Introduction to Existentialism:

1. Questions to be Answered:

Why do we exist?
Is there a meaning to life?
What is the meaning of life?
Is there a higher being that controls our destiny?

2. Assignment: image/youtube/tiktok Search for Existentialism

Search for basic information about Existentialism, Meme, Insta, Tikok, (5 Min)
Written, Identify basic ideas from your search. (Your goal is to try to understand what, who, etc of Existentialism.)
Be prepared to discuss your findings.

3. Assignment: Sartre and Camus Bio:

Read Wikipedia, look at works, notable things they did…
spend 10 mins skim, get a good gist of their background.
Written outline for each, Sartra and Camus 50pts.
Details, brief, talking points. (must be able to talk about 10 notable topics)

Jean Paul Sartre (1980 75 years died)
Believes we are free to choose our meaning
Knowing we have freedom to choose is living authentically (authenticity)
Intentionality, Sartre believed humans are living with intention, purpose, which are meanings.

Albert Camus (1960 47 years old died)
Existential author
From Algeria, (French nationality)
Books: The Stranger, The Myth of Sisyphus, The Rebel, The Plague

4. Assignment: Discuss and identify 4 most important beliefs of the Existentialists

(Link to Youtube guy summarizes the story)
Read the outline of Existentialism, and any other sources,
Discuss in small groups and clarify the most important beliefs
Choose 4 beliefs of the Existentialists that are most important for kids to understand Existentialism

5. Assignment: Read "The Wall" by Jean-Paul Sartra.

Be able to **summarize** the story, you may use notes on the **discussion** and **written component**.
Identify parts of the story that symbolize/connect to Existential philosophy.
How does the short story the Wall connect to Existentialism?
You must use details from the story for evidence.

Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Link) Wikipedia (link) Nihilism (link)

Ontology= the study of the "nature of being"

Late 19th and early 20th century thinkers and writers. Created the philosophy known as Existentialism.

Camus:
Sees a world "silent god"
"A universe unspeakingly indifferent"
Indifference is something we laboriously arrive at.
When we discover the indifference of the universe it brings wisdom
The **absurd** = indifference of the universe, "reasonless universe"

Camus is writing about life.
An internal life
Man has desire, plans, intentions
A conscience awareness

Absurd: describes this universe

He sees man as a duality of thought and intention.
Universe has no reason or purpose

He argues man need to live and focus on the meaning that is important to man.

Existentialism is a philosophy: A philosophy is an **explanation** of how life is organized.

It's a way of life, a kind of organizational structure. If you have a philosophy you are guided by ideas that inform your life, your **thoughts**, and your actions, your perspective/perceptions. This also affects your emotions.

Existentialists believe in these basic ideas:
They think about human existence/life
They explain human thought as entirely created by humans.
They argue that there is no god or higher being that creates man or what man thinks.
They argue nothing is predetermined, people have no destiny or luck or any outside metaphysical (above the physical world) force.
Man is responsible for his actions.
Life is random = concept of "The Absurd" (things happen for no reason)
The only thing that is real is that we exist.
Life has no purpose by itself… Except the purpose that the person decides.
Man is free to ***choose*** his own purpose or not choose to have one at all.
Purpose/meaning of life, to the existentialists, is determined by the individual.
Purpose/meaning are ideas, thoughts or cognitions.
Existentialists believe that only meaning that humans believe, are all man made.
Humans create their own meaning.
When man contemplates his existence it brings anxiety, worry, and depression.

According to the existentialists the **only way to end** anxiety, worry and depression about your existence is to accept and make choices to find your own meaning.
Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky – discussed concept of meaning of life or inexistence, of being

Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus… are main thinkers and authors

Phenomenology- deals with self-awareness

"Nothing fixes our purpose but we ourselves, our projects have no weight or inertia except for our endorsement of them."
Religion
Religion is meaningful in itself, but not beyond in any metaphysical (beyond the physical) sense.
Existentialists say there is no God, but people can believe in God if they choose to.
Sartre emphasizes existentialism is "a philosophy of action in defining oneself"
"…Examines mortal man's search for meaning in a meaningless universe"

Concept of The Absurd
Absurdity = randomness, things happen for no reason.
We have no control, things happen for no reason.

This concept suggests that we (people) try and try to make things happen that we want to happen and avoid things we don't want to happen and sometimes things just happen.

Existentialists believe that random occurrences happen with no reason and these things are part of human experience. That's it.

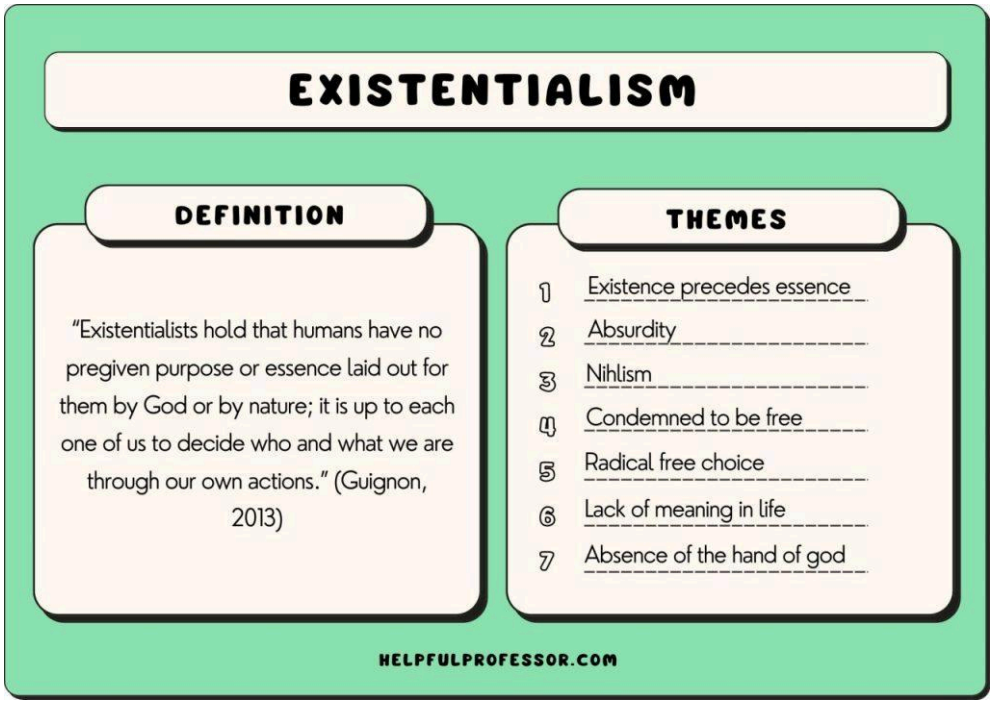
Unfairness of the world
Unfairness is a large part of the absurd. What happens, happens, not because you are a good person or a bad person.
Anything can happen to anyone at any time. There is no reason, things just happen.

The Myth of Sisyphus- (link)
Sisyphus the man whose daily routine was pushing a rock up a hill and then when it rolled down, he pushed it up the hill again, in a never-ending toil. This story is a symbol of the absurdity of existence. It also serves as an example, there is no meaning to pushing the rock, it simply is… however Sisyphus does find meaning, for himself.

Existentialism in Short:
There is no force that controls you. You live, you die and that's it. What you do in between is all a matter of choices, and it doesn't really matter what you choose. You could choose to stay in bed or you could break your neck when you're in the shower. Existentialism becomes clear when you recognize this fact. and accept it. If you see that there is no meaning in life, except what the individual human gives it, then you understand human existence as the existentialists understand.

Existential Crisis/The role of Anxiety or Anguish
Angst is nervousness, when we contemplate our future can create angst.
Many people experience anxiety when they are confronted with the idea that we choose our own meaning.
Questioning the existence of god is also a cause of anxiety or anguish.
We get anxiety when we face the end of our existence.

Personal freedom
Individual responsibility
The Crowd


EXISTENTIALISM
DEFINITION
“Existentialists hold that humans have no pregiven purpose or essence laid out for them by God or by nature; it is up to each one of us to decide who and what we are through our own actions.” (Guignon, 2013)
THEMES
1 Existence precedes essence
2 Absurdity
3 Nihlism
4 Condemned to be free
5 Radical free choice
6 Lack of meaning in life
7 Absence of the hand of god
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Essay: "The Wall" By John Paul Sartre (1939)

Introduction:

Begin with personal commentary about the story.

Discuss your initial thoughts as you were learning about existential philosophy and then assigned this book?

Comment on your thoughts after having read the story.

Body:

Write an analysis of "The Wall"

How does this story symbolize/represent existential ideas?

Choose 3 Existential topics that are present in the story. (see existential philosophy document)

3 paragraphs, include quotes as evidence to prove your points.

Explain yourself fully.