INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

• Use black ink or black ball point pen. Do not use pencil or gel pen. Do not use correction fluid.

• Write the information required in the spaces above.

• Use both sides of the paper. Write only within the white areas of the book.

• Write the question number in the two boxes provided in the left hand margin at the start of each answer e.g. Q1

• If you make an error when writing the question number, fill in both boxes completely and write the question number in the space immediately below the boxes you have filled in.

• Leave at least two line spaces between each answer.

• Do all rough work in this answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked. Do not tear out any part of this book. All work must be handed in.

• If you run out of space in the answer book, ask the Invigilator for a supplementary answer book. Complete all of the information required in the spaces on the front of the supplementary answer book.
Knowledge can be defined as a justified true belief according to the traditional definition. Scepticism challenges how we justify beliefs to amount them to genuine knowledge and thus is impossible.

Better cases target the justification of knowledge and scepticism leads us to scepticism as a result. Getter shows how justification can be inadequate when searching for knowledge. To illustrate, I place a melon in my fridge to store over night. In the middle of the night, a friend eats my melon and

What is left and replaces it in the morning.

When looking for my melon, my belief that it is in the fridge is justified because I remember putting it there and I find a melon in my fridge. However, this case shows my belief does not amount to knowledge as my melon has actually been eaten and disposed of. There have been attempts to respond to Getter such as infallibilism (I know I have not made a mistake) in the knowledge (my beliefs is not defeated by facts). However, this leads to scepticism for two reasons. Firstly, we cannot rule out error alike justifying a belief and secondly, we can never know whether we are in a Getter case or normal case.

Other attempts of questioning justification have been made other than Getter. The illusion argument illustrates how our empirical data is not always reliable. We can witness a straight ruler appear to be bent when held
saturated in a pool of water or our thumb would appear larger than a coin that is far away. However, we know of these illusions because of sense experience so these does not present a strong argument. Knowledge is still possible because we know why these illusions occur using physics.

Descartes also attempted to show knowledge is impossible because we can never know if we dream or if we are dreaming as we were hallucinating. Thus, he builds an argument to support skepticism as it presupposes a reality and thus knowledge is still possible. We are also able to distinguish between dreaming and reality because reality is more coherent than dreaming so we know which is which.

The illusion argument and argument from dreaming are more shown to show our vulnerability to errors as opposed to showing knowledge is impossible but we are still able to distinguish whether something is an illusion or if we are dreaming. To add to this, so far these skeptical arguments, including Descartes, have only challenged the notion of propositional knowledge so it would seem that analytical knowledge is still possible and is still knowledge. Knowledge by definition mathematical and decidable e.g. C is smaller than A because B is smaller than A and C is smaller than B so

\[ 2 + 8 = 10, \quad 5 + 5 = 10 \quad \text{therefore} \quad 2 + 8 = 5 + 5. \]

The brain in a vice thought experiment challenges all knowledge, propositional and analytical. It is because of the idea that all knowledge is
downloaded into our brains through a computer and what you are currently experiencing is also put into your head. It is also possible that this fact is true be it is put into our brains that it is 10.

This presents a challenge to all knowledge but

fails in a similar way to the argument from dreaming. It is a pointless thought experiment because we can certainly refer to a brain in a vat as opposed to the image of a brain being in an image of a vat. This, along with the problem with the argument from dreaming shown a similar objection to scepticism as seen in the ordinary language argument.

The ordinary language argument shows that scepticism cannot claim knowledge is impossible. Sceptics use the term ‘error’ when talking about justification but this presupposes ‘correctness’ and thus it is possible to have knowledge because it is possible to be correct. However, sceptics challenge this notion as this does not necessarily mean we are correct, imperfection presupposes perfection but it is still possible to have no object being perfect.

Wittgenstein developed the ordinary language argument by adding that to decide something is to decide the very meaning of what you are deciding. With this in mind, it then becomes very difficult to know what it is you are deciding as it no longer has any meaning.

Sometimes it can seem sceptics are too hard to criticise knowledge and they can get a bit excessive. With reference to Hume’s problem...
Skepticism thus would mean that we would have to give up many values and beliefs because many are founded on faith. This would in fact be difficult so even if skepticism shows knowledge to be impossible, it does not actually matter as it would not change anything. People will still search for (anything) truth and it is those beliefs people will hold.

Skeptical claims are alleged as meaningless as we can see using the verification principle. Skeptical claims are neither analyzable or empirically verifiable and will therefore add nothing. Or, instead, you could refer to the falsification principle as how skeptical claims are meaningless as they cannot be falsified. Only these principles we can see are what we refer to as ‘knowledge’ is possible as through analysis and empirical data, we can strengthen ideas and theories based on the world. It is also possible to look at the idea of synthetic a priori knowledge as our own knowledge of the external world using mathematics to survey such claims.

In conclusion, the skeptics use of ‘error’ presupposing ‘correspondence’ is a reasoning valid argument. It shows how knowledge is possible as opposed to difficult. On top of this, it is difficult to put down analytical knowledge as impossible and, both verificationism and falsificationism, shows that skeptical claims are in fact meaningless claims. A final point to make is that the claim ‘skeptical argument show that knowledge is impossible’ is similar to the Socratic paradox: I know that I know nothing. Knowledge does offer nothing according to the claim, but paradoxically claiming no knowledge.
Cognitivists within philosophy aim to search for an ultimate moral truth. It is an apparent teleological approach as we aim to search for and/or follow the ultimate moral truths.

However, this proves to be a challenge as there are many who deny moral truth and therefore knowledge of it is impossible.

The idea of moral truth can date back to Socratic times with the likes of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Plato played a big role in searching for moral truths as he used his theory of the Forms. Moral truths existed with the Form of honesty, justice, and kindness, and ultimately the Form of good—the supreme Form. Having full knowledge of moral truths, or so he claimed, he showed knowledge of moral truths was possible, albeit through many years of study.

The road to moral truths appears to be an elitist one as only a select few can discover knowledge of moral truths. This is surely unfair as the majority will in fact remain lacking in such knowledge. On the other hand, why should this be an issue? We have experts in other fields, a select few at the top of their field of knowledge so surely it would be acceptable to have experts of morality that others can contrast.

Moral truths or a transcendent truth is problematic as they would be very difficult to dispute. On the other hand, you have those who search for knowledge of moral truths in relation to natural facts.
Mill associated 'good' with 'happy'. Using natural facts, he had seen that what is overall desirable brings individual happiness as it is a natural force we search for happiness and pleasure. However, there are two meanings of desirable. The first meaning is 'what is worth desiring' and the second is 'what is capable of being desired'. When looking at both, what is capable of being desired, we could see that people desire all sorts of unnecessary rubbish. Despite this, it is unlikely Mill missed this distinction because both what is worth desiring and what is capable of being desired, would result in happiness.

In response to Mill, it is possible he has made a mistake in the naturalistic fallacy. It is not logical to say that 'goodness' = 'happiness' because you cannot ask 'is being happy good?' as it would be similar to 'is being good good?'. If the two are synonymous, it is a closed question as there is only one logical answer - 'yes'. Good should equal y and happiness should equal x, 'is x the same as y?'. So it is a question with two possible answers - 'yes' or 'no'. In this instance, we still do not have knowledge of moral truths.

But is the naturalistic fallacy an actual fallacy? It is possible that concepts and properties have been confused. Take water for example, you have the concept of 'water' and the concept of 'H₂O'. These are two different concepts that refer to the same property. Similarly, the concepts of 'goodness' and 'happiness' may also refer to the same property and therefore we still have knowledge of what is good.

From a non-cognitivist's standpoint, knowledge of moral...
truths are impossible. One non-cognitivist argument is emotivism. Here, moral values are reduced to descriptive and emotive meanings. It is now true that stealing is wrong. Stealing refers to taking something not belonging to you without permission (descriptive) and to say it is wrong is to show disapproval (emotive). Here, there is no moral truths as all we have to are the emotions of an individual being expressed. Empiricism sounds like manipulation as people encourage moral values onto others with no reason. Supporting or disagreeing abortion is the same as saying the ‘hurtful abortion’ or ‘bad abortion’. This is not necessarily true as emotion may link to facts about suffering and pain and attitudes are shared and are not made in isolation.

Alternatively, you could take a relativist’s argument and interpret as indistinguishable between cognitivists and non-cognitivists. Relativism shows that moral values are in fact relative to different cultures. In this case, moral truths are possible to know; knowing the values of a culture, but these moral truths are subjective instead of objective. There are many examples of cultural differences, e.g. different ideas on female circumcision, ideas on ‘witches’, age of consent, piracy laws, etc. The extent of disagreement between cultures is arguable evidence for are being no moral objective moral truths.

When using disagreement to disprove objective moral truths, it is logical to have agreement support moral truths. Many cultures disagree with violence and murder while others are following suit, dropping capital punishment or tightening laws on such issues. This is different moral progress, many towards moral truths.
alongside other cultures. Secondly, it is possible that
with those in disagreement, at least one side is
wrong. One party lacks the knowledge or more
truths while the other does hold knowledge and
aims to more truths, i.e. Similarly, both may
have knowledge of more truths but are stuck
in different situations. Similarly to moral ethics,
both know the aim is to flourish but being
in different situations, both will have to reach the
end in different ways.

One big question that still remains is why
people can in a be the wrong way even they
know how to rise? Why do they when they know
x is the better option. If we were to accept
knowledge of more truths being possible then we would
have to accept the weakness of the will. On the
other hand, there’s weakness of the will. It could
just be that someone else does y instead of x
does not fully understand why x is better
and in fact does not have knowledge.

To conclude, it is difficult to dispute that knowledge
of moral truths is impossible. A cognitivist can
respond to a non-cognitivist with ‘They don’t know
the truth’. The non-cognitivist arguments are
inadequate for dispute moral truths as there are aspects
they fail to acknowledge such as agreement supporting
moral truths. If knowledge of moral truths was impossible
then moral progress would be impossible. But
what we can see among different societies suggest otherwise.
On the otherhand, moral progress is a result of tolerance
of one another. At least, moral truths are possible
on a subjective level as it is difficult to
find an objective moral truth followed by every society.