



# Why Philosophy?: Benefits for Students of Implementing Philosophy into the High School Classroom

While often seen as a strictly academic field, philosophy and its central questions are both timeless and deeply important for understanding our world. Philosophy is at the heart of many important questions we ask ourselves and each other: “What’s out there?” “How do we know?” “How should we live?” These questions are so fundamental to our lives that most of us have probably considered the answers to them even if we’ve had no formal exposure to philosophy. Engaging with these questions offers countless benefits.

## **Improved Academic Performance:**

Philosophy promotes analytical reasoning, reading comprehension, logical argumentation, and independent thinking. One study found that philosophy programs help young students improve their reasoning, discussion, and logical argumentation skills. Another study found that students who study philosophy also tend to perform higher on the Cognitive Reflection Test, which measures problem-solving skills. Students who study philosophy at the collegiate level receive some of the highest scores on a variety of standardized tests including the GMAT, LSAT, and GRE.

## **Career Readiness:**

Studying philosophy helps prepare students for career success in a rapidly changing world. Philosophy majors out-earn other humanities majors at all career stages by a considerable margin. Philosophy helps students to develop a range of life skills, such as written and verbal communication, abstract thinking, and problem solving, that are highly sought after in today’s job market. This translates to higher average mid-career salaries than all other non-STEM majors, around \$85,100 per year.

## **Enhanced Civic Engagement:**

Philosophy demands that we examine our own biases and strive to understand the perspectives of others. It emphasizes that behind every idea is an individual with their own history, and that this history is integral to truly understanding their thoughts. In this way, philosophy prepares students to better negotiate a world that’s often marked by conflict and partisan tensions, helping them to develop robust and nuanced understandings of the world while also imparting the tools necessary for fruitful contribution to civil discourse.

## **Personal Growth:**

Answers to philosophical questions are rarely clear-cut. Philosophy can be a deeply personal enterprise, and engaging in it means students necessarily put themselves into their work. Students learn to be self-critical which, in time, gives way to greater self-confidence. Numerous studies have also linked studying philosophy to socio-emotional growth, independent thinking, and positive self-esteem in children and adolescents.

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