

DOING ESSAY TESTS: AN EXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the sample question in the box below and all the sample answers, then use the criteria on the other side of this sheet to answer the two questions at the end.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Eliminative Materialism is a reductionist theory. What general difficulty does Nagel raise for such theories in "What is it Like to be a Bat?" Give a detailed summary of the conclusions Nagel draws about the prospects of reductive physicalist (i.e. Identity) theories like Eliminative Materialism from this perceived difficulty.

SAMPLE ANSWER #1

Nagel's says that we can't know what it is to be a bat and have bat sonar. He thinks this means that Churchlans is wrong because Churchlan has to say that we could have bat sonar, even though we couldn't. I think Nagel is right cause his arguments is convincing to me. And Churchland is too dark because he does not think that we can have a soul or a mind and Nagel is right that we could not evolve to have bat sonar at all. Churchlind is wrong, about this, like Nagel's says he is because of the bat sonar example. We can't have bat sonar.

SAMPLE ANSWER #2

Philosopher's has had many ideas down through the centuries. Nagel says that bats are not like us because they fly by sonar and we walk or drive a car when we feel like it. Plato says that the wise should not fear death because either when you die you go to heaven or there is nothing. Two. If you go to heaven then your happy and if you don't go to heaven then it is just over. You have no more pain. Three. So either you don't go to heaven and don't have pain or you get to go to heaven and see God. Therefore. So Death is nothing to the wise. That's why Nagel and Plato agrees that Bats have sonar and physicalists must be false even though no one could really say for sure.

SAMPLE ANSWER #3

Nagels thinks that examples like how we could not know what it is to be a bat shows that physicalism is false. He says that eliminative materialists cannot handle objections like the bat because they are to subjective and it is objectively.

SAMPLE ANSWER #4

Physicalism is the idea that all that exists is physical. There are no immaterial souls or minds. Eliminative materialism is a type of physicalism. It says that we should stop talking as if there were things like souls and minds. Both of these are reductionist views because both of them say that we can explain everything mental in physical terms. Nagel says that views like this have problems because they can't explain the "what it's like" (the subjective aspect) of certain experiences. Nagel thinks this is a problem for physicalists and eliminative materialists because they have to explain the subjective side (the personal side, the "what it's like" for a person him or herself) of experience in terms of physical facts, and physical facts are objective, not subjective. Nagel thinks that all reductionist views are like this. Nagel doesn't say that this makes physicalism false, only that it means that physicalists have this problem to solve before their view can be accepted. He also argues that we ought to look for new concepts to explain the subjective part of our experiences.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

1. Have all parts of the question been answered adequately?
2. Does the author have the basic facts right?
3. Have all technical terms been defined?
4. Is there any important information missing, or any unimportant information added?
5. Is the answer written in clear, grammatically correct sentences?
6. Does the answer proceed directly to the point of the question in a clear and logical manner?
7. Can you tell that the author really understands the material from reading this answer?

Which of the sample answers should receive the highest grade? Why?

Which of the sample answers should receive the lowest grade? Why?