

# Assessment 1

## The Use of Philosophy of Science

### Guide to Responding

An *analogy* likens one thing (the topic, or *subject*, of the analogy) to something with which we are familiar (the *target* of the analogy). For example, “life is like a box of chocolates” likens life (subject) to a box of chocolates (target).

To *explain an analogy* is to identify the salient properties of the analogy’s target. For example, you might explain “life is like a box of chocolates” by noting that people tend not to know what they will be getting next from a box of chocolates, that the box eventually runs empty, that people tend to enjoy boxes of chocolate, and so on.

*Assessing an analogy* involves determining the degree of similarity between the subject and target of the analogy. This involves determining whether, and to what extent, the subject of the analogy shares the salient properties of the analogy’s target. If the subject and target share many such properties, and if these similarities are more important than the ways in which subject and target differ, then the analogy is a good one; if the subject and target are very dissimilar, or if the ways in which subject and target differ are more important than the ways in which they are similar, then the analogy is a bad one.

In Feynman’s analogy, the subject is *the usefulness of philosophy of science to scientists*, and the target is *the usefulness of ornithology to birds*. Accordingly, when you explain this analogy, you should discuss how useful ornithology—the study of birds—is to birds. This will help you to understand what Feynman seems to be saying about the usefulness of philosophy of science to scientists.

When you assess Feynman’s analogy, you should think about what Adler, Noë, and Zynda say about the usefulness of philosophy of science. Specifically, you should determine whether, from among the questions and tasks appropriate to philosophy of science, there are any questions or tasks the completion of which would be useful to scientists (or, at least, more useful to scientists than ornithology is useful to birds).