

70a – 71d

1. What is it that Meno first asks Socrates? What do Meno's questions presuppose?
2. Why does Socrates not answer Meno directly? (Had the roles been reversed and it had been Socrates who had asked Meno these questions about virtue (*arete*), how do you think Meno might have replied?)
3. Instead of answering Meno's questions directly, Socrates at first seems to avoid them. He talks instead, for example, about Thesselians, about Gorgias, about Meno's lover, about how Athenians might have answered Meno's questions had some stranger asked, and about himself. Assuming that such talk is not just poetic filler, what do you think it accomplishes?
4. Socrates responds to Meno's questions with questions of his own. What issues do Socrates' questions raise?
5. Meno regards himself as handsome, rich and well-born. Does this self-impression suffice for him to know who he truly is?
6. Why might Socrates feign not to remember how Gorgias seemed to be with respect to his knowledge of virtue?
7. This opening sequence of the dialogue introduces a number of themes: what is virtue and how is it acquired; the relation of knowledge and ignorance; how a quality or property of something ("what sort of thing something is") relates to the whole of the thing ("what it is"); who is Meno; the relation of seeming and being; the role of "remembering" in knowing. Reread the opening section and note how these themes are signalled.

71e-79d

8. Meno offers three successive answers to the question, "what is virtue?" What are they? Can you say at this point what would count in principle as

an appropriate answer to this question—in other words do we know what *sort of* answer we are looking for?

9. What is Socrates' objection to Meno's first definition?
10. What is the point of Socrates' development of his objection (72a-73c); in particular what does it show *both* about the question itself and about Meno?
11. How does Socrates' developed objection lead Meno to his second definition? What is that definition?
12. What is Socrates' objection to Meno's second definition? In offering this definition, what is Meno's basic mistake?
13. How does Socrates' objection lead Meno to amend his second definition? What is wrong with the amendment?
14. What is wrong in general with both of Meno's first two definitions of virtue?
15. What is the point of the discussion of shape?
16. From what source does Meno derive his third definition of virtue? Before he gives it, what does Socrates insist that Meno stop doing?
17. What are the two parts of Meno's third definition of virtue?
18. What is Socrates' criticism of the first part of this definition? How does his criticism connect knowledge and desiring good things?
19. What is Socrates' criticism of the second part of the definition?
20. What criticism of all of Meno's attempts to answer the question, what is virtue? does Socrates reiterate? What kind of answer to the question do Socrates and Meno seem to have rejected? Do Socrates and Meno both reject this kind of answer and in the same way?
21. Recalling Meno's question to Socrates (71c), where might we assume that Meno got all of his definitions of virtue?

79e-86d

22. What picture of Socrates does Meno draw? Why does Socrates think Meno draws this picture?
23. What is the paradox that Meno poses? How does Socrates develop it? What assumption about knowing does this paradox involve?
24. What is the conflict between Meno's statement of this paradox and his own earlier rhetorical insinuation (71c) that Socrates ought to have learned what virtue is from Gorgias? Is there a conflict between Meno's view of himself as handsome, rich and well-born and the idea that he may have had to have learned virtue?
25. How does Socrates connect immortality and recollection in order to resolve the paradox? With respect to our knowledge, what is the third alternative to which he points, existing between absolute knowledge and absolute ignorance?
26. In order to *answer* a question like, what is virtue? what must we presuppose about human knowledge? In order even to *ask* such a question, what must we presuppose?
27. Would an all-knowing God philosophize? Would such a God need to ask questions? Could we make sense of the knowledge of such a God, if it is not knowledge in response to questions?
28. In response to the assertion that knowledge is recollection, what does Meno ask Socrates? What is the contradiction in his question? What would Meno need to do to resolve the seeming contradiction?
29. What is the point of the episode with the slave boy? In what sense does Socrates' discussion with the slave boy mirror his discussion with Meno up to this point?

86d-96d

30. In conceding to Meno's demand to return to the question of how virtue is acquired, what image of Meno does Socrates present? How does this image relate to Meno's first definition of virtue?
31. How is Socrates able to circumvent Meno's question as to how virtue is acquired in order to return to the question, what is virtue?
32. What does Socrates claim about the relation of knowledge and virtue? What is his argument?
33. Having argued that knowledge is virtue and having obtained Meno's agreement with this thesis (87d-89a), why does the dialogue not end here?
34. If Meno knows that knowledge is virtue, does that mean that Meno is virtuous? Does the claim that Meno is virtuous square with the picture of Meno drawn in the dialogue thus far?
35. If knowledge is virtue, is the whole of knowledge equivalent to the whole of virtue, or is virtue a part of knowledge, or knowledge a part of virtue?
36. What philosophical purpose does the introduction of the character of Anytus serve?
37. How does the character of Anytus compare with that of Meno? How do their views about teachers of virtue compare? Is one of these views right and the other wrong?
38. What is the significance of Meno's wavering on the issue of sophists as teachers of virtue (95-b-c)?
39. What is the view about knowledge and opinion with which the dialogue concludes?
40. What is the claim about how virtue is acquired that ends the dialogue? What supports this claim? How does this claim relate to the alternatives which Meno poses at the beginning of the dialogue?