

Properties of Good Philosophical Questions for Discussion

Good philosophical questions for discussion should have four properties:

1. Central
2. Contestable
3. Controversial
4. Answerable

(They should usually
—but not always—
be “on topic” too)

CENTRAL

They should matter a great deal to those in the discussion (and likely *all* people) because they challenge or investigate who or what we are or other fundamental issues related to our existence and experience.

CONTESTABLE

There must be more than one possible answer that those in the discussion see as being reasonable.

CONTROVERSIAL

Those participating in the discussion need to *care* about which of the reasonable answers is the right one.

ANSWERABLE

The answer to the question must be a “what is most reasonable to believe” style answer.