros tiene una idea diferente de cada cualidad, "heat and acid are affections only of the mind" (línea 4). En este caso, Berkeley pone el ejemplo de lo dulce, porque para cada persona es diferente el sabor de una cosa ya que nuestro paladar funciona diferente a otro, y esta cualidad puede cambiar en las ideas de cada persona.</p> <p>"[...] sweetness is not really in the solid thing [...] the sweetness is changed" (línea 9-10). Por lo que no tenemos conocimiento de las cosas materiales ni de sus cualidades, simplemente existen en nuestros ideas que cuando percibimos una cosa material, no la percibimos como tal porque esa materia está en nuestra mente y sólo puede ser percibida a partir de nuestros ideas.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWST A DOWN WOULDST</p>	<p>Positive things about this answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unlike what happens with #2's answer, this one addresses the passage in question. In the first few lines, it does describe some general issues of Berkeley's views that are not strictly necessary to explain the content of the fragment, but the student makes an effort to relate the general issues to what's going on in the fragment. -#3 makes some effort at explaining the fragment with his/her own words, although much more could have been done. <p>Negative points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is clear that the student did not really understand the main point of the passage. S/he does not mention the main issue: that Berkeley is arguing against Locke's distinction between 1° and 2° qualities, and offering a particular argument against the distinction. -The explanation of Berkeley's view is not clear and precise enough
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Let us now discuss different answers to Q3. This is what student #1 did:

<p>3. Siendo estrictos con la terminología propia de Locke, estoy en desacuerdo. Efectivamente para Locke la base de la identidad personal es la conciencia y la memoria, y por tanto una pérdida de la memoria supondría una ^{perdida} pérdida de nuestra identidad ^{personal} frente a dicha amnesia, esto en este caso para Locke se pasaríamos a ser otra persona. Sin embargo, Locke distingue entre <u>persona</u> y <u>hombre</u>. La conciencia y la memoria definen a una persona pero <u>es el cuerpo el que define al hombre</u>. Y puesto que en este escenario hipotético es la memoria la que se desaparece pero no el cuerpo (entendido por Locke como un conjunto coherente de partes con el objetivo común de mantener una vida) esta es una parte que sigue siendo el mismo, debemos concluir que para Locke este individuo con esperanza de vida de 230 años seguiría siendo el mismo hombre, en hasta su muerte.</p>	<p>Positive points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There is a clear statement of the student's position right at the begging. S/he starts by saying: "I disagree". Good. -As it is clear from the beginning, #1 got the trick of the question: the question was about man-identity, not about personal-identity. -The question is about what Locke would have said about the hypothetical case described. So #1's initial position is precisely about this: about what Locke would have said. And, correspondingly, #1's justification for holding that position mainly involves what Locke thought about these issues
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This is the answer given by student #4, who did not do so well with this question:

<p><u>QUESTION 3.</u> Locke: "About a situation like the one described Locke would have said that in 2110 I am no longer the same man that I am now".</p> <p>Respecto la situación expuesta en esta pregunta, podríamos decir que según Locke como explica en el tema de "Personal Identity" podemos diferenciar entre nuestros recuerdos o memorias y el hecho de ser conscientes de lo que hemos hecho.</p> <p>Por ejemplo, en este caso posiblemente al perder la memoria y no acordarnos de haber hecho un examen estaríamos hablando de la persona, ya que como bien dice Locke la persona está determinada a la psicología y a la conciencia, pero en cambio el hombre está determinado al cuerpo; por lo tanto seríamos las mismas personas, ya que es el mismo cuerpo pero no la misma persona porque nuestra conciencia hubiera cambiado ya que no recordábamos ciertas cosas.</p> <p>☉ man is determined by body, person is determined by their consciousness / psychology.]</p> <p>Otros ejemplos, como los que hemos visto en clase, han sido el hecho de que una persona tenga un accidente, si sería o no la misma persona después de tener un accidente y no recordar nada de su pasado; pero como he dicho anteriormente, sería la misma persona pero sí el mismo hombre.</p> <p>Por lo tanto en esta parte Locke distingue entre amnesia total o cambio de mentes. (Como por ejemplo si le cambiáramos mi mente a un científico, sería la misma persona pero sí el mismo hombre). Finalmente, concluyo con la idea de Locke que el cuerpo es determina al hombre, y la persona está determinada por la conciencia o la psicología.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">how to posit</p>	<p>-Look at how the answer starts. The student does not start by clearly stating his/her position. Not good. #4 jumps to arguing but the reader wonders: "does #4 agree or disagree with the claim? What is the view that s/he is arguing for?" We can guess what her/his position is, given what s/he says next. But this is not good enough. Do not make the reader guess! Tell the reader explicitly what your position is, and do so right at the beginning.</p> <p>-The first paragraph makes clear that the student has some notions that are relevant for the question (like the distinction between man and person), but the explanations s/he offers are not clear enough, and are not presented as justification of a previously stated position on the question.</p> <p>-If you now look at the last part of the answer, you will notice that much of what the student says here, even if true, is not relevant or not clearly connected to the question. Or at least, s/he does not make clear what the connection is.</p>
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Just one more, from student #5

<p>Estoy de acuerdo con la cita de Locke ya que, aunque físicamente eres la misma persona, o es decir, vienes del mismo lugar, con los años se ha adquirido conocimientos, experiencias en la cual la manera de pensar y de actuar ha cambiado. Lo mismo es por eso se puede decir que no eres la misma persona, lo mismo se ocurre físicamente etcétera y entonces como ocurre en este ejemplo, perdemos</p>	<p>-This is a very poor answer that did not get off the ground. It makes a very serious mistake: it wrongly assumes that there is a quotation from Locke here. But where? There is no quotation at all, only a claim about what Locke would have said about an hypothetical situation. This kind of mistake was found in other students who offered more complete answers and showed evidence of understanding the topic. But such a gross mistake makes any possible virtue fade away...</p>
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Ok. Let us finish by considering answers to Q. 1. Let us see what #1 did

<p>4. La frase está escrita desde un punto de vista fuertemente determinista que <u>no comparto</u> -si bien como hemos visto en clase tampoco puedo refutar-. Si bien comparto la concepción de libertad que se deriva del enunciado, es decir que una acción libre es aquella que no está esta ser determinada por una causa externa a nosotros (a diferencia de la concepción de Hume, que cae por supuesto el determinismo y defiende que la decisión libre es aquella consecuente con nuestro carácter) no comparto la premisa (que mi decisión está esta determinada). Me alíneo con el pensamiento "libertarista" y creo que los argumentos a favor del determinismo, si bien pueden demostrar que estamos <u>influenciados</u> en nuestras decisiones (condicionamiento psicológico y sociológico) no prueba que estén ^{estén} totalmente determinados. Ni la existencia de Dios se pueda probar, ni tampoco el determinismo de las leyes físicas de momento (véase la cuántica) y en cuanto al "argumento lógico", lo veo como un juego del lenguaje, como ^{se} la <u>paradoja de Russell</u> quizás solo sea "wishful thinking", pero que <u>no demuestren lo contrario</u>.</p>	<p>-Notice that this time, the position is not so clearly stated at the beginning. S/he says "no comparto", but here s/he is talking about a point of view that s/he takes to be presupposed by the claim, not about the claim itself.</p> <p>-A good point here is that in defending his/her view, the student makes reference to some of the arguments discussed in class and by the authors we were reading.</p> <p>-However, and this is the weaknesses of the answer, the student does not go far enough in two directions: (a) in explaining what the arguments that s/he mentions are --s/he presupposes that the reader knows these arguments and that mentioning them will be enough, no need to explain. Do not do that! Always explain. (b) in arguing for his/her views. The student tells us only very briefly why s/he is not convinced by the arguments for determinism. S/he needs to explain more, consider what a proponent of the arguments could say in their defense, etc</p>
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Here is another quite good answer, by student #6:

<p>QUESTION 1</p> <p>I disagree with the following claim because I would say that yes my choice do register in the English Studies program may have already been fixed ten years ago, but it was still a free decision. In this case I would like to refer to Hume's compatibilism in which he argues that actions can be both determined and free! I would say that acc. to Hume's definition of a free action, which is an action that flows out of my character, it was a free action to study English because I have always been interested in languages reading and my close friends who know my personality for a long time might have guessed that I will study English, beforehand. Moreover, it may also have been determined ten years ago before, again referring to Hume, of by the environment in which I grew up, how I have been</p>	<p>-Here you have a good positioning right at the begging. The arguments coming next are coherent with the position taken at the beginning.</p> <p>-As it is clear at the end, the student got the trick: s/he saw that the claim presupposes that free will and determinism are incompatible, and that this is a controversial assumption.</p> <p>-The student connects his/her argument with Hume and compatibilism. His/her answer is appropriately informed by the readings and discussions held during the course</p>
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ed by my parents and grandparents (they encouraged me to read and write early), they all know more than one language,...), by the experiences I have made in school. To summarize these factors they are social and cultural factors which determine future actions to some extent. To Hume, socialization is an important phenomenon in relation to explaining determinism.

All in all, in this case, I would follow Hume's arguments when ~~consciously~~ giving my opinion about the claim. So, I would say I agree with the first part, namely that my choice to register could have been determined ten years ago, but I disagree with the second part, namely that my decision was not free because I would say that the decision was still free (acc. to Hume's definition of a free action).

-Notice how the student uses Hume's theories. S/he relies on them for stating her argument. S/he makes a clear connection between these views and her own argument. **These views are put to the service of the student's main argument.** They are not presented by their own right.

-Just to mention one weak point: the reasons offered of why his/her decision was determined are not too original, and there are others that could have been mentioned. Also, the student does not consider potential objections to his/her view. Considering potential objections, and replying to them, is a very good way of boosting one's argument.

Let us consider a final answer

This claim belongs to Hume's theory. He believes in determinism and thinks that freedom of the will (liberty) and determinism (necessity) are compatible if concepts are clarified. So, according to Hume, everything is fixed and there are many theories which supported this thinking as "the wishful thinking", God's omniscience, deterministic laws of nature... The problem is that many people resist determinism because they feel as they are free or they have a wrong idea about causal necessity, so, Hume thinks that they should avoid that and adopt causality theory.

My opinion about this sentence is that I am agree with it because I think in destiny and everything that happens over by something. I mean, our actions are determined before we were born, but, the same that Hume, your actions are free if they are consistent with your character, that is, they are free if they flow out with your character.

To sum up, all my actions are free because I am agree with them, but all of them are determined before my birth.

And.

-Oops! Very serious mistake right at the beginning. Which claim belongs to Hume's theory? What you have in the question is a claim that obviously was not made by Hume! And you are being asked your opinion about it. In answering, you may mention Hume, but no claim here is by Hume. (There are other mis-attributions in the answer)

-There is a clear positioning, but it is at the second paragraph and not where it should be (right at the begging).

-The most important problem, though, is that the student **does not really argue for his/her views** -or not forcefully enough. S/he tells us what s/he believes, but not **why** she does so, or why we should agree with him/her. Philosophy is not just about stating your opinions, it is basically about **arguing** for them, making an effort at showing that they are true.