

The Inferno: Establishing a Philosophical Baseline, Part Two

The light was departing. The brown air drew down all the earth's creatures, calling them to rest from their day-roving, as I, one man alone, prepared myself to face the double war of the journey and the pity, which memory shall here set down, nor hesitate, nor err.

Each statement covers a major theme from *The Inferno*. Please write “yes” next to the statement if you agree with it, and “no” if you disagree. If you aren’t sure, write what sounds best to you in *most* cases; while it’s important to recognize the nuances of our world, it’s also interesting to see which side you lean toward. **Do not write “I don’t know” or “Both” under any circumstances.**

There are no “correct” answers, but the sheet will help predict how you will react to the text (which is why it’s important to choose one side or the other). Think carefully as you choose your answers, and write several sentences responding to each statement. **You must include examples – real ones from life or art, not hypothetical situations or straw men – whenever you’re explaining and justifying your choices.** We will discuss these for the next few weeks, and well-thought-out positions make for better talks!

- a. _____ I suppress certain elements of my “inner life” – temper, vulnerability, etc. – in order to make my way through the world.
- b. _____ If a partner betrays me, I will not stay with them.
- c. _____ While most people can fall in love multiple times, *true* love exists only once in any given person’s lifetime.
- d. _____ I test the beliefs I form, and routinely re-examine my principles and ways of thinking.
- e. _____ I have fears I’ll never be able to abandon.
- f. _____ Good men can still do evil things intentionally.
- g. _____ As long as you pull it off successfully, revenge is a worthwhile pursuit.
- h. _____ Communities function more smoothly when one system of ideas dominates the discourse.
- i. _____ I don’t get a sense of closure after a conflict unless I’ve had the last word.
- j. _____ I cannot suffer hypocrisy in silence.
- k. _____ We all have individual destinies, and we cannot escape them.
- l. _____ If the cost of truth is high, it’s OK to lie.
- m. _____ I’m waiting to find my purpose, but I don't know where to look.
- n. _____ I’m willing to hurt someone I love if I benefit from doing so.
- o. _____ If I could choose to see the future, I wouldn’t.