



For Auntie Sandra and Uncle Jim, with love. - J.H.

*For all the questioners everywhere -
Keep Asking! - J.L.*

*I thank everyone involved in the production of this book for
this great experience, both working and learning, and to all
who have supported my work since the beginning - A.D.*

A TEMPLAR BOOK

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GREAT MINDS

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WHAT'S PHILOSOPHY FOR?

Philosophy is the study of knowledge. Its name comes from Ancient Greek and means 'love of wisdom'. In fact, many people picture philosophers as wise ancient Greek men. But, as this book shows, philosophers are not always ancient or Greek, and not always men. Philosophy is for everyone – for us and for you.

Philosophers ask questions, think through the answers, and explore the best ways of doing both these things. When you read the questions here, you might say, 'I've wondered about that too!', or sometimes you might say, 'I never thought of that! That's interesting...'. If so, that means you are a philosopher too.

What does it mean to be good?

How do we know things, and how can we tell if something is true?

Who am I?

What is time?

How should we treat others?

Should actions be judged by their consequences?

What makes something beautiful?

In this book, we'll look at just a few of the most fascinating philosophers from around the world and from all walks of life. We'll talk about how their ideas have often been brave, powerful and ground-breaking. They've taught us how to constructively disagree, helped us create fairer, safer societies and make important scientific discoveries. They've even overturned concepts that people thought had always been the truth and would never, ever change.

So, what's philosophy for? Well, if you think about it, it's a tool to change the world.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is organised into chapters, each of which tells the story of a philosopher, a group of philosophers or a collective philosophy. It presents the historical time and place they are from, some of their questions, what led them to ask them, and what kinds of answers they came up with.

Key ideas from each thinker's philosophy have a heading with a special font (**THIS ONE**) and are written in *italics*.

If you get stuck on a difficult word or phrase, head to the glossary at the back of the book to find out what it means.

At the end of each chapter, we've highlighted some other philosophers you could find out about and the fascinating ideas they have to explore!

MEET THE THINKERS



LOOKING FOR ANSWERS
IN A TIME OF WAR

CONFUCIUS



THE ILLUSION OF
MOTION

ZENO OF ELEA



THE
SOCRATIC

SOCRATES,
ARISTOTLE & PLATO



BEING A BRIDGE

IBN KHALDUN



THE MAN WHO
THOUGHT IN A CAVE

ZERA JACOB



THE AGE OF
REASON

RENÉ DESCARTES,
JEREMY BENTHAM &
MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT



TO CHANGE
THE WORLD

KARL MARX



EXPERIMENTS
WITH TRUTH

MOHANDAS
KARAMCHAND
'MAHATMA' GANDHI



THE EXISTENCE OF
NOTHING

NIISHIDA KITARŌ



WE ARE THE
SYMBOL MAKERS

EULAND LANGER



THE TROLLEY
PROBLEM

PHILIPPA FOOT



AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

HENRY ODERA
ORUKA



PEOPLE OF THE LONG
WHITE CLOUD

MAORI
PHILOSOPHERS



ANIMALS AND US

MARY MIDGLEY



AN ACCIDENT AT
THE CROSSROADS

KIMBERLEE WILLIAMS
CRENSHAW



GLOSSARY

PRESENT-DAY CHINA

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS IN A TIME OF WAR

CONFUCIUS / KONG FUZI / 孔子
(551-479 BCE)

THINGS FALLING APART

For many years, the Zhou dynasty (about 1050-256 BCE) had been a time of peace and order, with the land's far-flung states all under the control of the central government. Music and literature flourished and there were clear ideas of how people should behave. By the time Confucius was born, however, things were breaking down. The states were at war with each other and the old ways were disappearing.

BORN INTO TROUBLED TIMES

Confucius's father was a soldier. He died when Confucius was three, leaving the young boy to be raised in poverty by his mother. In the social hierarchy of Confucius's time, he was considered shi - one class above common people. This meant he had access to education despite his poverty. After years of schooling, he worked his way up in the government, becoming an advisor to the local ruler. But unlike others in government, Confucius wanted to use his respected position to help others.



THE HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

As the years of chaos dragged on, scholars and teachers struggled to make sense of what was happening around them.

Why is this happening?

How can we make it stop?

What does it mean to be good?



With so many answers and solutions to these questions being considered, this time was later named the Hundred Schools of Thought. Like many of the other thinkers, Confucius looked to the past to find ways of creating a better future.

ON THE ROAD

Disappointed with the local ruler's leadership and refusal to follow his teachings, Confucius decided to leave his job. For the next 14 years, he and a group of his students travelled great distances through the war-torn countryside in search of a new ruler to guide in more honourable ways.



There were hardships and dangers, and at one point they nearly starved. But, as they walked, mile after mile, they talked and argued and asked many philosophical questions, testing and shaping Confucius's ideas as they went. In the end, they found no ruler willing to listen and Confucius returned home to continue teaching.

CONFUCIUS'S NEW NAME

Beginning in the 16th century, Jesuit priests were sent from Europe to learn about Chinese culture as a first step to converting the Chinese people to Christianity. They translated many Chinese texts into Latin, including a book of Confucius's sayings. Chinese names were also Latinised, so Kong Fuzi became Confucius.