

How to Write the Second PPT Paper

Step 1

Read the excerpt you plan to analyze in your paper carefully, including its surrounding context, to confirm that the philosopher does not contradict their own argument elsewhere.

Step 2

Identify what the philosopher's conclusion is in your chosen excerpt.

Step 3

Make a list of the premises that allow the philosopher to arrive at that conclusion, making sure there are no repeated premises in your list, or premises with logical gaps between them.

Step 4 (if applicable)

If you have learned the names of various argument forms in your section, such as reasoning with conditionals, argument by analogy, *modus tollens*, *modus ponens*, etc., identify what type of argument is in your excerpt.

Step 5 (if applicable)

Brainstorm possible objections to the philosopher's argument, based on the premises and conclusion you have just laid out, and identify what you consider to be the best one.

Step 6 (if applicable)

Generate the best possible response to your objection.

Step 7

Write the essay: simple introduction saying what you will do in the essay, one body paragraph for each of the philosopher's premises, and one body paragraph for the philosopher's conclusion. Then, if your prompt calls for it, write one body paragraph for the objection, one body paragraph for the response to the objection, and a simple conclusion recapping what you have done in the essay.

Step 8

Revise and proofread, either through peer feedback, or by booking an appointment at the Writers' Centre.

Sample prompt:

In his argument on moderation in funerals, Mozi describes what he sees as the destructive effects of lavish funerals and prolonged periods of mourning. Identify what Mozi's conclusion is, reconstructing the premises that allow him to arrive at this conclusion. Then, propose the best possible objection to Mozi's argument. Finally, suggest how Mozi might respond to your objection.

Sample excerpts: from P. Ivanhoe and B. Van Norden, eds. (2006). *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, second edition. Hackett, p. 80-84.

“If the world is poor, benevolent people do what they can to enrich it. If the people are few, benevolent people do what they can to increase their numbers. If the world is in chaos, benevolent people do what they can to make it well ordered”

“These are the three benefits that benevolent people plan for on behalf of the world.”

“If by following their [upholders of lavish funerals and prolonged mourning] words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children.”

[Description of material costs of lavish wedding.]

“Among common men and women this would exhaust the resources of the entire family. And even a feudal lord would have to empty his entire state treasury...”

[Description of activities required in prolonged mourning.]

“Should kings, dukes and other great men follow such practices, they would be unable to administer the Five Offices and Six Treasuries in order to ensure that crops and timber are harvested and the granaries kept full. Should farmers follow such practices, they would be unable to go out to the fields early and return home late in order to carry out ploughing, planting and tending of crops.”

[Description of prescribed duration of prolonged mourning and mourners' physical condition.]

“If the people starve themselves in this manner then they will be unable to withstand the cold of winter or the heat of summer and countless numbers of them will grow ill and die. This greatly diminishes the chances for men and women to procreate.”

Yale-NUS Writers' Centre Online Resources:

[Book a consultation with a tutor.](#)

[Writers' Centre Resources webpage.](#)

[Prof. Matthew Walker's "Some Matters of Style: Some Suggestions for Writing in PPT and Philosophy"](#)

Model PPT Papers (Prof. Malcolm Keating): [One](#), [Two](#), [Three](#).

[Model PPT Paper \(Prof. Neil Mehta\).](#)

[Model PPT Paper \(Prof. Bryan Van Norden\).](#)