

You have now schematized Sextus's best arguments for and against the existence of God—or, to be precise, his best argument in favor of the existence of Gods, and his best argument showing that *it cannot be apprehended whether* God exists. (You may wish at some point to discuss whether these precise formulations are important.) But in this paper, more generally, you will present and evaluate these arguments.

After an appropriate introduction—one that uses one paragraph and no grandiloquence to introduce the question at hand, also forecasting your conclusion about it—begin by presenting the first argument. This should take no more than two pages. You should stick close to your schema, or at least close to its corrected version. Write fluid prose, but do not aspire to eloquence. Your goal in these first two pages is to present this argument clearly, in a way understandable even to someone who has read neither your schema nor Sextus himself. Accordingly, audition your presentation for others outside of our class, clarifying the parts they cannot understand.

Next, in less than a page, adduce the most powerful objection to this argument you can muster. You may use one of those we discussed in class, or you may develop your own. You may find it easier to adduce the objection in the midst of your presentation or at its end, once you have taken your reader through the whole argument. This decision will depend on your particular presentation, and thus require your good judgment. But it should add a page to your presentation of the argument, making three altogether. (Three and a half if you include the introduction.)

In either case, once you have presented the first argument and its objection, proceed to do the same for the second. It too should likewise take no more than three pages all told. As a result, when this section is done, your paper should be about six and a half pages, seven perhaps. Now, in two final pages, assess the results. Which argument was better? Which objection was more serious, and which argument has the resources with which to reply? In other words, can a theist respond to the objection you adduced against Sextus's theistic argument? If so, how? Can an agnostic respond to the objection you adduced against Sextus's agnostic argument? If so, how? If responses are available in both cases, which response is better?

After having prosecuted this complex dialectic, you will be in the perfect position to conclude with this required, final, sentence: "In light of these arguments, the objections that can be raised against them, and the resources available to them for reply to these objections, it is most reasonable to..." Fill in the ellipses with a clause that presents the results of your investigation: "believe that God(s) exist(s)," or "believe that no God exists," or "suspend judgment about the existence of God(s)."

Pages: 9–10

Font: 12 point

Margins: Same as this prompt (i.e., standard Word margins)

Spacing: Double