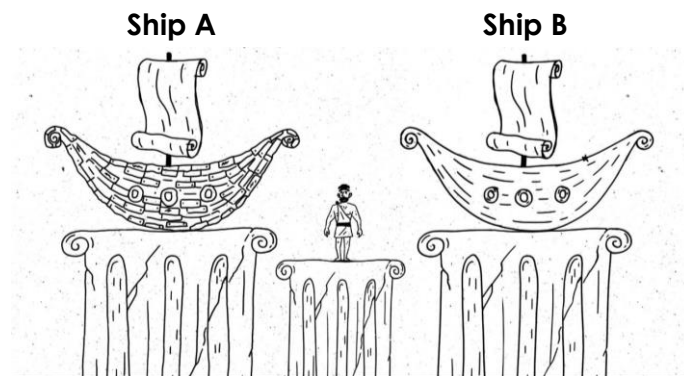


## Study Skills: How to Conduct a Thought Experiment



### A Summary of 'The Problem of the Ship of Theseus'

Theseus had a ship that he used to sail around the world. Over the course of 10 years, old parts on this ship were gradually removed and replaced with new parts. Eventually, the ship was made out of entirely new parts. This is Ship A.

Meanwhile, the old parts were being gradually pieced together used to make another ship. This is Ship B which is made entirely out of the parts of the old ship.

Which one of these ships is the original ship? Are these ships the same? If you believe that Ship B is the original ship, at what point did this happen? If 51% of the original parts were on Ship B, then does that mean it is the original ship?

**TASK: Write a response to the following question:**

**Which of the ships is the original 'Ship of Theseus': Ship A with the replaced parts or Ship B that was remade with the original parts?**

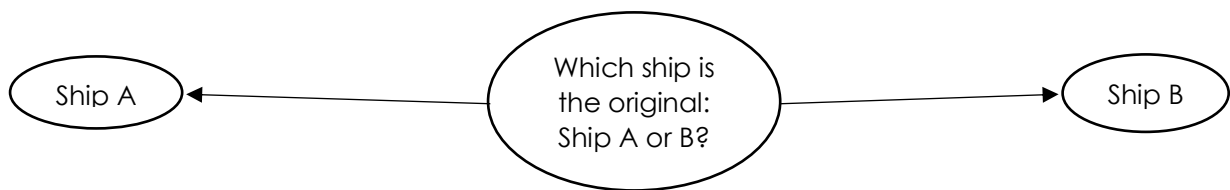
Extension: Explore what this reveals about human identity in relation to how humans gradually change over time e.g. are you the same person now as you were 10 years ago?

The recommended word count for your answer is approximately 500 words.

Top Tips: Remember to plan your essay before you begin writing. You may wish to use the mind-map and prompt questions on the following page to come up with ideas for/against both sides of the argument. You may also wish to write a PEE table to help you plan what you will include in each paragraph.

Prompt Questions for the Mind-Map Plan:

- If you believe that Ship B is the original ship, at what point did this happen? If 51% of the original parts were on Ship B, then does that mean it is the original ship? Why?
- What are the most important parts of your identity? Are there any parts of your identity that could never be taken away from you? Are there parts of the identity of Ship A and B that will always remain too?
- Do our ideas about the identity of an object matter more than what the identity of an object actually is?
- If another person had all of your memories instead of their own memories, would they be the same person as you? If you no longer had your own memories but the other person had your memories instead, then would that change your answer? Why?



**Success Criteria for your written response (tick each of these steps as you complete them):**

- Introduction that summarises the thought experiment
- Main paragraph 1: Argument (Explain your initial argument for which ship you believe to be the original)
- Main paragraph 2: Counter-Argument (Explain how someone holding an opposite view to you would criticise the argument that you have made so far)
- Main paragraph 3: Rebuttal (Defend your argument in response to the counter-argument)
- Extension: Explain what this reveals about the human concept of identity

Reference: Image taken from youtube video 'Thought experiment «THESEUS» (English) #f'ilosofix' from author SRF Kultur. Video published on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and image sourced for use here on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGAnLY46zAk>