

Introduction to Philosophy  
Study Questions for Exam 2

On the exam date, you will be given 40 multiple-choice questions closely related to the following questions. Also, there will be ten true/false questions aimed at assessing your grasp of the readings. You will not be allowed books or notes. And you ought not cheat.

1. What is a skeptical hypothesis? Give an example.
2. What is a skeptical argument? Give an example.
3. What is Descartes' dream hypothesis and which four categories of his beliefs were left untouched by it?
4. Discuss the various interpretations of how Descartes reached his first certainty, namely, that he exists. Which is most plausible?
5. Descartes thought that only one or two propositions were directly evident. Are there other propositions that are plausible candidates for being directly evident? Explain your answer. What categories of propositions about the external world can be deduced from your directly-evident beliefs?
6. What is meant by 'indirectly evident belief'? Be ready to identify plausible candidates for being indirectly evident beliefs.
7. Briefly describe, and give the significance of, The Cartesian Theatre.
8. What is the traditional analysis of knowledge? Give a "Gettier-type" counterexample to it and explain why it qualifies as a counterexample.
9. What is the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions? Give an example of each.
10. What is Locke's distinction between secondary and primary qualities? Give examples of each.
11. Describe Berkeley's proposed solution to Descartes' skeptical arguments. Does Berkeley take this solution to be consistent with our commonsense view that the desks in our classroom continue to exist even when we leave the room? Explain.
12. What is the causal-representative theory of perception? Is it consistent with Berkeley's proposal? Explain.
13. What is Berkeley's argument from commonsense that physical objects are mind-dependent?
14. Evaluate Berkeley's argument in terms of soundness and validity.
15. It is commonsense (i) that in ordinary cases of perception we are directly aware of physical objects and (ii) that physical objects are not mind-dependent. What would Descartes and Berkeley say about (i) and (ii)?
16. What is inductive reasoning? Be ready to identify examples of it. What is Hume's worry about it?
17. Hume's worry aside, might induction help us out of Descartes' skepticism—that is, might it help us to move from our justified beliefs about our private experience to justified beliefs about the external world? Explain.
18. What is foundationalism about justification?
19. What is coherentism about justification? Be ready to identify objections to it.
20. What is "inference to the best explanation"? Be ready to identify examples of such reasoning. How might we use this form of reasoning in response to Descartes' skepticism?