**Worksheet 4: The Emergence of Classical Philosophy**

**Name:** ………………………………………

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

................. .................. ..................... ..................

Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

.................. .................. ..................... .....................

Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

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**4.1 Historiography and the History of Philosophy**

(1) Scholars adopt three main approaches to the history of philosophy. The presentist approach to the history of philosophy examines philosophical texts for the arguments they contain and judges whether their conclusions remain relevant for philosophical concerns today. While making the wisdom of the past available for present applications, this approach has been critiqued on two points: 1) in reading philosophical texts too narrowly, past philosophers are judged by contemporary standards; 2) this approach may also result in anachronistic errors, as ideas from contemporary philosophy may be inaccurately attributed to historical philosophers. A contextualist approach interprets philosophy in terms of the historical and cultural contexts in which it was written. While this approach can yield deep understanding of historical moments and historical ways of thinking, it can be blind to the lasting value of philosophical inquiry. A hermeneutic approach attempts to take the best of the presentist and contextualists approaches, viewing the historical context of original texts seriously but also recognizing that our interpretation of history is connected to and conditioned by our contemporary context.

**4.2 Classical Philosophy**

(2) Classical Greek philosophy owes much to Egyptian scholarship emanating from Heliopolis, as both Pythagoras and Plato are believed to have studied at that center of learning. Indeed, the Plimpton 332 clay tablet reveals that Babylonian mathematicians knew not only of the Pythagorean theorem of right triangles but also of trigonometric functions. Classical philosophy emerged in ancient Greece with the Presocratics; the three great philosophers Socrates (470–399 BCE), Plato (c. 428–347 BCE), and Aristotle (384–322 BCE); and schools of thought that came after—Epicureans, stoics, and others. From what remains of the works of the Presocratics, they were primarily interested in questions of metaphysics and natural philosophy. Some Presocratics, such as Parmenides, were monists while others, such as Heraclitus, were plurists. Plato advanced a theory of the forms, a metaphysical doctrine that holds that every particular thing that exists participates in an immaterial form or essence that gives this thing its identity. The invisible realm of the forms differs fundamentally from the changing realm we experience in this world. The invisible realm is eternal, unchanging, and perfect. Aristotle’s work centers on his doctrine of the four causes: “What’s it made of?” (material cause), “What shape does it have?” (formal cause), “What agent gave it this form?” (efficient cause), and, finally, “What is its end goal?” (final cause). The four causes can explain nature of all things in this universe, including the universe itself. Aristotle’s universe is a closed system of final causes. Each final cause leads to another, until we get to the first cause or prime mover.

**4.3 Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Philosophy**

(3) Greek and Roman imperialism in the Middle East and North Africa brought Jews—and later, Christians—into the intellectual sphere of Hellenism. Jewish and later Christian scholars incorporated ideas of classical Greek and Roman philosophy into their own theological studies. As Arab conquerors and traders expanded into the Middle East and Africa, the Muslim world adopted and advanced classical philosophy and the natural sciences. Yet a tension at all times runs through these works as philosophers tried to balance theological revelation and freedom of intellectual exploration. Unlike the classical Greek and Roman philosophers, the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim philosopher always works with a partner, the events and facts central to the religion. It is only in the early modern age that philosophers replace the primacy of God as the source of truth with reason.

**Comprehension check**

*Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T” before true statements and “F” before false ones.*

1. Scholars adopt two main approaches to the history of philosophy. …

2. In reading philosophical texts too straightly, past philosophers are judged by contemporary standards. …

3. A hermeneutic approach attempts to take the best of the presentist and contextualists approaches, viewing the historical context of original texts seriously but also recognizing that our interpretation of history is connected to and conditioned by our contemporary context. …

4. Egyptian philosophy owes much to Greek scholarship emanating from Heliopolis, as both Pythagoras and Plato are believed to have studied at that center of learning. …

5. Presocratics, such as Parmenides, were plurists while others, such as Heraclitus, were monists. …

6. Jewish and later Christian scholars corporated ideas of classical Greek and Roman philosophy into their own theological studies. …

7. Unlike the classical Greek and Roman philosophers, the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim philosopher always works with a partner, the events and facts central to the religion. …

**Multiple choice questions**

*Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items. There can be more than one answer correct.*

**What approach interprets philosophy in terms of the historical and cultural contexts in which it was written.**

1. textualist
2. contextualist
3. philosophical

**Who were three great philosophers?**

1. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
2. Socrates, Plato, Heraclitus
3. Socrates, Pythagoras, Aristotle

**What are the four causes?**

1. Material, formal, effective, last
2. Material, formal, efficient, last
3. Material, formal, efficient, final

**Who brought Jews and later Chistians into the intellectual sphere of Hellenisms?**

1. Europans
2. Greeks
3. Romans

**In early modern age philosophers replace the primacy of God as the source of truth with what?**

1. love
2. Wisdom
3. Reason

**Synonym finding**

*Find a single word in the passage which means:*

1. Debates (para. 1)………………

2. Ready (para. 1)………………

3. Technique (para. 1)………………

4. Intervals (para. 1)………………

5. Customary (para. 2)………………

6. Roles (para. 2)………………

7. Domain (para. 2)………………

8. Field (para. 3)………………

9. Rulers (para. 3)………………

10. Stress (para. 3)………………

11. Root (para. 3)………………

**Matching**

*Match the terms with their definitions.*

1. Contextualist …

2. Empiricism …

3. Hermeneutic approach …

4. Logos …

5. Monism …

6. Natural philosophy …

7. Plurism …

8. Presentist approach …

9. Theory of the forms …

10. Zeno’s paradoxes …

1. approach an approach to the philosophy that interprets the ideas of philosophers in terms of the historical and cultural contexts in which they wrote.
2. the belief that the universe is made up of more than one substance.
3. a metaphysical doctrine that holds that every particular thing that exists in our changing, material world participates in an immaterial form or essence, which is unchanging, invisible, and perfect and which gives this thing its identity.
4. a belief that all knowledge is derived inductively from sense experience.
5. an approach to philosophy that examines philosophical texts for the arguments they contain and judges how and whether they remain relevant today.
6. paradoxes proposed by Zeno that attempt to prove that change and motion are illusory.
7. the thoughts of God, which according to Philo of Alexandria serve as the means by which God creates the physical world.
8. an approach to philosophy that takes the historical context of the original text seriously but also recognizes the incuence of contemporary issues and perspectives.
9. the fields of study that eventually gave rise to science.
10. the belief that the universe is made up of one substance.

**Cloze test**

*There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best choice for each blank.*

**Boethius**

Like Augustine, Boethius (c. 477–524 CE) was a philosopher who (1)………….. the late Roman and Christian worlds. Indeed, he serves as one of the most important intermediaries between these two very different worlds. A Roman statesman and Christian theologian, Boethius is best known for his work The Consolation of Philosophy. Boethius was imprisoned on conspiracy charges and subsequently executed by the ruler he had served, the Ostrogothic King Theodoric the Great. (2)……………to his imprisonment, he had translated and written commentaries on Aristotle’s work, logic, music theory, astronomy, and mathematics that were influential for medieval philosophers. However, while (3)………………….., he wrote The Consolation of Philosophy, which takes the form of a dialogue between Boethius and philosophy personified by a beautiful woman who visits him in his cell. The text starts out with a bitter Boethius complaining of his fall from power to Lady Philosophy. She consoles him by showing Boethius that happiness remains possible for him even in his wretched state. She argues that Boethius has not lost true happiness, or the true Platonic form of happiness, as these are not found in material (4)…………. or high stature, but in family, virtuous actions, and wisdom. She then reminds him that true good—and so true happiness—is found in God. Extremely popular throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Marenbon 2020), The Consolation never makes mention of Christianity. In facing death, Boethius turns to (5)…………………… . His work and influence exemplify how Catholicism incorporated classical philosophy into its worldview.

1 A) connected B) **straddled** C) battled D) saved

2 A) Previous B) After C) **Prior** D) Before

3 A) freed B) **imprisoned** C) traveling D) studying

4 A) thinking B) **possessions** C) speaking D) thinks

5 A) God B) Himself C) Sokrates D) **Plato**

**Source:**

Smith, N. (2022). *Introduction to Philosophy*. Houstom, Texas: OpenStax.