

How to Read a Book

Chapter 18 Discussion Questions

1. What are the main questions that philosophy attempts to answer?
Distinguish between first-order and second-order questions. (p. 266 -269)
2. What are the five different philosophical styles or methods (in the Western tradition) that Adler identifies, and how does recognizing these styles help a reader understand philosophical works? (p. 273 - 279)
3. How should a reader approach philosophical arguments differently than arguments in practical or scientific books? What special considerations apply? (p. 282 - 284)
4. Why do the authors suggest that reading philosophy requires more active engagement and critical thinking than other types of books? What makes philosophical reading particularly demanding? (p. 284 - 285)
5. What do the authors say about the role of context and the "great conversation" when reading philosophical works? How should a reader relate one philosopher's ideas to another's? (p. 285)
6. What do the authors say about the reading of "canonical texts?" (p. 287 - 288)