

Writing as a philosopher

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Philosophy is mainly a matter of suggesting answers to questions (which do not have a straightforward or trivial answer) and defending them against objections. Therefore, it makes sense to think of philosophical writing as the description of a controversy between people (philosophers or philosophers to be) who share an interest in the same question but suggest different answers – none of them just unreasonable.

As the **author** of a philosophical paper, you might imagine yourself in the position of a **talk-show host** who is preparing a talk-show which will then be shown on television.

Choose your topic and think about how to **introduce the topic** addressing an **audience** of amateurs who have their finger at the remote control. You should raise a **question** that people in the audience recognize as important, important enough to keep them from choosing a different program.

Think about whom to invite to your talk-show as a **guest** (it should be people who have suggested answers to the question, ideally incompatible answers). Remember that the philosophical experts in the subject matter you have chosen as a topic for the talk-show will eventually be in the audience. They will be able to judge if you really have invited the most relevant researchers to participate in your show.

Then, you have to take the roles of your 'guests' respectively (one after the other): Let them **present their answers to the question**, and allow them to make these answers as plausible as possible to the audience. It should become evident from the way you present their respective positions on what topics they actually disagree and why.

As for a **conclusion**, you should point out in your own terms the pros and cons of the presented positions. You might also suggest your own answer to the question, relating to you various guests as allies or opponents to your own view. Can you expect support? If so, from whom? And if not, why not? If you choose to do that, you have to make explicit in which way your own view is more convincing than the answers previously given to the question of common interest by your guests.

You might even let your guests challenge the view you present yourself and then try to defend it against their objections. After all, these guests are all very smart.