

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class Sec. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Homework – Twin Earth**

**Instructions:** Read the thought experiment attached to this assignment. Then, please answer the questions in complete sentences. Make sure to explain your answer for full credit.

1. What is the main difference between Earth and Twin Earth in the story?
2. What makes H<sub>2</sub>O and XYZ seem the same or like each other?
3. If someone from Twin Earth and someone from our Earth both say “water,” do they mean the same thing? Why or why not?
4. If a universal “water-ness” exists, what would it have to include for both H<sub>2</sub>O and XYZ to be considered the same thing?

**READING ON THE NEXT PAGE**

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Imagine there is another planet known as Twin Earth that is absolutely identical to our Earth down to the smallest detail, with even the inhabitants on both planets being the same. However, there is one difference between Earth and Twin Earth: Wherever there is water on our Earth, Twin Earth has a substance, known as XYZ, in those exact places. For the purposes of this story, assume this is the Earth during 1750, before the discovery of  $H_2O$  (the chemical makeup of water). On this imaginary planet, instead of water in rain, lakes, and oceans, it is the substance XYZ. Furthermore, XYZ has similar observable properties to water, but it has a different chemical structure. Inhabitants of Twin Earth (who call their own planet as Earth), who are identical to the inhabitants of our Earth, speak “English” and refer to XYZ as “water.” In other words, XYZ from Twin Earth and  $H_2O$  our Earth are both called water.

Now, if universals exist as independent of minds, what is the universal **“waterness”** that both substances supposedly share? Oscar, an inhabitant of Earth, and his twin, an inhabitant of Twin Earth (also named Oscar), both call their colorless, odorless, substance “water,” but when they refer to “water”, do they refer to entirely different things?