

A good way to prepare for writing a philosophy paper is to schematize the arguments you will be treating—that is to say, to set them out in premise and conclusion form, much like you did when you applied the argument forms from Weston, ch. 6, to Marcus Aurelius. This exercise makes the task of writing much easier in the end because it forces you to know beforehand exactly how the arguments work, or, as the case may be, do not work.

Since you will soon be writing a paper that evaluates arguments from Sextus Empiricus, it is time to prepare schemata of these arguments. One argues for the existence of Gods, and is found on pp. 193–94, beginning “Now the substance of existing things,” and concluding “Gods, therefore, exist.”

A second argument weighs against any divine existence, although Sextus does not think it quite disproves God’s existence. He carefully formulates his conclusion as follows: “it cannot be apprehended whether God exists.” This argument is found on pp. 177–78, beginning “He who says that God exists,” and concluding “which is manifest impiety.”

Schematize these two arguments. Represent each of Sextus’s main claims as either a premise or a conclusion, or, in some cases, both. You may quote these claims, but sometimes, in order to make the logical structure still clearer, it will be better to paraphrase them. If you do paraphrase, please include the verbatim quotation in parentheses, so that I can evaluate the fidelity of your paraphrase.

For each conclusion, as we have been doing in class, name the premises from which it is supposed to be derived (e.g., “P1 + P2”), and, whenever possible, name the argument-form according to which it is derived (e.g., “modus ponens”). This is not always possible, you will find, since there are many more argument-forms than we have learned from Weston; but do your best.

The result should be about 2 pages, but no more.