



Plato Phaedo

Ideas for Further Study

Below is a selection of questions for you to go away and research. They are designed to help you explore the philosophical and literary context of the *Phaedo*, rather than prepare you for questions in your A-Level papers. A better grasp of the context will, however, greatly enrich your response to the text.

Plato's Theories of Recollection

- a) How does the theory of recollection (*anamnesis*) in the *Meno* compare with that of the *Phaedo*?

- b) Do you think the discussion of recollection in the *Phaedo* assumes any familiarity with the theory on the part of the reader? If so, how much? Justify your answers.

- c) Do you find the argument for recollection in the *Meno* to be sound? Explain what you think are its strengths and weaknesses.

The Dialogue Method

- a) Pick one passage, in translation, from an early dialogue of Plato and one from a late dialogue (you can find a list of dialogues by period in the introduction, in your textbook). What stylistic differences can you observe between each of the two and the passage of the *Phaedo* you have studied? In what ways is Plato using the dialogue form differently?

- b) What other philosophers, ancient and modern, have made use of the dialogue form? Pick one or two, and explore how their use of the form compares with Plato's.



B L O O M S B U R Y

The Trial of Socrates

a) Read in translation Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Plato's *Apology*. What common ground can you identify between these two portrayals of Socrates? Who else is Aristophanes trying to represent in his Socrates character?

b) Why was Socrates condemned to death? What, if any, were the political motivations behind the accusations against him?

Useful sources: Plato, *Apology*; Xenophon, *Apology*; Aristophanes, *Clouds*. For accessible secondary material, visit <https://www.historyofphilosophy.net/socrates-and-plato>