

# **5 CABANG FILSAFAT**

## **Dasar-Dasar, Pokok-Pokok, dan Alasan-Alasan Teknis**

HO 01-05

**Materi Penunjang Kuliah**

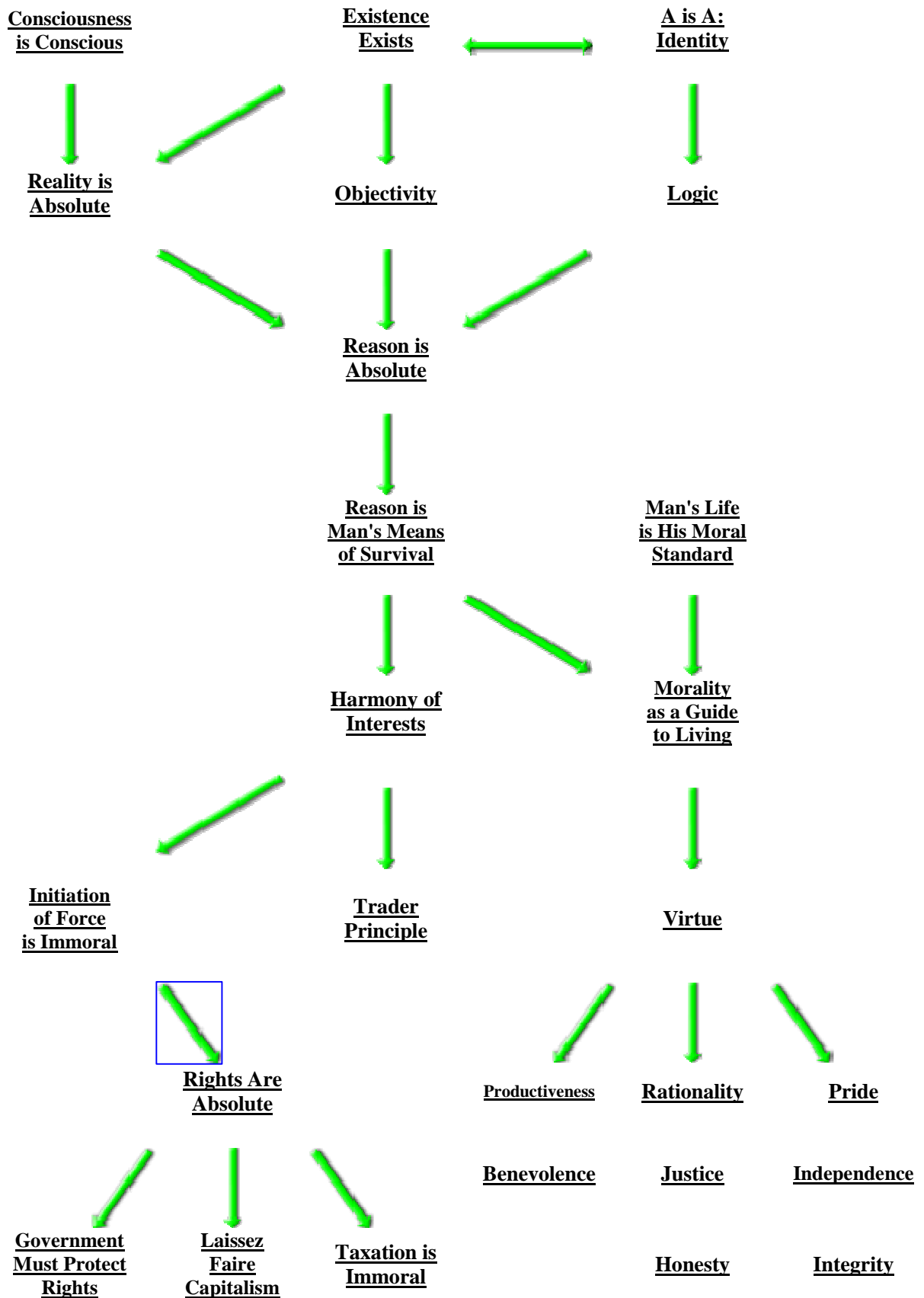
**PENGANTAR FILSAFAT DAN TEORI ADMINISTRASI PENDIDIKAN  
(ADM501)**



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# Introduction to the Five Branches of Philosophy

Philosophy can be divided into five branches which address the following questions:

<b><u>Metaphysics</u></b>	Study of Existence	What's out there?
<b><u>Epistemology</u></b>	Study of Knowledge	How do I know about it?
<b><u>Ethics</u></b>	Study of Action	What should I do?
<b><u>Politics</u></b>	Study of Force	What actions are permissible?
<b><u>Esthetics</u></b>	Study of Art	What can life be like?

There is a hierarchical relationship between these branches as can be seen in the Concept Chart. At the root is Metaphysics, the study of existence and the nature of existence. Closely related is Epistemology, the study of knowledge and how we know about reality and existence. Dependent on Epistemology is Ethics, the study of how man should act. Ethics is dependent on Epistemology because it is impossible to make choices without knowledge. A subset of Ethics is Politics: the study of how men should interact in a proper society and what constitutes proper. Esthetics, the study of art and sense of life is slightly separate, but depends on Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Ethics.

## 1. Metaphysics

HO-01

### What is Metaphysics?

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy responsible for the study of existence. It is the foundation of a worldview. It answers the question "What is?" It encompasses everything that exists, as well as the nature of existence itself. It says whether the world is real, or merely an illusion. It is a fundamental view of the world around us.

### Why is Metaphysics important?

Metaphysics is the foundation of philosophy. Without an explanation or an interpretation of the world around us, we would be helpless to deal with reality. We could not feed ourselves, or act to preserve our lives. The degree to which our metaphysical worldview is correct is the degree to which we are able to comprehend the world, and act accordingly. Without this firm foundation, all knowledge becomes suspect. Any flaw in our view of reality will make it more difficult to live.

### What are the key elements of a rational metaphysics?

Reality is absolute. It has a specific nature independent of our thoughts or feelings. The world around us is real. It has a specific nature and it must be consistent to that nature. A proper metaphysical worldview must aim to understand reality correctly.

The physical world exists, and every entity has a specific nature. It acts according to that nature. When different entities interact, they do so according to the nature of both. Every

action has a cause and an effect. Causality is the means by which change occurs, but the change occurs via a specific nature.

## a. Basics

### Axiom

An axiom is an irreducible primary. It doesn't rest upon anything in order to be valid, and it cannot be proven by any "more basic" premises. A true axiom can not be refuted because the act of trying to refute it requires that very axiom as a premise. An attempt to contradict an axiom can only end in a contradiction.

The term "axiom" has been abused in many different ways, so it is important to distinguish the proper definition from the others. The other definitions amount to calling any arbitrary postulate an 'axiom'. The famous example of this is Euclidean geometry. Euclid was a Greek mathematician who applied [deductive logic](#) to a few postulates, which he called axioms. In this sense, "axiom" was used to mean a postulate which one was sure was true. Later, though, it was shown that his postulates were sometimes false, and so the conclusions he made were equally false. The "axiom" he used was basing his geometry on a two dimensional plane. When his work was applied to the surface of a sphere, though, it broke down. A triangle's three angles add up to 180 degrees on a plane; they do not add up to 180 degrees on the surface of a sphere. The point is that Euclid's "axioms" were actually postulates.

True axioms are more solid than that. They are not statements we merely believe to be true; they are statements that we cannot deny without using them in our denial. Axioms are the foundation of all [knowledge](#). There are only a few axioms that have been identified. These are: [Existence Exists](#), [The Law of Identity](#), and [Consciousness](#).

### Existence Exists

Existence exists is an [axiom](#) which states that there is something, as opposed to [nothing](#). At the core of every thought is the observation that "I am aware of something". The very fact that one is aware of something is the proof that something in some form exists -- that existence exists -- existence being all that which exists. Also, to grasp the thought, "I am aware of something," you must be [conscious](#). Existence is axiomatic because it is necessary for all [knowledge](#) and it cannot be denied without conceding its truth. To deny existence is to say that something doesn't exist. A denial of something is only possible if existence exists.



To exist, an existent (an entity that exists) must have a particular [identity](#). A thing cannot exist without existing *as* something, otherwise it would be [nothing](#) and it would not exist. In the statement "something exists", the *something* refers to the [axiom of identity](#) and the *exists* refers to the axiom of existence. They cannot be separated and are like two sides of the same coin or two ways of understanding the same axiom.



## A is A: Aristotle's Law of Identity

Everything that exists has a specific nature. Each entity exists as something in particular and it has characteristics that are a part of what it is. "This leaf is red, solid, dry, rough, and flammable." "This book is white, and has 312 pages." "This coin is round, dense, smooth, and has a picture on it." In all three of these cases we are referring to an entity with a specific identity; the particular type of identity, or the trait discussed, is not important. Their identities include all of their features, not just those mentioned.

Identity is the [concept](#) that refers to this aspect of existence; the aspect of existing as something in particular, with specific characteristics. An entity without an identity cannot exist because it would be [nothing](#). To exist is to exist as something, and that means to exist with a particular identity.

To have an identity means a single identity; an object cannot have two identities. A tree cannot be a telephone, and a dog cannot be a cat. Each entity exists as something specific, its identity is particular, and it cannot exist as something else. An entity can have more than one characteristic, but any characteristic it has is a part of its identity. A car can be both blue and red, but not at the same time or not in the same respect. Whatever portion is blue cannot be red at the same time, in the same way. Half the car can be red, and the other half blue. But the whole car can't be both red and blue. These two traits, blue and red, each have single, particular identities.

The concept of identity is important because it makes explicit that reality has a definite nature. Since reality has an identity, it is [knowable](#). Since it exists in a particular way, it has no [contradictions](#).

## Consciousness

I think, therefore I am.

*Rene Descartes*

Descartes argued that consciousness is [axiomatic](#) because you cannot logically deny your mind's existence at the same time as using your mind to do the denying. However, his formulation and derivation of the axiom were wrong, in that he assumed one can be aware, without something to be aware of.

Consciousness is the faculty that perceives that which exists.

Directly or indirectly, every phenomenon of consciousness is derived from one's awareness of the external world. Some object, i.e., some *content*, is involved in every state of awareness. Extrospection is a process of cognition directed outward -- a process of apprehending some existent(s) of the external world. Introspection is a process of cognition directed inward -- a process of apprehending one's own psychological actions in

regard to some existent(s) of the external world, such actions as thinking, feeling, reminiscing, etc. ... A content-less state of consciousness is a contradiction in terms.  
*Ayn Rand, Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*

Because to be conscious is to perceive something, consciousness requires something outside of itself in order to function; consciousness requires and is dependent upon, existence.

Further, a consciousness cannot merely be conscious of itself, as Descartes implied. To be a consciousness, it must be conscious of something external to itself. Only after it is conscious of something external can it identify itself. Like a car motor that generates electricity for its own use, it needs to be kick-started by something outside of it. It needs existence.

## **b. Specifics**

### **Is Absolute: The Primacy of Existence**

Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.  
*Francis Bacon, Novum Organum*

Francis Bacon knew that in order to command nature, one must act according to its rules and identity. The statement **Reality is Absolute** is the explicit recognition of **the primacy of existence**. This means that reality is not subject to wishes, whims, prayers, or miracles. If you want to change the world, you must *act* according to *reality*. Nothing else will affect reality. If you evade this fact, your actions will most likely not have their desired effects. Your failure will be metaphysical justice.

**The primacy of existence** states the irrefutable truth that existence is primary and consciousness is secondary. Consciousness is the faculty which perceives and identifies existents (things that exist). For two reasons we say that existence is primary, that consciousness requires existence, and that there is no consciousness without existence.

Because consciousness identifies *existents*, there can be no consciousness without something existing to perceive. Nothing can have an identity (to be identified) without existing. The fact that something is identified necessarily implies its existence which necessarily implies existence in general. Thus there is no consciousness without existence.

Because consciousness *identifies* existents, consciousness itself must exist in order to do the identifying. Along the lines of Descartes *cogito*, to be conscious (to identify), a consciousness must exist. A faculty can not operate and not exist at the same time. A verb without a noun makes no sense, and the noun must exist in order for the verb to take place.

Consciousness is not responsible for creating reality or creating an individual reality. It is completely dependent upon reality. Existence is primary because it is independent of, makes possible, and is a prerequisite of consciousness.

All forms of mysticism derive from the false premise of the [primacy of consciousness](#), which is demonstratively false. Also, the assertion that existence somehow requires consciousness, sometimes called the [Interdependence Theory](#), is [arbitrary](#) at best without [objective](#) basis.

## Causality

Causality is the [Law of Identity](#) applied over time. It is the identity of actions. An action requires an entity. It presupposes an entity. Without an entity, action is meaningless. There are no "floating" actions that aren't actions of an entity.

Action is a change in the identity of an entity. Every action has a particular nature. The action is determined by the entities involved. The change of the entities occurs based on the identities. A marble, when dropped, falls towards the ground. Its position (part of its identity) changes. This change, though, is dependent on the nature of the objects involved. It is dependent on the Earth and the Earth's gravity. It is dependent on the friction of the air.

A log that burns is also acting. Its identity is changing. In this case, its position stays the same, but its chemical structure is changing. It is changing into ash. It is releasing smoke into the air. The oxygen in the air is being combined with the carbon in the fire. Heat is being released. All of these changes are determined by the identity of the entities involved. As the entities change, so do their natures. With the altered identities, the actions change to match. This continual process of change is all determined by the initial identities.

Causality is the term used to describe this dependence of an action on the identities of the entities involved. The changes in the identities of the objects are a result of their identities interacting. This interaction, which is an action, is based on the previous natures of the objects involved. In short, for something to change (which is an effect), it needs to be acted on (caused) by a previous action. This previous action, or change, is an effect as well.

Every effect must have a cause. That cause, however, is an effect of a previous cause. Causality is the law that states that each cause has a specific effect, and that this effect is dependent on the identities of the agents involved.

## Nothing

Nothing, or non-existence, is that which doesn't exist. It is not a metaphysical entity. It doesn't exist. It has no [identity](#). It is not an object.

Non-existence is a [concept](#) that is meaningless by itself. It isn't something. It is a relational concept, gaining meaning only in comparison to another concept. Non-existence gains meaning only in comparison to existence. It is the denial of existence. The concept "nothing" is a denial of the existence of a particular entity. Both "non-existence" and "nothing" are denials of concepts, which must be accepted and understood in order to give meaning to "non-existence" or "nothing".

The important point is that "nothing" is just that: nothing. It doesn't exist. It has no identity. It's not a vacuum. It's not dark. It's not cold. It has no characteristics. As a tool of cognition, it can be useful, but doesn't exist.

### **c. Technicalities**

## **Contradiction**

A contradiction arises when two ideas each make the other impossible. Contradictions don't exist in reality because reality simply is as it is and does not contradict itself. Only our evaluations of reality can contradict each other. If you think you have found a contradiction, then check your premises. Either you're mistaken about it being a contradiction or one of the contradicting [concepts](#) has been improperly formed.

If the content of your knowledge contains contradictions, then some of your knowledge is in error. Because in order to be successful in reality one must know reality, success requires correct knowledge. It is therefore important to continually search for and root out contradictions in your knowledge in order to make sure that your knowledge corresponds to reality. The two primary methods for doing this are logic, the art of non-contradictory identification, and integration.

## **An Entity is the Sum of its Parts**

One difficulty in applying the Law of Identity to an entity is in discussing what exactly an entity is. This is important to the [concept](#) of change, which is a subset of [causality](#). Assuming there are basic building blocks of the universe, it is conceivable that these entities have a fixed identity, except location. They do not change. They act, and interact, but do not ever actually change their identity.

Other objects do change. A log can burn. A plant can die. A cookie can crumble. Their identities appears to be unstable. This isn't true, of course. Their identities are changing according to their identities, and the causal interaction that is occurring. So it is clear that even entities composed of other entities have identity.

It is important to note, though, that their identities are based on the identities of their constituent parts, and how they are combined together. The identity of an entity composed of other entities can be fully explained by reference to the identity of the building blocks, and how they are interacting. A house can be explained by reference to the wood, metal, and glass that are combined in that particular way to form the house. Or it could be explained in terms of the atoms that form it. These are all true, because the entity is a sum of its parts. Depending on what we specify as an 'entity', it has a particular identity. This identity exists objectively. We may choose to focus on a particular part of an entity, and discover the identity of that part, but it doesn't contradict the identity of the whole.



## Mental Entities

The concepts of existence and identity apply even to thoughts, ideas, memories, etc. There is a difference between these entities and the physical objects around us. They don't exist in a physical form. Or more specifically, they don't exist as actual objects.

Mental entities are products of chemical reactions within our brains. This is the level of abstraction that they physically exist. However, we perceive them in an entirely different way. We perceive them as visual representations. We perceive them as physical sensations. We perceive them in a variety of ways. The important thing is that their physical existence is different from their content. A mental image of a triangle doesn't exist as a triangle in one's head, for instance.

Mental entities do exist, though, and so they have identity. Since our minds have the ability to manipulate these mental entities, their identities may change over time. This is not anything new, though. All objects change over time. Their identities change over time. This change, though, conforms to their identity. The identity of an object specifies how it will change.

## Metaphysical vs. the Man-Made

An important difference exists between the rules that govern existence (the metaphysical), and the rules that men create to govern themselves (the man-made). This should be obvious, but confusion of the two has led to all kinds of problems. The problems stem from not clearly differentiating between those things men need to do, and those things man chooses to do.

The first common problem is the belief that the man-made is metaphysical. The important distinction here is that rules that men choose are not necessary. That they are chosen. For instance, any particular law is chosen. This is not to say it's chosen without reason. Many laws are. But the fact that a choice is made is important to remember. Often people believe that things are the way they are, and nothing can change it. If it is man-made, though, this is wrong. It still may be difficult to change, but it is possible. This error is usually an excuse not to act. It assumes a difficult task is an impossible task, which allows the person to remain free of guilt, since morality requires a choice between alternatives.

The second common problem is the belief that the metaphysical is man-made. This error is usually made in the field of ethics when the assumption is made that a man can act any way that is physically allowed to him. For instance, a man can be completely selfless, but this is ultimately destructive. The metaphysical fact being ignored is that death would follow shortly. That man, in order to live, must act in his own interest to further his life. One cannot defy reality without consequence.

## 2. Epistemology

HO-02

### What is Epistemology?

Epistemology is the study of our method of acquiring knowledge. It answers the question, "How do we know?" It encompasses the nature of concepts, the constructing of concepts, the validity of the senses, logical reasoning, as well as thoughts, ideas, memories, emotions, and all things mental. It is concerned with how our minds are related to reality, and whether these relationships are valid or invalid.

### Why is Epistemology important?

Epistemology is the explanation of how we think. It is required in order to be able to determine the true from the false, by determining a proper method of evaluation. It is needed in order to use and obtain knowledge of the world around us. Without epistemology, we could not think. More specifically, we would have no reason to believe our thinking was productive or correct, as opposed to random images flashing before our mind. With an incorrect epistemology, we would not be able to distinguish truth from error. The consequences are obvious. The degree to which our epistemology is correct is the degree to which we could understand reality, and the degree to which we could use that knowledge to promote our lives and goals. Flaws in epistemology will make it harder to accomplish anything.

### What are the key elements of a proper Epistemology?

Our senses are valid, and the only way to gain information about the world. Reason is our method of gaining knowledge, and acquiring understanding. Logic is our method of maintaining consistency within our set of knowledge. Objectivity is our means of associating knowledge with reality to determine its validity. Concepts are abstracts of specific details of reality, or of other abstractions. A proper epistemology is a rational epistemology.

#### a. Basics

## Philosophy

A philosophy is a system of beliefs about reality. It is one's integrated view of the world. It includes an understanding of the nature of existence, man, and his role in the world. Philosophy is the foundation of knowledge. It is the standard by which ideas are integrated and understood.

Philosophy is a necessary product of man's rational mind. To live, man must gain knowledge of the world. To understand the world, man must form conclusions about its very nature. For instance, to gain knowledge of particular objects, man must recognize that objects have identity. He must recognize that conclusions are possible because the world does exist, and exists in a particular way.

Philosophy provides the framework for which man can understand the world. It provides the premises by which man can discover truth, and use his mind to support his life. Every

man has an understanding of the world. Every man must have a philosophy, even if it is never made explicit.

## Objectivity

Objectivity is the recognition of reality as the ultimate [standard of evaluation](#). It is the acceptance that all [knowledge](#) is knowledge about reality. It is the only means of determining the truth. The concepts of true and false are only meaningful in reference to reality.

Objectivity is the act of referencing reality in determining the truth. It is the act of founding one's knowledge on reality, and making one's thoughts and ideas conform to it. To be objective, reality must be an explicit standard to be compared to. Objectivity is the process of actively comparing one's thoughts to reality, and this can only be accomplished if the purpose of the comparison is identified. The purpose, of course, is to set the standard for validity.

It is a common mistake to believe that one cannot be objective if one has a personal stake involved in something. The implication is that the emotion or motivation necessarily prevents one to be accurate. Since objectivity is the act of conforming one's thoughts to reality, it should be clear that this is possible regardless of any influences.

## Logic

Logic is the art of conforming one's thoughts to the [Law of Identity](#). In one respect, thoughts have to conform to the Law of Identity, as does everything else. This has to do with the nature of thoughts. Ideas have a different nature than memories, which are different from emotions. In this respect, all thoughts conform to the Law of Identity.

In a different respect, though, it requires focused action to conform to the Law of Identity. Ideas have content. This content is generated by the thinker from perceptual data. However, it may be generated incorrectly. Logic requires the content to be clear and identifiable. It requires that no contradiction exist within the idea.

Logic is used in [integrating](#) ideas as well. Again, it is the process of conforming to the Law of Identity. What this means in practice is combining information clearly, and without contradiction. It must be combined into a specific, identifiable package, that doesn't contradict itself.

Logic is the art of non-contradictory identification. It is the mental tool that sets the standard for proper thought. It is the foundation of knowledge. It is the means of understanding and clarity. Without logic, we could not distinguish between the true and the false. We could not throw out bad ideas because we could not judge them as bad. Without logic, our minds would be cluttered with so many absurdities and falsehoods that if there was some truth, it would be lost in the garbage of contradictions, fuzzy thoughts, and non-integrated mental images.

## Reason

Reason is man's tool of understanding. It is the method of identifying entities through one's senses. It is the means of integrating those [perceptions](#) into [concepts](#), gaining [knowledge](#) through this [integration](#), integrating that knowledge into the rest of one's knowledge, and evaluating and manipulating ideas and facts.

Reason is the process of thinking. Its fundamental attribute is clarity. The use of vague notions, fuzzy feelings, or "instincts" is not reason. Reason requires clear, identifiable building blocks. It uses ideas, memories, [emotions](#), and sensory input. The ideas must be clear and definable. The memories must be recognizable, and vivid. The emotions are recognized as emotions only, with no further meaning. The sensory input must be identified in order to be used.

Reason is organized. It is systematic and purposeful. It concentrates on [fundamentals](#), and makes pertinent associations. Since clarity is the purpose of reason, it must use clear methods, as well as clear tools. It must use [logic](#), [deduction](#), and [induction](#).

Reason is the method of thinking in an organized, clear way to achieve knowledge and understanding. Since it is a means, its importance and significance is in its method. The ends toward which it is used defines the validity of the method. Understanding and knowledge is the criteria for evaluating the use of reason.

Knowledge is knowledge about reality. Its base is [perception](#), and its method is reason. We gain knowledge through observing reality. We use our minds to identify what we have observed by gathering more perceptual information until we can understand what we see. Reason is the tool that allows us to determine how to gather more information, and what kind of information we need. Reason is then used to compare and combine that new information into the rest of our body of knowledge in order to acquire a more complete understanding.

Knowledge requires clarity and the identification of limits and boundaries. Only reason can collect sensory data into something meaningful, which is clear and definable. To speak of knowledge that we don't understand is a contradiction in terms. Emotions, perceptual memories, or vague notions are not knowledge. Knowledge is lucid and can only be formed by the use of reason. There is no other path. **Reason is absolute.**

## Knowledge

Knowledge is the mental grasp of the facts of reality. It is the awareness of the [identity](#) of particular aspects of reality. It is not just an awareness of reality, but an understanding of it. It is a successfully formed conclusion about some aspect of reality. An example of knowledge is the identification of the law of gravity. It is a characteristic of reality that is identified and understood.

Knowledge is gained through a successful evaluation of one's [perceptions](#). It is through the use of [reason](#) that man draws conclusions about the world. It is through [objectivity](#) that man identifies the validity of those conclusions. Knowledge is the clear, lucid information gained through the process of reason applied to reality.

## Standard of Evaluation

The [concepts](#) of true and false are dependent on an important idea: a standard of evaluation. Whenever a comparison is made, whenever an opinion is stated, whenever a judgment is made, there must be a standard of evaluation. The standard of evaluation is the criteria by which something is being compared. If someone says "He is a better gambler than I am", the criteria is how well each person gambles, or more specifically, how much money each person makes while gambling. If someone says "She is shorter than I am", height is the standard by which they are compared.

It's impossible to make a comparison without some criteria. There can even be a combination of criteria. For instance, one might say "Michael Jordan is the best basketball player." The standard could include a specific combination of traits or statistics, including points scored, championships won, and endorsements sold. It's not important which criteria, and how they are combined, but only the fact that there must be some standard by which an evaluation can be made.

When communicating to others or trying to think clearly, it is important to make the standard or standards explicit. Since there can be various criteria or combinations of criteria, there can be confusion about what exactly is being compared. If I tell you that some car is the best available, you wouldn't know if I meant best performance per dollar, best performance total, best gas mileage, etc. Only by making the standard explicit can the statement be judged to be true or false. This is true for thoughts as well. Each thought needs an explicit standard in order to judge its validity.

## Perception

Perception is the automatic [integration](#) of sensory stimulus. It is not a form of thinking, in that one's ideas do not affect the process. Perception is automatic and independent of volition.

Perception is an integration of stimulus. It combines different sensory effects over time into a single unified whole. The result is the awareness of entities. We don't see a mass of different colors and brightness. Instead we see a computer monitor, a book, or a cup of grape kool-aid. We see things. This is different than knowing what we see, though. That [knowledge](#) is not automatic. An example is a scientist's laboratory. If you walked in, you would see objects of different sizes, shapes, colors, etc. You may have no knowledge about what they are, or what they are used for, but you would perceive them as objects -- as integrated wholes.

Perception is the base of all knowledge. We acquire raw information about the world around us through perception. We can then take that information and integrate and try to understand it. All knowledge, though, is derived from this common root. What we perceive. It is our link to the outside world.

There is never a question that what we perceive is accurate. The only question is whether we accurately interpret what we perceive. The way to do this is through [reason](#).

## **b. Specifics**

### **Concepts**

The world is full of innumerable entities. Without the ability to generalize -- forced to approach the world as if every entity were entirely unique and different -- you would waste all of your time grasping fundamentals over and over again. Life would be impossible.

A concept is a mental abstraction which allows generalization and the extension of knowledge from some known objects to others unknown. It integrates two or more particulars into a common mental unit. For example, the concept "book" subsumes all particular books. It does so based on the essential characteristics of multiple pieces of paper or pages combined into a bound stack.

A concept is formed by taking a number of similar entities and deciding what makes them similar in an important way. The differences and the unessential similarities are not important and are abstracted away from the newly created mental entity. Each concept serves a particular purpose and is created to allow higher-level thinking. People do not waste their time forming arbitrary concepts.

While concepts integrate particulars, concepts can also act as particulars. In this way, it is possible to form higher levels of abstraction, combining concepts into more complex concepts, and furthering one's understanding and knowledge by increasing the amount that can be integrated. Higher level concepts can also allow more complicated combinations that are not possible by trying to integrate lower level particulars. The concept wife is not possible without the concept marriage, the concept relationship, and so on down a long tree of complex concepts.

Although a concept is built from particular entities, it is not tied to those specific entities. If those entities were changed or destroyed, the concept would still be intact, but would no longer include those particulars. The concept combines any entities with those particular characteristics. It encompasses any entity with those particular characteristics, past, present, or future.

There are two essential tools to complete the concept formation. The first is a definition. This is the method of specifying the essential characteristics of the concept, or what is the basis of the integration. It also specifies the method of differentiation, which distinguishes it from everything not encompassed by the concept.

The second tool is a word. A word is a cognitive trigger for the concept. It is the method by which the concept is stored away and referenced later. Without such a trigger, the act of integrating each concept would have to be redone every time it was used. It would be difficult to form higher level concepts, and the level of integration of one's knowledge would be severely limited in scope.

## Definitions

A definition describes the basis of integration of a specific concept. It describes the essential nature of the concept. It differentiates all other particulars from those included under the concept.

A concept has a genus and a differentia. The role of the definition is to describe both.

A genus is the category of particulars from which the concept draws on. Coffee tables, for instance, have the genus tables. Coffee tables are a subset of tables. They share the same characteristics of tables, although they have more specific requirements as well. The genus acts to eliminate all particulars that don't fit under its own definition. It also acts to describe what the remaining particulars have in common. The basis for its own integration. Tables are a type of furniture that have four legs, and objects are placed on it for temporarily.

The differentia acts to distinguish the particulars encompassed by the new concept from the remaining particulars subsumed under the genus. The coffee tables are a subset of tables. They differ from other tables by their use and size. They are smaller, and are used to place coffee, magazines, etc., on. The differentia is that which makes it different from the rest of the genus.

An explicit definition provides a clearer understanding of a concept. It allows a more complex manipulation and use of the concept. It also allows communication of what the concept

## Words

Words are symbols of concepts. They act as the means of making concepts into mental concretes. They allow the storage of a conceptual integration that can be recalled on demand. Words are references to a concept. They are mental entities which trigger the contents of the concept. By making the concepts into concretes that can be easily maintained and used, we are able to use concepts as particulars, allowing further integration.

Words in themselves are meaningless and mostly arbitrary. They are auditory or visual symbols of concepts, which contains the meaning. A definition applies to a concept, not a word. A word is a name given to a concept. It isn't the concept itself. A word is only meaningful if it has a concept, which in turn, has a definition. Without these, a word is just a noise.

The primary use of a word is in concept building. Additionally it can be used for communication. This purpose is secondary, though. Communication requires clarity and understanding. Before communication can occur, concepts must be formed. Concepts are not only required for communication, though. They are used to acquire knowledge, and to use it to act purposefully. This is the primary purpose of words.

## Emotions

Love, hate, fear, envy. We all feel emotions. We've all experienced them. We know what they are and how they affect us. The primary questions in [philosophy](#) is what causes them, and how can they be used. The first answers the second.

Emotions are caused by one's thoughts. They are both triggered by one's thoughts and programmed by one's thoughts. The triggering is straightforward to show. Hearing the [words](#) "rape", "murder", "death", or "genocide", etc., one experiences an emotion. Hearing the same words in an unknown language, the words would be meaningless. One wouldn't be able to make the mental connection between the sounds and the meaning of the words. The emotions that one normally feels with respect to these words would not be present. Only understanding can trigger an emotion.

A further example is that of a gunman. If someone burst into a room with a gun, the people present would probably feel fear. However, if one didn't know what a gun was, you wouldn't make the connection, and wouldn't experience the fear. The emotion is only triggered when understanding of the situation is present.

We know that understanding triggers the emotion. This doesn't explain the particular emotion, though. Why do we feel fear when we see the gunman, but joy when we see a baby walk for the first time? The answer is the same as why understanding is required to trigger the emotion. The emotion is a response to our understanding of the situation. Emotions are triggered by particular beliefs. Fear is based on a belief that one's life is in danger. Pleasure is experienced when one believes a [value](#) has been achieved. Each emotion is a particular response to a certain kind of judgment.

## Integration

Integration is the act of mentally combining information or ideas. It is the process of taking isolated ideas and consolidating them into a unified whole. It's taking little things we know, and making a bigger picture out of them. I know that my car is out of gas. I know that a car cannot be driven without fuel. I now can integrate this information to realize that I can't drive my car until I get more gas. The new piece of [knowledge](#) is a combination of the previous knowledge.

Integration is necessary for thinking. Without it, we would only have isolated thoughts that are unconnected to all of our other thoughts. These thoughts would be too simple to use effectively. The world would appear chaotic and unstable. We wouldn't see similarities between entities. We would be left in a state of confusion and helplessness.

Integration, though, is only useful if done correctly. Understanding is the criteria for knowing how to integrate. The integration must be [logical](#), meaning consistent and non-contradictory. If one knows a car can be red, and also a car can be blue, a proper integration is that a car can be different colors. An improper integration would be that a car must be red and blue at the same time. It means that the integration must be correct

The knowledge must be integrated by [fundamentals](#), or it won't be useful. If two men killed people, it would be proper to integrate them as two murderers. It would be



improper to integrate them as blue eyed men. Even if the latter integration is true, it misses the more important point that these are dangerous men. To think of them having blue eyes is to categorize them by unimportant features, which has the effect of ignoring those features. Only confusion can follow.

Additionally, not all integration is necessary or proper. Some knowledge cannot be integrated directly. A car exists, and a tree exists. There is no useful integration possible with just these two ideas. A case of improper use of integration is the attempt to combine a businessman and a thief. Both take your money, and so it is possible to integrate them under a category of those that take money from you. But the distinction between the two is important. One voluntarily trades goods or services for your money. The other takes it by force. In one case you want them to take your money. Not in the other. An attempt to integrate these into a single category is destructive since it ignores the difference. Since understanding is the criteria for judging an act of integration as proper, it is clear that some integration should not be done.

## The Epistemology of Values

Values are that which one acts to gain or keep. Living entities act to achieve various ends. They decide, by some [standard of evaluation](#), which ends are wanted, and to what degree. The combination of an end to which one can act towards, and the wanting to accomplish those ends, is a value.

Values are automated judgments about particular ends. Similar to [emotions](#), they are originally derived through the use of [reason](#). They are derived from an initial judgment about the merits of particular ends to achieve some goal. The automated response comes in the form of "wanting" something. Since it is based on a previous judgment, it can sometimes be stale or incorrect, just as an emotion is.

Values are not desires. A desire is an emotional longing for something. It differs from values in a couple ways. First, the desire may not be achievable. One may desire to grow wings and fly. Values are concerned with goals one is able to pursue. Only when a course of action is apparent can one value something.

Another difference between values and desires is the emotional content. Desires are emotions, so a desire without an emotional response is a contradiction. A value, on the other hand, need not have an emotional response. It is an automated judgment, which often produces a desire, but not necessarily. One may value getting a college degree to get a better job, but certainly during a long, boring lecture, the emotion desire is not applicable, except in reference to wanting to leave class.

Values are important to men because they are the motivation to act. Purposeful action requires values. Since there can exist many values, they need to be compared in order to decide which action to take. At a quasi-emotional level, this is easy. Whichever value is wanted the most. However, since the values are based on a previous judgment, and on a goal to which the ends produce, the degree of wanting needs to be rationally determined. This is the goal of [ethical values](#).

## Certainty

Certainty is the acceptance of a fact without doubt. It is a level of confidence attributed to particular knowledge. We are certain when we know something is true, and have no doubts. The term "degrees of certainty" is used to describe how close we are to being certain. Certainty, though, is the upper limit. It is the state where no more doubts exist.

When should one be certain? When all knowledge supports the conclusion, and none denies it. If one has a valid reason for doubting something, one should not be certain. If one, for instance, knows there are facts that are unknown, and important in validating the knowledge, one should not be certain. If, however, one believes that all of the relevant information is known, and it all points to the knowledge being true, one should be certain.

Certainty is contextual. It is based on one's current knowledge. It is possible to be certain, and still be wrong. Human beings are not omniscient. They can form conclusions, but there is the possibility of error. Humans need knowledge, though, and need a basis for accepting knowledge as true. They cannot live constantly doubting every piece of knowledge. To survive, they must be able to accept knowledge as true, and act accordingly.

The term certainty is often used to describe knowledge without the possibility of doubt. This is omniscience. It is an improper use of the term. Certainty could have no meaning when applied to an omniscient being, since it wouldn't have the capacity for doubt. It only has meaning when applied to human beings. Its meaning allows the possibility of error, but the contextual lack of doubt.

## Deduction

Deduction is the mental process of forming conclusions based on premises. The conclusions must follow directly and necessarily from the premises. An example is the premises: the house is white; I own the house. From this we can conclude that I own a white house.

Deduction is useful in combining knowledge to form new knowledge. It is a form of analysis that creates new insights. Deduction is an act of [integration](#). It combines two related premises, and identifies the new integration. The new idea must obey the [Law of Identity](#). The means by which a proper deduction takes place is [logic](#). It requires a clear, non-contradictory identification of the conclusion.

## Induction/Abstraction

Induction is the mental process of taking particular facts or instances and generalizing them to form new ideas. It is also called abstraction. The process omits particular details of the instances, and [integrates](#) based on a criteria or set of criteria. A yellow pen, a blue pen, and a red pen can all be integrated under the criteria of being a pen. The colors are omitted, since they don't have relevance. A black book, a black sofa, and a black telephone can be integrated under the criteria of being black. The other aspects of each object's nature is omitted.

## Focus/Volition

Man's thinking is volitional. It requires choice. Thinking is not automatic. The use of [reason](#) to [integrate percepts](#) into knowledge, or knowledge into more abstract knowledge, does not happen on its own. It is a process that takes effort. Man must focus on what he is doing. He must act.

Focus applies to perception since man can choose to ignore his senses. He can focus on something else. When we day dream, we often ignore our immediate surroundings. Additionally, there are degrees of focus. We can look at a friend and recognize her, but we can focus even more on particular features, such as her eyes or hair.

Focus is especially important in the realm of ideas. Since man's entire base of knowledge, including one's memories, is readily available his choices of thought are wide open. The mind could easily wander from topic to topic like a bored T.V. watcher with a remote control. Focus is required to stay on a topic, and think deeply.

## Evasion

Evasion is the act of willful suppression of one's knowledge of [reality](#), and the acting upon that knowledge. This self-destructive act is perpetrated constantly by those who are slaves of the false [primacy of consciousness](#) premise and are trying to act upon their feelings without regard to the validity or source of those feelings, or what the likely consequences will be.

Just as man can choose to think, he can choose not to think. Or more specifically, he can choose not to [focus](#). Man can choose to avoid a particular topic or idea. Guilt, for instance, can make a man want to avoid thinking about a particular topic. His mind can focus on something else, which is the equivalent of changing the topic of a conversation

Man can also choose not to think rigorously. Instead of making the effort to integrate ideas, he can choose not to. He can stay focused on particulars, and avoid the task of understanding.

### **c. Technicalities**

## Context

Context is the idea that a statement or thought has meaning in relationship to its setting or background. The statement "I flew to New York" would be nonsensical without the [knowledge](#) of airplanes. Context refers to the information that is required to make the statement meaningful. It is the supporting information that is taken from the setting.

In grade school, children learn to try to identify the meaning of a word through the context of a sentence. This is useful because the words in a sentence are connected to the other words by the meaning of the sentence. Often the meaning of the sentence can be determined without understanding each word. In this case, we can make a reasonable guess at what the word is supposed to imply. An example is "Since the man was \_\_\_\_\_, he

could lift the entire crate by himself." If, in the blank spot, an unknown word was placed, one might be able to surmise that the word means "strong".

Ideas require certain conditions in which they are meaningful and valid. These conditions are the context. Understanding the context provides important information about the meaning and applicability of an idea.

## Fundamentals

The purpose of using one's mind is to gain understanding and clarity about reality. To this end, some methods are more effective than others. The term 'fundamentals' is based on the idea that some details are more important than others by their ability to convey understanding. For instance, the fundamental difference between man and other animals is our conceptual nature. Although there are myriad differences in shape, size, and abilities, this one difference specifies the most important difference. It is fundamental because this one difference has the largest impact on our lives. It is the cause of why we treat the two groups in very different ways.

The term "fundamental" is also highly [contextual](#). The above examples of humans being different from other animals is based on an ethical context. When choosing how one is to act in relation to humans or animals, the conceptual nature is the difference that is most important. However, if the discussion was about biology, and the specific topic was disease tolerance, the conceptual nature of man is not important. The difference then may be the specific workings of the immune system.

Discussing ideas in terms of fundamentals is important for clarity. One cannot [integrate](#) ideas that have nothing in common. Similarly, a non-fundamental differentiation will form a concept that is unusable. Without dealing in fundamentals, it is difficult or impossible to reach useful conclusions. The effectiveness of one's thinking is dependent on thinking clearly in fundamentals.

## Hierarchical Knowledge

Ideas are created by [integrating](#) previous ideas and sensory input. Due to this dependency of ideas on previous ideas or sensory input, we know that knowledge is hierarchical. Every higher level [concept](#) is based on a lower level information. At the root of all of this, of course, is [perception](#). The very first concepts are derived directly from perceptions, via [reason](#). Future concepts can then use the first concepts as part of their base, but the foundation is always there.

The understanding of how a particular concept is tied to lower level concepts or sensory input is useful. It allows a more explicit understanding of the concept. Without knowledge of the hierarchy, one is left with only a vague notion of the meaning of a term. Since we learn some concepts from others, we may only have an ambiguous idea of what the term means. This "notion" is not really a concept. It is a place holder for a concept. One can understand enough about the concept to differentiate it from other concepts one is aware of, while still not grasping exactly what it refers to.

Without an understanding of one's hierarchy of knowledge, it is possible to lose sight of some features of a concept. This seems to happen frequently in philosophy. This is how people can claim that they don't exist, or that reality doesn't. Since it is possible to ignore the foundation of an idea, it is possible to use it in a way that specifically contradicts the foundation. An example of this nonsense is people 'proving' that [logic](#) doesn't exist, when the concept 'proof' is derived from the concept logic.

## The Arbitrary

An arbitrary statement is a statement without reason or justification. It is unsupported by any facts or reasons. Epistemologically, we may accept the validity of a statement for various reasons. The more support we have for the statement, the more likely we are to believe its validity. Arbitrary statements, though, have no support at all.

Often the arbitrary statement is absurd. An example of an arbitrary statement is claiming the possibility that all blue objects will turn green after a particular date. These absurd statements are usually softened by asking whether it is at least possible. In this way, the speaker tries to gain some legitimacy by referring to reality in judging whether the statement is known to contradict reality. This appearance of legitimacy is fake. The statement has no support from reality and therefore it doesn't need to be contradicted in order to be dismissed. The proper response to any arbitrary statement is to treat it for what it is: a statement made without any factual support or reason.

Not all arbitrary statements are absurd; some might conform to possibilities we accept. If someone stated that there was alien life on a specific planet, it wouldn't necessarily be absurd. We may accept that, given our [knowledge](#) of life, it certainly is possible elsewhere. The statement could be true, since it conforms to our knowledge, and we may have reason to believe it exists on *some* planet. It's arbitrary because someone specified a *specific* planet, without reason or facts to support it.

People sometimes insist that you disprove one of their arbitrary statements; logically, this is flawed. The burden of proof is on those that make a claim. One need not and should not attempt to disprove arbitrary statements. As it is impossible to disprove a negative, attempting to do so leads to accepting any ideas, no matter how arbitrary they are. Since the ideas are groundless, there is no means by which they can be [integrated](#) with the rest of one's knowledge. Later, if knowledge is discovered that contradicts the arbitrary idea, the knowledge will be more likely dismissed. The proper response to an arbitrary statement is to ignore it.

## 3. Ethics

HO-03

### What is Ethics?

Ethics is the branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man. It answers the question, "What do I do?" It is the study of right and wrong in human endeavors. At a more fundamental level, it is the method by which we categorize our values and pursue them. Do we pursue our own happiness, or do we sacrifice ourselves to a greater cause? Is that foundation of ethics based on the Bible, or on the very nature of man himself, or neither?

### Why is Ethics important?

Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal because there would be no way to pick between a limitless number of goals. Even with an ethical standard, we may be unable to pursue our goals with the possibility of success. To the degree which a rational ethical standard is taken, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most important values. Any flaw in our ethics will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavors.

### What are the key elements of a proper Ethics?

A proper foundation of ethics requires a standard of value to which all goals and actions can be compared to. This standard is our own lives, and the happiness which makes them livable. This is our ultimate standard of value, the goal in which an ethical man must always aim. It is arrived at by an examination of man's nature, and recognizing his peculiar needs. A system of ethics must further consist of not only emergency situations, but the day to day choices we make constantly. It must include our relations to others, and recognize their importance not only to our physical survival, but to our well-being and happiness. It must recognize that our lives are an end in themselves, and that sacrifice is not only not necessary, but destructive.

#### a. Basics

### Man's Life as His Moral Standard

For centuries, the battle of morality was fought between those who claimed that your life belongs to God and those who claimed that it belongs to your neighbors - between those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of ghosts in heaven and those who preached that the good is self-sacrifice for the sake of incompetents on earth. And no one came to say that your life belongs to you and that the good is to live it.

*Ayn Rand, [Atlas Shrugged](#)*

Life is the process of self-sustaining and self-generating action. Life requires action, and action requires [values](#). Philosophy in general, and [ethics](#) in particular, attempt to answer the questions, "What do I do?" and "Why?" People study philosophy so they can know how to live their life.

So that you can live life successfully and happily, you must learn which values to hold and how to achieve them -- this is your life as your moral standard. All moral questions (questions of right action) are questions of how to live happily and successfully, and all moral principles must be measured against how they promote and benefit your life and happiness. **Your life as your moral standard holds all things promoting your life as the good.**

To every living thing, there is one primary choice, and that is to live or not -- to engage in the action required to further its own life or to engage in action that destroys its own life. The only other alternative is death. Choosing life as your standard of value is a pre-moral choice. It cannot be judged as right or wrong; but once chosen, it is the role of morality to help man to live the best life possible.

The opposite of choosing life is altruism: the moral doctrine that holds death as its moral standard. It holds sacrifice as the only good, and all things "selfish" as evil. According to altruism, it doesn't matter what you do, as long as it does not further your life it is considered good. The more consistently a person is altruistic, the closer their actions are to suicide. The consistent altruist will give up every bit of food he owns to other people because that is what he considers good, and die because of it.

Your life as your standard does not mean Hedonism -- the spur of the moment instant gratification, doing whatever you feel like. Your life as your standard means acting in your

rational self-interest. Rational self-interest takes into account the long-term effects of every action.

Your life as your standard does not mean trampling on other people to get what you want. This is not in your rational self-interest. It is in your interest to be benevolent.

Nor does your life as your standard mean cheating people to get ahead, even if they don't realize it and you never get caught. Fraud is not in your rational self-interest because you lose your independence and you sacrifice honesty to an unreality that you have to maintain to perpetrate your fraud. This is self-destructive in the long run.

In order to know what is good, which actions are objectively in a person's self-interest, we develop virtues which are principles of action.

## **Morality is a Guide to Living**

Choosing to live is a pre-moral choice, after which, the question becomes "How?" This is the same as "What do I do?" One can either go about it randomly or with a methodology designed for success. That methodology is called morality.

An explicit morality allows one to choose rationally among values. It makes the selection of values rational by providing a method to evaluate them. Values are compared to a moral standard, and prioritized according to how well they promote that standard. To make decisions easier, we develop virtues which are moral habits which tend to help gain values.

Historically, the concept of morality has often been used negatively as a list of *thou shall not's* in check against ones actions. The stance taken is often that it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you don't violate any moral edicts; but the source of these moral edicts is often mystical or arbitrary.

A list of prohibitions, even if founded in reason rather than mysticism, is not a sufficient outline for success. Morality should be positive rather than negative. Not *What shouldn't I do?* but *What should I do?*. The problem with defining morality negatively is that pretty much anything goes provided one avoids a few problem areas. This is not useful because within the sphere of *pretty much anything goes*, there is no methodical way to choose which action is best, whereas positive morality sets forth habits which lead to the achievement of values and methods for choosing what to value which is the way to live and thrive.

With ones own [life as the standard of value](#), morality is not a burden to bear, but a prudent and effective guide which furthers life and success.

## Reason is Man's Means of Survival

Man's essential characteristic is his rational faculty. Man's mind is his basic means of survival--his only means of gaining knowledge..

In order to sustain its life, every living species has to follow a certain course of action required by its nature. The action required to sustain human life is primarily intellectual: everything man needs has to be discovered by his mind and produced by his effort. Production is the application of reason to the problem of survival.

*Ayn Rand, "What is Capitalism?"*

Homo Sapiens are not particularly fast. They don't have sharp claws or teeth. They don't have hard shells nor can they digest grass. They can't fly, spit poison, or release skunky stink bombs. So why are there so many of us? Bears should have eaten us all a long time ago. No -- we humans are still around because we're smarter than the average bear.

**Man's mind is his tool of survival.** The mind is used to gain, use, store, and recall [knowledge](#). It is his mind that enables a farmer to know what to plant, when to plant it, how to nurture it, when to harvest it, how to prepare food from the result. It is his mind that enables a hunter to know what he needs to make a spear, how to make it, and how to use it. And it is his mind that enables a blacksmith to know what rocks contain ore, how to extract the ore, and how to make a forge and tools. In short, it is the mind that enables a person to know what to do in order to survive.

Man's mind allows long-range planning and thinking. It enables such long-range planning as required for farming, hunting, and tool making. These endeavors require the ability to conceptualize long-term cause and effect chains. "I need to make a spear tonight so I can hunt tomorrow and have food for the next 7 days." There may be some environments where people could survive for a while without long range planning, but without the results of knowledge like spears, fire, and other technologies, people would get out-bred by other animals and die out.



Man's mind is his tool for survival, but like all tools, it must be properly used. The mind manipulates knowledge, and knowledge can only be obtained through [reason](#). Without reason, there is no knowledge, and thus no survival.

You must recognize reality and act in accordance with it in order to be successful ([reality is absolute](#)). To the extent that you use [reason](#) as your method of judgment in knowledge and action, you will survive and flourish. To the extent that you ignore or [evade](#) reality, you will suffer and die.

It is very important to note that survival by reason requires the freedom to act according to your reason. This is why men do not thrive under coercion, and can not survive when they are subject to [the initiation of force](#) by others.

## Values

[Values](#) are that which we seek to achieve or maintain according to [our life as the standard of evaluation](#). Values are the motive power behind purposeful action. They are the ends to which we act. Without them, life would be impossible. Life requires self-generated action to sustain itself. Without values, one could not act, and death would follow.

Value specifies a relationship between a person and a goal. A value requires a valuer--a particular person who aims to achieve or maintain something. An object cannot have value in itself. Value is relational, and so requires a person and a goal. The goal to which one aims is called the "value", but the relationship is always required. This means an object cannot be a value in itself. It only gains the title of value when a person acts to achieve or maintain it.

Values are essential to ethics. Ethics is concerned with human actions, and the choice of those actions. Ethics evaluates those actions, and the values that underlies them. It determines which values should be pursued, and which shouldn't. Ethics is a code of values.

## Virtue

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.  
*Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, c. 350 B.C.*

A virtue is a moral habit which generally results in the gaining or maintaining of your [values](#). Your values are based on your [moral standard](#) which should be your own life. Virtues are pre-thought out methods for achieving your values. This means that with [rational](#) virtues, acting virtuous leads to a happy and successful life.

This is very different from the traditional [mystical](#) view that there is some "good" out there which is opposed to your natural tendencies and you constantly have to choose between what you want and what is "good". There is no choice to be made between some "mystical good" and your own life, [morality is not a limit on action](#). What is "good" is actually that which is in your rational self-interest -- there is no conflict.

It is important to keep in mind that virtues are not absolutes. Or, put another way, they are [contextually](#) absolute. They are not to be followed blindly and dogmatically. Virtues only

apply within the context in which they were formulated. To understand the context and when a virtue applies is why you must understand the "why" behind the "what" of each principle. When it is not clear whether a virtue applies or how to apply it, you must fall back onto your ultimate standard of value, your life, to guide your actions.

## Rational Virtues

### b. Specifics

## Independence

Independence, or self reliance is the [virtue](#) by which you are self-supporting in the sense that you consume nothing that you haven't earned. In a market economy, everyone lives by trade. This does not make independence impracticable. The virtue of independence is to provide one's own means of subsistence. This means either producing it directly, or indirectly by creating something that someone else wants. Dependence, in this case, would mean relying on charity or favors from friends or family. Or worse, theft in the form of direct stealing from others, or indirect theft through benefits by government.

Independence is not only applicable to production, though. In fact, production isn't even the most important place where this virtue should be practiced. The most important is the independence of one's mind. Life requires man to act in order to achieve his values. This requires the proper use of judgment to not only pick the right values, but to understand the best way of achieving them. To substitute another's thoughts for yours makes it impossible to judge the accuracy of them. It makes it impossible to build off of them to achieve better understanding. This is the area where independence is most critical. To default on one's responsibilities is to default on one's life. The degree to which one abandons his intellectual independence is the degree to which he is helpless to act. The degree to which he cannot pursue his own life and values.

Another area where independence is useful is in social interaction. When dealing with friends or strangers, one needs to earn the benefit of the interaction. To default on this is to accept a reward without cause. Nothing is ever free, though. By accepting the unearned, a man loses his grasp of what it means to earn something. He loses his assurance of his own self-efficacy. Every independent act is a reaffirmation of one's ability to deal with reality. Every unearned gift is a blow to one's confidence.

## Productiveness

Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry, all things easy.

*Benjamin Franklin*

Man must achieve [values](#) in order to live. Productiveness is the [virtue](#) of achieving values. It is the fullest use of one's mind in seeking and achieving those values. It's primary use is in the creation of wealth. To live, men need physical wealth (meaning food, shelter, etc.) in order to survive. Wealth beyond the minimums is necessary to hedge against the uncertain future. The more wealth created and saved, the better chances one has of survival. Productiveness is the virtue of creating this wealth. It is directly responsible for the forwarding of one's life.

Productiveness in a market economy doesn't mean the direct creation of goods. It means the earning of goods through the creation of value. By trading goods or services, one enables the creation of wealth by others for one's own use. Trading is a kind of productiveness. It is another method of practicing productiveness. The result and aim is the same, though. The creation of wealth.

Productiveness is also applicable in other aspects of one's life. In social relationships, for instance, it is possible to create value. And even outside of material wealth, one can be productive by achieving values. Productiveness then isn't dependent on producing physical goods. It consists of producing values for oneself.

A last note on productivity is that it must be profitable to be called productive. This means the cost of doing something must be less than the value achieved by doing it. In this respect, many acts can be considered non-productive after the fact. Mere profitability, or the gaining from an act, is not sufficient for productivity, though. The virtue of productivity means achieving the most one can achieve. Working at a fast-food restaurant is not productive if one has the ability and opportunity to be a brain-surgeon. Spending one's resources (time and effort) on a lesser value when one could achieve a higher value is not productive.

## Integrity

Integrity is the [virtue](#) of practicing what one preaches. Or more importantly, practicing what one believes is right. A 'man of principle' is not a man who understands a principle, but a man who understands, accepts, and lives by a principle. There are many reasons why integrity is a virtue.

The first and most important reason to practice one's beliefs is that if they are right, you will be benefiting your own life. To understand other virtues or principles, and not act by them, is destructive. It is an act against your own best interest. Any deviation from what you know to be right is an attack on your own life.

The second reason to practice integrity is that it is an affirmation that your ideas benefit your life. To act contrary to your own knowledge is accepting the premise that morality is somehow different from your own self interest, and that bypassing morality will somehow make your life better. Instead of seeing morality as a tool for survival, you see it as a restriction that makes life more difficult. Every act that violates your integrity weakens the moral habit, until your emotions are unaligned with your thoughts. Further, it is an attack on the efficacy of one's mind. To act against your own ideas is to claim your own incompetence, or to claim the general inadequacy of reason to guide your life. Since reason is your means of survival, you will be abandoning your life.

A third reason to practice integrity is in dealing with others. A man who practices what he preaches is predictable, and few will feel threatened by it. Trust can develop, since others will come to realize you are consistently virtuous. To act without integrity, even occasionally, will leave others distrustful. This can negatively impact one's life in a number of ways. People won't allow themselves to become emotionally close to you. They won't trust that you'll pay back debts. They'll always fear your betrayal.

## Honesty

Honesty is the recognition of the fact that the unreal is unreal and can have no [value](#), that neither love nor fame nor cash is a value if obtained by [fraud](#) -- that an attempt to gain a value by deceiving the mind of others is an act of raising your victims to a position higher than reality, where you become a pawn of their blindness, a slave of their non-thinking and their evasions, while their intelligence, their [rationality](#), their perceptiveness becomes the enemies you have to dread and flee -- that you do not care to live as a dependent, lest of all a dependent on the stupidity of others, or as a fool whose source of values is the fools he succeeds in fooling -- that honesty is not a social [duty](#), not a sacrifice for the sake of others, but the most profoundly selfish [virtue](#) man can practice: his refusal to sacrifice the reality of his own existence to the deluded consciousness of others.

*Ayn Rand, [Atlas Shrugged](#)*

## Pride

Pride, then, seems to be a sort of crown of the virtues; for it makes them greater, and it is not found without them.

*Aristotle, [Nicomachean Ethics](#), c. 350 B.C.*

Pride is the [virtue](#) of respecting oneself. It is a human need to think highly of oneself. Without it, one would have no reason to trust one's ability to live. One would have no reason to accept that one's life is worthy of living.

Pride is often confused with arrogance. Both seem to evaluate oneself highly. The difference is fundamental, though. Pride is a rational evaluation of oneself. Arrogance is not. Pride requires one to think highly of one's accomplishments and abilities. But the accomplishments and abilities need to be worthy of the praise. Without them matching, the false pride will lead to self-hate when reality undermines the attempted illusion. If one's abilities are not as good as one would like to pretend, it is just a matter of time before they are genuinely tested, and the results will destroy the flimsy self-esteem.

True pride, on the other hand, is rational. It has the secondary consequence of making an person want to improve himself in order to feel greater pride. This secondary effect, though, is not the reason for accepting pride as a virtue. Pride is virtuous because one needs it to live. It is the pillar that supports one's mind. Without it, one would constantly question one's ability to make rational judgments. It would undercut [reason](#), man's [primary means of survival](#).

## Justice

Justice is the [virtue](#) of treating people in accordance with their actions. It is applying the [law of identity](#) to people. All people are not equal. Some are good and some are evil and they must be treated accordingly.

Acting justly requires the willingness to judge. You must identify people and their actions as being good or evil and act on it. Justice is judging and acting on your judgment. But judging requires a standard of judgment, and that standard should be the same as your moral standard, [man's life](#).

Injustice is turning the other cheek or showing mercy to wrongdoers. Those actions are [evasions](#) of reality because you are acting as if a person hasn't acted the way they have. Injustice is also not recognizing achievement and greatness in others -- specifically treating an achiever as a non-achiever or worse. Judging people by methods other than their actions (such as racism) is also an injustice.

Acting justly is in your self interest because good people around you will feel recognized and continue their good behavior. Bad people around you will be encouraged to stop their bad behavior because of the consequences. Also, the people around you will tend to treat *you* justly, which is a good thing assuming that you live a normal, productive life.

## Benevolence

In his book, [Unrugged Individualism](#), David Kelley describes how benevolence is not [altruism](#) and not simply a response to misfortune in others. It is the active pursuit of the enormous value that we can get from relationships with other people. Benevolence, as a major [virtue](#), is key to living by the [trader principle](#).



Opportunities for trade do not simply present themselves. They must be created through our own initiative. The world does not beat a path to our door; we must go out to meet it; we must extend ourselves. In order to obtain the benefits of living with others in society, we cannot function solely as judges, we must also function as entrepreneurs.

*David Kelley, [Unrugged Individualism](#)*

Trade creates enormous value, both material and non-material. The benefits of economic trade are well documented throughout the field of economics. Some of the non-material values achieved through trade are friendship, love, exchange of knowledge, mutual protection, and visibility. Benevolence is the commitment to create trade and trading opportunities.

Benevolence can be seen as optimism applied to other people and relationships. It does not consist of any particular set of actions, but a general good will towards others based on the benevolent universe premise: Successful trading relationships with others are the *to be expected*, so treat other people accordingly. For example, if you are optimistic about other people and relationships, then perhaps you will treat a stranger like you would normally treat an acquaintance and an acquaintance like a friend. This broadcasts a friendly, non-hostile, attitude and a willingness to trade which is a prerequisite for peaceful interaction.

Benevolence is *not* the same as [altruism](#). Altruism dictates that you sacrifice yourself for the benefit for others -- that their need is a claim on your actions. Benevolence enables you to achieve *your* [values](#) from relationships with other people. Benevolence is very much like [productiveness](#) in its use as a tool for achieving value.

By giving a person the benefit of the doubt when interacting with them, you create opportunities that would not be available if you always assume the worst about people and act like it. This mainly manifests itself in the form of civility. Politeness takes little effort and can often achieve a lot. Politeness and the assumption that another person is not out to cheat you pave the way for beneficial interaction.

Trust between people can be built up over time and founded on the past actions of the other person; but it has to start somewhere. Initial trust is based on a positive outlook on humanity and the likelihood that the other person is a good example. Benevolence is this optimism applied to the other person. Economic trade, exchange of knowledge, and mutual protection all require some level of trust between people.

Traditionally, benevolence has been seen as being in conflict with justice. The Christians like to talk about "tempering" justice with mercy, and many rugged individualists hold justice so highly and irrationally that they view benevolence as treason to reality. These attitudes only apply if benevolence is seen simply as mercy and generosity in response to another person's suffering or need. As Ayn Rand pointed out in her "Ethics of Emergencies" essay, helping another in an emergency is a marginal issue in philosophy because, according to the benevolent universe premise, failure and suffering are the abnormal and not to be expected. They are not metaphysically important.

David Kelley points out that benevolence is never in conflict with justice. He writes that benevolence is to justice as productiveness is to rationality. Justice is the identification and judgment of people and their actions, and the decision to treat them accordingly. Benevolence is the pursuit of value based on those identifications and that decision. Benevolence is not an end in itself -- it is a means to the end of [your own life](#).

Benevolence is a commitment to achieving the values derivable from life with other people in society, by treating them as potential trading partners, recognizing their humanity, independence, and individuality, and the harmony between their interests and ours.

*David Kelley, [Unrugged Individualism](#)*

## Rationality

The [virtue](#) of *Rationality* means the recognition and acceptance of [reason](#) as one's only source of knowledge, one's only judge of [values](#) and one's only guide to action. ... It means a commitment to the principle that all of one's convictions, values, goals, desires and actions must be based on, derived from, chosen and validated by a process of thought.

*Ayn Rand*

Rationality is the habit of acting by reason, which means in accordance with the facts of reality. The only alternative is acting by whim, which because [reality is absolute](#), will result in undesired consequences. This is because an action based on a belief in a particular cause-effect relationship will not occur if that relationship is invalid.

A second consequence to acting irrationally is that it undermines one's ability to act rationally in the future. By choosing to act irrationally, you are confessing your lack of trust in your own mind. The more often you do this, the more you will believe what you are practicing. You will accept that the mind is impotent, and that you cannot make the right decisions. This undercuts your ability to live, since reason is man's means of survival.

Rationality is in your self interest because the only way to achieve desired outcomes is to act according to reality. To understand reality, one must use reason consistently. Any deviation can have long term problems, since one's knowledge is often derived from one's previous knowledge. To accept a false belief once can have the effect of polluting all

further knowledge, until the mistakes are cleared away and the new knowledge reevaluated.

Rationality does not mean being a perfectionist in one's thoughts and ideas. It does not require you to spend enormous amounts of time evaluating every idea. It does not require you to learn everything there is to know, to become an expert at every topic. Rationality means acting

according to reason. It means accepting only that which you have reason to believe. It means using [logic](#) to weed out any contradictions. It means when you have to accept the judgment of another, you use your own mind to determine whether you should. Is the person educated in that field? Is it knowledge that someone is capable of having? From what you know about the rest of his ideas, is he someone you believe will be correct? Rationality is foremost a method of survival. It is a virtue only to the extent that it encourages one's survival.

## Self-Interest

Man's interest is defined as that which benefits his life. It is an evaluation of the facts of reality. Since the nature of man's life has particular, [objective](#) requirements, determining whether something promotes his life is a statement of fact.

One's interests should not be confused with one's desires. A desire is that which you wish to achieve or acquire. A desire can be [subjective](#) or irrational. One's interests, though, are objective facts of reality. They don't state what you want to achieve. They state what you should achieve to promote your life.

A proper morality is based on man's self-interest. It is based on what allows him to live and flourish. Identification of his interests allows him to decide how to act, and what [values](#) to pursue. It is the measure of right and wrong.

## Harmony of Interests

With a proper understanding of one's [interests](#), it can be seen that there is a harmony of interests between [rational](#) men. That we benefit enormously from positive interactions with others. This benefit comes in the form of the abundance of wealth made possible by a [Capitalism](#), to the continuing increase of [knowledge](#) available to mankind. It comes in the form of friendships, romantic love, and the support of one's family. The harmony of interests bring men together in peaceful cooperation to benefit their lives. This is the bedrock of society. It is why people choose to live in a society.

Although the desires of men may be opposed, their interests are not. Living in a peaceful society is of incalculable benefit to man. Any possible advantage gain from living outside of a peaceful society is insignificant compared to the loss. For instance, living in a wilderness may bring you more peace and quiet, but it is at the expense of friendships and the enormous material wealth possible in a society.

The harmony of interests only exists between rational men. Irrational men and the use of [force](#) are not in the interests of other men. Men's interests are only in harmony with peaceful, voluntary interactions. Only when men live by the [Trader Principle](#) do their interests unite. Only when men accept persuasion and trade do they become a benefit to other men.

### **c. Technicalities**

## **Metaphysical Justice**

They that will not be counseled, cannot be helped. If you do not hear reason she will rap you on the knuckles.

*Benjamin Franklin*

Since [reality is absolute](#), any attempt to [evade](#) acting according to objective reality will result in unforeseen and likely unwelcome consequences. This is called Metaphysical Justice or "Reality sneaking up and biting you on the ass".

Metaphysical justice is a kind of justice. In other words, it is the method by which people get what they deserve. It doesn't require other people to enact the justice. Reality is fully capable of providing the result. To avoid confusion, this does not mean that some supernatural entity provides the justice either. No, this kind of justice is served by the [Law of Identity](#).

When one acts according to a correct view of reality, the result will be predictable. If one aimed for a beneficial result, the result will be beneficial. This is because the trail of cause and effects one had decided on was correct. If, however, the view of reality is distorted, evaded, or just mistaken, the results will not occur. Along one of the causal steps, a different effect will occur. This unintended consequence will remove the beneficial result, and leave some other effect, harmful or not.

The justice portion of Metaphysical Justice is based on ones choice to act rationally, or irrationally. If one acts rationally, he will be rewarded by gaining the value which he is pursuing. If one acts irrationally though, one will not only lose the reward, but may be punished as well. This has the nice feature of encouraging rationality while discouraging irrationality. In this sense, reality is providing the justice for a moral/immoral act.

## **Free Will**

Every existent acts [causally](#) in accordance with its [identity](#) from electrons to brain neurons to [conscious minds](#). The world is entirely determined in a physical sense, but the question of free will boils down to a question of [context](#).

Within the context of your mind, your consciousness is not a bunch of atoms held together in a particular way, but a [perceptual](#) and [rational](#) faculty that processes percepts into [concepts](#) from the lowest to the highest. This includes the creative process and problem solving. There is never something created from nothing -- there is no such thing as a divine inspiration; it is all a rearrangement of what was previously there.



Both within the context of consciousness and the context of interpersonal relations, people do have free will. This means that they do make choices, they act on those choices, and they are responsible for those choices.

## Courage

Courage is the ability to act in the face of danger and uncertainty. Although it is more of an emotion or state of mind, it is an important part of one's life. This is because the future is always uncertain. We can acquire understanding of the world, but there are too many factors to accurately predict the future. Or more importantly, to be certain that our prediction will come to pass. This is because we can make predictions that end up being accurate (even guessing works sometimes), but we have no means of knowing whether it will really occur.

Even danger is constantly present. There is no completely reliable way of avoiding danger. We can lessen the risk in many respects, but we cannot avoid it entirely. Even staying in our homes constantly does not remove risk.

Nor would we want to. Life is not just about avoiding death. It is about achieving values and happiness. Courage must overcome both the fear of danger and uncertainty. They must be pushed aside in order to get on with the business of living. Living with courage, in this respect, is virtuous.

## The Trader Principle

The trader principle is the principle of attaining [value](#) from other people through mutually beneficial trade rather than [force](#), [fraud](#), or parasitism. It is the principle that one should consume as much as he earns, no more and no less. People should interact with each other peacefully and for mutual gain.

If a man has something to offer to another man, he should be able to convince the other of this through the use of [reason](#). No force is necessary unless the other cannot be convinced. The trader principle states that man should trade value for value as opposed to force for value or non-value for value. This is based partly on [justice](#), in that people should get what they deserve.

The trader principle applies to the non-material realm as well as the material realm.

Love, friendship, respect, admiration, are the emotional response of one man to the [virtues](#) of another, the spiritual *payment* given in exchange for the personal, selfish pleasure which one man derives from the virtues of another man's character.

*Ayn Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics"*

One should not love another for their faults, but for their virtues. One should not befriend another because the other needs a friend, but because the other, by virtue of his character, has something to offer. Just as with material objects, one should not devote time and effort and emotional investment into another person unless that person has some kind of value with which to repay. One should only trade value for value.

## 4. Politics

### What is Politics?

Politics is ethics applied to a group of people.

### Why is this Important?

Politics tells you how a society must be set up and how one should act within a society. Except for hermits, this comes up a lot.

### What is a rational Politics?

The requirement for a political system is that the individuals within that system are allowed to fully function according to their nature. If that's not the case, they will either rebel, as in Czarist Russia, or the system will eventually collapse, as in Communist Russia.

Reason is man's prime means of survival. A human being can not survive in an environment where reason is ineffective, and will thrive or starve to a degree in proportion to the effectiveness of reason. This means that the prime goal of a political system must be the preservation and enabling of the faculty of reason.

Reason does not function under coercion. A man can be forced to act at the point of a gun, but he can not be forced to think. Likewise, in an environment where might makes right, reason can not function because the fruits of rationality can not be enjoyed. Why plant crops and domesticate animals if any raider can come by and take them from you?

A moral political system must ban coercion. Or put another way, a moral political system must ban the initiation of force, since retaliatory force is both just and necessary. This means there must be some way to keep one person from killing, threatening, or robbing another. This is accomplished by bestowing on government a monopoly on retaliatory force and objectifying laws.

#### a. Basics

### The Initiation of Force

The initiation of force is the act of one man initiating force against another, as opposed to

retaliatory force. Force includes such acts as murder, theft, threats, and fraud. It is acting against another person without their consent.

The initiation of force is never moral. Man's nature is such that he survives by reason. Survival by reason requires the ability to act on your reason. Force destroys that ability. When you use force against someone, you are destroying their ability to survive by destroying their ability to use reason, and their ability to survive will suffer to the extent that force is used.

When force is introduced into the equation of human relations, survival becomes harder and harder until everyone dies. If there is some parasite living off others, one thing is clear: he needs his victims while they do not need him. If you use force to get what you want, not only do you give him reason to retaliate, but you diminish your own ability to survive by becoming dependent on your victim. Once your victims all die off, you're screwed. In the end, the result of force is death.

If a man uses force against you, he is declaring that he does not want to survive by means of reason. He is telling you that he doesn't recognize your right to exist as an independent individual. According to him, might makes right, and he is just taking his share from the local sucker.

When you come up against a person who views force as the proper means of relating to people, you know that this is a person not worth dealing with. This is a person outside the realm of morality, and once outside, moral conventions and principles have no place. There is only one way to deal with such a person, and that is with retaliatory force.

The difference between the initiation of force and retaliatory force is that retaliatory force is a response to force. It is force meeting force in kind. It is the only proper response to a person who initiates force.

Since force inhibits survival, men can only thrive within a society if they are shielded from the coercion of others. [Government](#) is instituted among men to fulfill this function.

## Rights

Every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his.  
*John Locke, "The Second Treatise On Civil Government"*

[Man survives by reason](#), and in order to do so, he must be free from the [initiation of force](#). Society can be greatly beneficial to the individual because of mutual protection, division of labor, and economies of scale. But it is only beneficial to the extent that the individual is still free to act and survive according to his own reason.

A 'right' is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context.

*Ayn Rand*

Individual rights state explicitly the requirements for a person to benefit rather than suffer from living in a society. They codify man's protection from the initiation of force, as *required by his rational nature*. Being required by man's rational nature, rights are not arbitrary or negotiable. They are absolute requirements for life within a society. **Rights are absolute.**

## Right to Life

The right to life is the fundamental right, of which all other rights are corollaries. The right to life states that you own your own body. It is your property to do with as you

please. No one may force you to do anything, no one may injure you in any way, and above all, no one may take your life (without consent.)

The opposite to the right to life is life as a slave, where someone or some people essentially own you -- they can dictate what you do, when you do it, and take your life if they please.

It should be noted that rights are guarantees to freedom of actions. They do not provide for anything but freedom of action. There is no right to food, for example; only the right to work and keep the proceeds with which you may buy food.

## **Right to Liberty**

The right to liberty is a part of the [right to life](#), specifically referring to your freedom of action. You may do what you want, when you want, provided you don't trample on the rights of anyone else. This is a necessity for man's life because [man's means of survival is reason](#). Survival by reason requires that you are able to act upon your reason otherwise your reason is of no avail. You can only act on your reason if you are free from the coercion of others.

If society were to permit some actions and not others, it would be permitting some reason and not other reason. It would be effectively destroying individual reason by making reason second place to some other standard. When a society prevents its citizens from the initiation of force, however, it is not circumventing reason, because [there is never a reason for the initiation of force](#).

## **Right to Property**

Property rights are an extension to the [right to life](#). In order to support yourself through reason and stay alive, you must be able to own and use the product of your labor. If the tools of your survival are subject to random confiscation, then your life is subject to random destruction.

## **Right to the Pursuit of Happiness**

The right to the pursuit of happiness is freedom of action. To live, man must achieve values. To achieve values, man must be free to think and act. The right to the pursuit of happiness means a man is free to do anything he pleases, as long as it doesn't conflict with the rights of others. Since man must use his own mind to live, he must be able to choose his values and act towards them. Even acts which are destructive to himself must be allowed, or a man cannot

live by his own mind. Ultimately, man must be free to pursue his own goals and happiness.

## **Right to Free Speech**

The right to free speech is a recognition that speech in itself is devoid of physical threats and does not warrant any retaliatory force. Many dictatorships

and People's States will outlaw certain types of speech as being dangerous or inflammatory or against the will of the people, but this censorship is just an evasion of reality - hoping that if a problem is ignored it will go away. Freedom of speech is required for liberty because without the freedom of speech, you can not persuade others of what is right and what is wrong. Without the freedom to persuade others, only force can make people act in a particular way. It is an important check on government because it allows transgressions to be identified and fixed rather than hidden and perpetuated.

## Right to Self Defense

The right to defend yourself is a corollary to the [right to life](#). You must be able to protect what is yours when it is threatened. If you are being attacked the situation leaves the realm of morality - it leaves the realm of the everyday and becomes an emergency. In such an emergency, anything goes. That is the choice that your attacker has made, and he must live with his choice. The government must maintain [the right to bear arms](#) so that self defense will be possible.

## The Necessity of Government

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable [Rights](#), that among these are [Life](#), [Liberty](#), and the [Pursuit of Happiness](#) --That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men...

*Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence*

A Government is an organization in a specific geographic location which is dominant in physical force. Government is necessary to ensure the [proper use of force](#). For this reason, it must specify objective laws to clarify the use of force, and it must have the ability to enforce these laws.

The purpose of government is to protect the [individual rights](#) of its citizens. Since rights can be assaulted both within a country or outside of it, the government must deal with either threat. This requires an army for defense of the country, and a police system to protect the individual citizens from other individuals within the country.

To ensure that rights are upheld properly, the judgment of the use of force must be objective. Since individuals involved in an incident are not likely to be objective, it is the government's job to judge the individual use of force by its citizens. For this reason, the government must provide a court system. Laws are the tools by which the court decides if a use of force is valid or not.

## The Proper Role of Government

Each person [survives and flourishes based on their ability to exercise and use their reason](#). For this to happen, each person must have the protection of [individual rights](#). The whole society will flourish to the degree that rights are protected and individuals are free.

The word *proper* is used here to mean *with man's life as the standard of evaluation*. A proper government must be proper for all those governed. A society is beneficial to each member to the extent that they are free (their rights are upheld.) With the government being the immediate guardian of freedom for a society, individuals will either immigrate to or flee from that society based on the freedoms protected by the government.

A proper government, a government which is designed to allow man to live his life to the fullest according to his nature ([as a rational being](#)), is a government which upholds individual rights and does not itself violate them in any way. The name of that political system is [Capitalism](#).

## Laissez Faire Capitalism

"Laissez Faire" is French for "leave alone" which means that the government leaves the people alone regarding all economic activities. It is the **separation of economy and state**.

There are two ways that a government typically is tempted to interfere with the economy. The first is through [the initiation of force](#), and the second is through socialized industries. Neither of these activities are aligned with the [proper role](#) of [government](#), and are both unacceptable.

"Laissez Faire Capitalism" is actually redundant, due to the nature of [Capitalism](#). Therefore, simply "Capitalism" is sufficient to get the point across although historically it has been misrepresented as compatible with government economic interference.

## Taxation

Taxation is a form of extortion, where a threat is offered, and unless the victim pays up, the threat will be followed through. For some reason, a lot of people seem to think that extortion is fine if the extorter (the tax man) works for the government.

## The Moral Argument

Taxation is a form of [initiation of force](#), which is immoral, destructive, and unacceptable whether perpetrated by an individual, mafia, or government. Specifically, taxation negates the concept of [property rights](#) by claiming that the government has first right to the income or money of its citizens. When every man's work is the property of the state, and he is allowed to keep only what the state feels appropriate, that is Communism which leads to poverty and death. It is the opposite of the view that man has a right to exist for his own sake, that [his life is his moral standard](#).

Any political system that endorses taxation as moral makes the claim that man is a sacrificial animal, who is to be sacrificed in whatever manner the state deems necessary. It must be remembered that the ends do not justify the means -- the means are part of the ends and affect those ends. If the role of government is confined properly to the protection of its citizens and nothing else, then the budget will be fairly small and can be [financed through moral means](#).

## The Unseen Results

Practically speaking, taxation is not just an instance of taking money from the private sector and transferring it to the public sector. It is not an instance of moving it from one pocket to the other. There are many other undesired side effects.

These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.

There is similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

*Henry Hazlitt, [Economics In One Lesson](#)*

Not only do the artificial conditions set up by taxation make the private sector less efficient, but in addition, money spent centrally can never be as beneficial as money spent locally. The fundamental alternative between tax-and-spend and self-reliance is a choice about who is to spend an individual's money (the product of his labor.)

Money is not an end in itself. It is the means to an end. The means that it represents is your labor - the amount that other people value what you have produced. The end that it can achieve is your [values](#). To benefit from your labor, you must be able to direct that labor or its equivalent (money) towards accomplishing your values. Because only the individual knows his values and their relative importance, only the individual can know how best to spend the result of his labor.

A government official in some central location, unless endowed with a form of omniscient ESP, cannot know how best to spend the money that has been appropriated into his charge. Therein lies the gross inefficiency.

You think that you need a new pair of shoes -- he thinks you need a diplomat in Lithuania.

You think that you'd like a new car -- he thinks you would rather support someone on welfare.

You think that you'd like to buy a house -- he thinks that you'd rather build a new jail to house drug offenders.

You think that you need some new medicine to survive -- he thinks that you should spend your money on a bloated FDA to spend years testing while you die waiting for approval. Sure, all of these things that he, the government official, thinks you need might be of some use to you, but the difference between those uses and what you really want is the inefficiency. And that is not even mentioning his salary, which by the way, he thinks is in your interest to pay.

Some people, like Benjamin Franklin, see taxation as an inescapable fact of nature ("In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.") Others see it as a method of draining their work for uses they neither approve of nor enjoy. When another man's claim, proposal, or need is a blank check on your efforts, that is when resentment builds. Only when people deal with each other as people with equal **rights**, inalienable under the law, as people whose only interaction is as voluntary traders, when no one is sacrificed to anyone and nothing is extorted to "common" or "individual good" -- only then can people truly see each other as a benefit and an asset rather than another competitor for the same stuff.

## **Taxation is Not Necessary to Pool our Resources**

Sometimes it is claimed that without a government building large public works projects and infrastructure (with tax money), these things would never be build and we would all be the worse for it. Where there is something that people value, there is profit -- the difference between how much something is valued and the cost to provide it. Large scale makes private ventures more difficult, but the rewards greater. The railroads in the United States are an example of a massive project which was accomplished with private volition and funding, despite government attempts to interfere.

Of course, if the public work or infrastructure is not valued by people then there is no profit to be made and private industry will not build it. But that's a good thing.

### **b. Specifics**

## **The Law**

The role of government is to protect individual rights. It must ensure that nobody violates the rights of another. In this capacity, it must specify what kinds of actions are forbidden. These rules, punishable by retaliatory force, are called laws. Laws are predefined rules. They are written to make them explicit and verify that they are predefined.

Laws serve multiple purposes. The first is a method of informing the populace of what actions will bring about retaliatory force. This facilitates the job of protecting rights by enabling citizens to have knowledge beforehand whether a particular act is forbidden. The people are then able to act appropriately, removing the need for retaliatory force, and increasing the ability of people to avoid violating others rights.

The second job of a law is to make the rules of the land explicit. This serves to avoid confusion in exactly what is legal or not. Such confusion can occur since the government is an organization of individuals. Individuals that can err or have differences of opinions.



It also limits the power of the government officials by requiring them to act according to predefined methods. This has the advantage of safeguarding the people from their own representatives.

A third job of the law is to clarify ambiguous situations between men that may be difficult to decide if rights have been violated, or by who. Even among rational men, disagreement can occur, especially in areas as complicated as contracts. The law provides them a means of settling disputes peacefully by subjecting their claims to an objective, predefined reference. In this respect, the law stands as an impartial arbiter to conflicts.

Laws have many other positive benefits as well, such as providing a reaffirmation that coercive acts will be punished, and justice will be served. To be secure in life and property, man must be able to know what to expect from other people. Although an occasional criminal may act against the rules that govern society, this is exceptional. One interacts in a society because the majority of men act in good faith to respect each other's rights. The law is the primary facilitator for this.

## The Rule of Law

The Rule of Law is a concept required for a free society, where individual rights are absolute. Its basic premise is that the use of force is tightly controlled by objective, predefined [laws](#). It is opposed to the Rule of Men, where those wielding power can use force in any way they choose. Where the whims, envy, or viciousness of the few are unchecked by any restrictions, and everyone else's lives are at the complete mercy of these thugs.

The Rule of Law is the system that subordinates the use of force to specific rules. It is based on the premise that some uses of force are wrong (the initiation of force), and some applications of force are right (retaliatory force). It is based on the understanding that the peaceful, productive interaction of men is conditional on individual rights, and the use of force can make that impossible. That all men must obey the law and respect others rights.

The Rule of Law in practice means a system of objective, predefined laws governing the use of force among people. It means the establishment of a government as a means of enforcing those laws. It means requiring the government to obey those same laws.

## Constitutions

Although governments are instituted among men to protect individual rights, history has shown that governments often become the largest threat to those rights. Knowing that unlimited, arbitrary power of the government is dangerous, men found a partial solution. They called the solution a constitution.

A constitution is a set of [laws](#) that specifically apply to the government. A properly constructed constitution limits the power of a government by specifying which actions they are allowed to take, and disallowing all others. The founding fathers of the United States were the first to create such a constitution. They additionally added a list of rights that specifically prevented the government from certain kinds of actions. The Bill of

Rights, though, was redundant. The government had no power to do anything that wasn't specifically designated to it.

A piece of paper cannot protect people from a tyranny, of course. It did have a number of positive effects. The first was that it defined limits on the government that everyone had access to. In this way, if the government attempted to reach beyond its limits, the people had clear, objective grounds for resisting it. This allowed for easier organization against violations of their rights, and made them stronger and more confident in dealing with their representatives.

The second effect was that, through legal channels, a citizen could challenge any particular government act. Without a constitution, there was no way of arguing against an act by government. The government had unlimited power. A constitution invalidates that premise. It makes clear that even the government is constrained by the law. In the past, governments were above the law. No longer.

There are many varieties of constitutions now in existence. Most of them are not constitutions at all, but documents that attempt to hide under the umbrella of legitimacy provided by the US Constitution. For instance, the Soviet Union had a constitution. It was a document saying the Soviet government could do anything it wanted, without limit. This is nothing more than a document asserting the government's claim to power.

To keep things clear, a constitution has the following properties. It is a limit on the government, denying absolute or arbitrary power. It applies to the government specifically, and not to the people qua citizens. It enumerates particular powers the government has, and denies all others. It is written as law, and cannot be changed by the government itself.

Moreover, a proper constitution would have these additional criteria. The enumerated powers all specifically defend individual rights. All powers are further constrained to not violate individuals rights themselves. The constitution should be interpreted in light of its duty to protect individual rights, and if there is ever a question of meaning, the one that conforms to individual rights must be accepted.

## **Separation of Powers**

Understanding that a government's role is to protect individual rights, but acknowledging that governments have historically been the major violators of these rights, a number of measures have been derived to reduce this likelihood. The concept of Separation of Powers is one such measure.

The premise behind the Separation of Powers is that when a single person or group has a large amount of power, they can become dangerous to citizens. The Separation of Power is a method of removing the amount of power in any group's hands, making it more difficult to abuse.

The US government has a partial Separation of Powers. It distinguishes between three groups. The Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial. They are distinguished by the kind of power they wield. The Legislative branch has the ability to enact laws. The

Executive branch has the ability to see those laws enforced. The Judicial branch has the ability to decide the guilt of a party, allowing punishment.

If a single group shared all three powers, they would have unlimited power. They could specify any law, arresting the 'criminal', and then decide that they are guilty. Through the Separation of Powers, though, no group can have more than one of these powers. Only through the combined use of all three can the government use force. By requiring the consent of all three branches, it increases the likelihood that the government will not initiate violent force.

There are many different ways to separate the powers of a government. The US, for instance, requires those that declare war to be different from those that execute the war. Only by combining the two can a war be declared. Also, the Legislative branch is further broken into two, each with separate responsibilities and powers. By any number of possible separations, a government can be made safer for its citizens.

## Checks and Balances

Understanding that a government's role is to protect individual rights, but acknowledging that governments have historically been the major violators of these rights, a number of measures have been derived to reduce this likelihood. Checks and Balances is one potential method.

Checks and Balances is a system where people in the government are able to impede the work of others in the government if they believe the work to be a violation of rights. In the US government, if one branch of the government becomes irresponsible, the other two branches have the ability to remove members of the first from office. This is called impeachment.

Another form of Checks and Balances is requiring two branches to work together to enact certain decisions. Treaties, for instance, require the President and the Senate to both agree. One group may prevent another group from acting by withholding support. This is easier in practice than trying to undo the actions of a rogue party.

The Checks part of the Checks and Balances is pretty straightforward. The Balances, on the other hand, is a little more difficult to grasp. Essentially, it is an attempt to keep the power of the government evenly divided into many hands, to prevent one group from becoming dominant. Since all three branches have checks on each other, the checks are used as a way of balancing the power. The branch that is grabbing too much power is limited via the actions of the others.

Checks and Balances are created to limit the power of the government. It achieves it by splitting the government into competing groups that can actively limit the power of the others. This is more likely to be done when a group is trying to use its power illegitimately.

Depending on how they are enacted, though, the Checks and Balances scheme can conflict with a [Separation of Powers](#) system. By allowing the other branches to have undue influence on the actions of the first group, they will expand their own power. Also, when a sharing of responsibilities occurs, the groups have incentives to work with each

other to gain power, instead of against each other to limit power. The Presidential veto in the US is an example. The President has such significant power over the Legislature that he is able to demand certain provisions in the bills they pass or he will veto. The result is that the President works closely with the Legislative to increase Federal Power, and the alleged "check" on the Legislature did nothing to prevent an increase of power.

## **Federalism**

Understanding that a government's role is to protect individual rights, but acknowledging that governments have historically been the major violators of these rights, a number of measures have been derived to reduce this likelihood. The concept of a Federation is one such measure.

A Federation is a loose organization of governments. The parties involved agree to work together towards particular ends. These ends vary from military purposes, to economic cooperation. The organization is limited by a few factors. First, it is entirely voluntary. The member parties stay part of the organization as long as the benefits are greater than the costs. Second, each party usually has significant clout, preventing the organization from attempting to enact rules to which they do not agree. Third, since the members of the organization are direct representatives of the parties involved, they will act according to the wishes of their party, or be removed.

A Federal Republic, like the United States, borrows from this idea. Originally, the Senators were representatives of the states, elected by the states. Additionally, the Electoral College, divided by states, elects the President. In this way, the strengths of a national government could be combined with the strengths of a loose federation. The national government had the power to enforce agreements between the states, while being heavily controlled by the states. This competition between the national government and the states allowed a check against either parties from gaining too much power.

The national government was supposed to be a government of the states, instead of the people. It had the ability to prevent the states from abusing their own citizens, or the citizens of other

states, but had no ability to abuse those citizens directly. Since then, this has changed, of course. Senators are elected by the people now, and the Electoral College is essentially a popular vote as well. The result is that the national government is a government of the people now.

Federalism, properly enacted, can be a powerful force towards protecting the rights of the citizens. At its root is the knowledge that power, when centralized, is dangerous. Several smaller governments are safer, since there is still a place to run if things get bad. Also, control over the government is easier at the local level than at a more distant national level.

## **The Right to Bear Arms**

No freeman shall ever be debarred the use of arms.  
*Thomas Jefferson: Draft Virginia Constitution, 1776.*

The last, most important check on government abuse of individual rights is an armed populace. A written [constitution](#) requires somebody to enforce it. Any mechanism built into the government, such as [Checks and Balances](#), can be eventually bypassed by a determined government. Ultimately, the only thing that can prevent the use of force is the threat or use of greater force. To this end, the people are the ultimate check on government.

Only an armed population has the ability to overthrow a tyrannical government. Governments are well aware of this. In every dictatorship, ownership of guns is outlawed to the general populace. Before the Nazis went about exterminating their Jewish population, they needed to disarm them first. A state treads carefully when the citizens are armed.

## Trial By Jury

When someone is charged with a criminal act, their own rights are in jeopardy. Those charging them (the government for instance) intended to punish them with retaliatory force. Unless they are given a fair trial, the alleged retaliatory force could be an initiation of force. One means of ensuring a fair trial is by submitting the question of guilt to the jury of peers.

The Trial by Jury has a couple of uses, each important in preserving individual rights. The first is straightforward from above. The jury is comprised of non-biased individuals who judge the evidence and the charge. If the man is innocent, he will not be convicted, and the use of force will be prevented. If he's guilty, though, he will be punished appropriately. By allowing a group to decide, and forcing a unanimous decision, it helps to prevent the use of force against innocent people.

A second feature of the Trial by Jury has been almost forgotten. The jury has the responsibility to judge both the crime, as well as the [law](#). Judging the law means determining whether the law is just or not, and whether it should even be a law. In this way, the jury acts as a final defense against government abuse. The jury has the ability to prevent an unjust law from being implemented. Its formal name is Jury Nullification.

This developed after the trial by jury was invented. There used to be laws that required the jury to vote according to the law, and prevented them from judging it. The first jury to violate this law was then put on trial. Not surprisingly, the jury in that trial voted not-guilty. Since then, the Trial by Jury has been a powerful tool at preventing government misuse of force.

## Voting

Voting is a check on government abuse that has interesting characteristics. It appears to be a mixed blessing. The advantage is clear. If the people vote for their representatives, who are occasionally put back to the vote, the representatives will desire to appease the people. If the representatives abuse their position or become unpopular with the people, they can be voted out. In this way, a bloodless revolution is possible. This should make revolutions easier, and a stray government will come in to line easier.

No longer can a government violate its citizens rights with only a threat of violent retaliation to fear. A threat, by the way, that is rarely acted on, has unknown chances of success, and takes quite a lot of abuse before men are willing to risk their lives, fortunes, and families to carry it through. Without voting, dictators know they can do just about anything if it's introduced in small enough doses. Voting reduces the size of the doses even more. The people will not stand for much abuse.

The disadvantages of voting are not as clear. The first disadvantage is that the threshold for pain before violence increases. With the ability to vote, people will be far less likely to resort to violence to end government abuse. If the government does act in a truly vicious manner, the populace will just tell themselves that in the next election, they'll remedy things. Of course, justice delayed may be justice lost. Some things cannot wait a few years.

Another downside to voting is that the government can hide behind the shield of being properly elected. The people begin to believe in Democracy as a good in itself, and an elected official as their voice. Calls for any number of abuses in the name of the "public good" become more reasonable if a man elected by a majority of voters says it. The effect is that public becomes more susceptible to abuse due to its camouflage.

### **c. Technicalities**

## **Definition of Capitalism**

"Capitalism" is conventionally defined along economic terms such as the following:

*An economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development is proportionate to the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.*

[Source: Dictionary.com](#)

This is an example of a [definition](#) by non-essentials. An essential definition of capitalism is a [political](#) definition:

*Capitalism is a social system based on the principle of individual rights.*

[Source: Capitalism.org](#)

In order to have an economic system in which "production and distribution are privately or corporately owned", you must have [individual rights](#) and specifically [property rights](#). **The only way to have an economic system fitting the first definition is to have a political system fitting the second definition.** The first is an implication of the second. Because the second, political, definition is fundamental and the cause of the first, it is the more useful definition and is preferable.

Because people often use the term "Capitalism" loosely, "[Laissez Faire Capitalism](#)" is sometimes used to describe a true Capitalist system. But this phrase is redundant.

It is important to define "Capitalism" correctly because a proper [definition](#) is a prerequisite to a proper defense. Capitalism is the only [moral political system](#) because it is the only system dedicated to the protection of [rights](#), which is a requirement for human

survival and flourishing. This is the only [proper role of a government](#). Capitalism should be defended vigorously on a moral basis, not an economic or utilitarian basis.

## Financing a Government

A moral [government](#) must ban [the initiation of force](#). [Taxation](#) is a form of coercion and an initiation of force, and is not a moral method for financing a government. There are other methods for financing a government which don't undermine [man's means of survival](#). Here are some examples.

### Trust Fund

Existing governments could create a large trust fund from their current assets. All government land and supplies which are not needed for police, military, or the courts can be sold. The real money, however, comes from selling intangible assets which are currently "publicly owned". The airwaves - i.e. portions of the EM spectrum - which are currently given away under special leases by the government to private companies should be sold at auction and made into permanent private property. Also, permanent, transferable pollution licenses should be auctioned off to private industry to bring environmental management into the free market rather than in the clutches of some bureaucrat. The resulting trust fund from selling these and similar assets could likely more than pay for all the necessary jobs of a proper government, depending on the country.

### User Fees

User fees are fees paid directly to government by individuals or legal entities who want specific services. An example of this would be court costs for civil actions. The plaintiff would be responsible for paying all court costs unless his suit is successful, in which case the court cost would transfer to the defendant. In the case of a successful criminal prosecution, all court fees would also be paid for by the defendant.

### Donations

A moral government with a narrowly defined role of preventing the initiation of force is a great good to all citizens. Certain functions which don't have specific beneficiaries could be financed largely through donations, just as charities are financed. Americans donate billions to charity each year, a cause such as the military for national defense is surely as worthy as any other cause. One aspect to note about this is that individuals will tend to donate more depending on how much they benefit. Bill Gates, for example, has a lot to lose if this country gets overrun by some enemy, so a few million donation for him would be in his interest to help insure his fortune. If individuals feel that the country is inadequately defended and they are at jeopardy, the marginal beneficiaries will donate more.

### Flat Citizen Fees

It is not necessary that everyone residing within the jurisdiction of a government be citizens. Citizenship could be optional for all residents of a country, with a flat yearly

citizenship fee. Citizenship would have such advantages as the right to vote and the right to run for public office. These fees would go to further finance portions of government without specific beneficiaries, such as the costs of unsuccessful criminal prosecutions. Citizenship status could never be allowed to determine the availability of government protection.

## The Death Penalty

There are two aspects of the question: Should the state have a death penalty? The first is **ethical**: "Is it moral to execute guilty criminals?" The second is **epistemological**: "What should be the burden of proof for capital cases?" In order to support the Death Penalty, it must be moral to execute criminals and the burden of proof must be specified and always met.

### Morality of Executions

Once a man has **initiated force** against an innocent person, he has in effect declared that he does not live by the principle of **individual rights**. He does not wish to live among men as a rational being, but as a predator, to the detriment and destruction of all those around. Rights stem from man's nature as a **rational being**, and a man living irrationally has no rights. It is not only prudent for a society to destroy such a harmful animal, but it is an act of **justice**: treating a person according to how they act.

There is a concept in justice called *proportionality* which states basically that the reaction should fit the action, (the punishment should fit the crime or the reward should fit the act.) The justification for proportionality is outside the scope of this article, but it's worth noting that without proportionality, death would be an appropriate punishment for all who initiate force.

Taking proportionality into account, the premeditated murder of an innocent by a criminal justly deserves the premeditated execution by the state of that criminal. A lack of justice would encourage citizens to take justice into their own hands.

### Necessary Burden of Proof - The Epistemological Argument

The above moral justification for the death penalty in certain situations assumes absolute **certainty** regarding the facts. The problem is that in real-life, despite overwhelming evidence, juries sometimes make mistakes. The punishment of a criminal is prudence, but the punishment of an innocent is a tragedy. How much are we willing to risk the life of an innocent for the punishment of a criminal? If an innocent man is unjustly imprisoned, he can be set free later when new evidence is discovered, but there is no recovering from an incorrect execution.

### Conclusion

It is tempting to side with either the moral argument, or the epistemological argument. Both have an appeal. It is right to punish criminals, and in some cases the death penalty is appropriate. If the court system isn't capable of doing this, people will take the burden on



themselves. They will make sure justice is dealt. This undermines the objective nature of the courts. On the other hand, to kill even a single innocent man is reprehensible. Most people try to pick one argument, while neglecting the other.

This is untenable, though, and will lead to unintended consequences. If there is no death penalty via the courts, people will take justice into their own hands. This has the disadvantage of eliminating an objective standard of proof. The likely result will be that more innocent people will die than if there was confidence in the courts.

On the other hand, if there is a death penalty, and people believe it is being used too loosely, they will avoid convicting people, or they will obstruct justice. The courts will seem to be an arbitrary threat, and the people will fight against them in several ways. Already we see calls for jury nullification in certain cases believed to have a racial bias. This would have still further consequences, though. As people begin to understand that certain criminals will be released due to their race, they will be less likely to trust the courts, having similar problems as officially rejecting the death penalty.

The answer isn't obvious, which is why so many people disagree on the topic. Ultimately, the courts must be trusted to enact justice. This means no artificial restrictions, such as the prevention of the death penalty. If the restrictions are too high, confidence in the courts will be lost, undermining their purpose. In cases of the death penalty, the burden of proof must be higher than normal though. It must be clear that death is final. The risk of killing an innocent man must be weighed heavily. The burden of proof is higher, but it must be objective and possible. A burden that can't be met is the same as eliminating the death penalty.

## Abortion

The issue of abortion, whether it should be legal for a woman to terminate her pregnancy, highlights the question of who has [rights](#) and why do they have them. On one side of the debate the argument goes that a woman owns her own body ([right to life](#)) and has the right to do whatever she pleases to it. On the other side holds that the growing fetus within the woman is not actually her property to do with as she pleases and itself has the right to life and, morally, can not be aborted. The two main issues to tackle are:

- 1) does the fetus have rights, and
- 2) if so, does it also have the right to remain in the womb against the mothers wishes.

To analyze whether or not the fetus has rights, we must go back to what specifically are rights and why men in general possess rights. Rights define the guidelines for social interaction between *rational* people. They allow society to exist by banning the [initiation of force](#) between *rational* men. A fetus does not act, let alone act rationally. There is no reason to recognize fetal rights. Rights are not arbitrary handed out by edicts, they are corollaries of an entity's nature.

Even if a fetus did have rights, would it have the right to stay in its mothers womb against her wishes? The answer is no. There are no unchosen obligations or duties. If a woman does not want a fetus inside her she may use any means necessary to force it out just as she would force an unwelcome visitor in her house. Even if you invite a visitor in, you still have the right to ask him to leave.

There is very little grounds to rationally argue for a ban on abortions. Almost all "pro-lifers" get their bloody politics from their evil ethics which come from their irrational epistemology which comes from their mystical metaphysics which they call religion.

For more information of abortion, please visit the web site [www.AbortionIsProLife.com](http://www.AbortionIsProLife.com).

## Fraud

Fraud is a type of initiation of force. It is when a man lies as part of an exchange, cheating the other out of his property. It is a form of theft. Fraud is an exchange that one side has reneged on. By making a trade under false pretenses, only one side of the exchange has been made. The defrauder has gained value from someone, but hasn't provided his side of the exchange.

If a man walked into a store and said "I'll buy that newspaper", the clerk will hand him the newspaper and wait for the money. Although physically the newspaper has traded hands, the ownership is not transferred until the man gives his money. If the man then walked out of the store claiming the newspaper was his, the clerk would rightly have him arrested for theft.

Similarly, if a man sells a car stating that it is in working condition, when it is not, the money placed into his hands is not his. The ownership is passed on the condition that the car works. If it doesn't, the exchange is invalid, and the buyer would expect the money back.

Fraud is simply theft through trickery, but theft nonetheless. As such, it is a violation of the property rights of the victim.

## 5. Esthetics

HO-05

### What is Esthetics?

Esthetics is the study of art. It includes what art consists of, as well as the purpose behind it. Does art consist of music, literature, and painting? Or does it include a good

engineering solution, or a beautiful sunset? These are the questions that aimed at in esthetics. It also studies methods of evaluating art, and allows judgments of the art. Is art in the eye of the beholder? Does anything that appeals to you fit under the umbrella of art? Or does it have a specific nature? Does it accomplish a goal?

## Why is Esthetics important?

Art has existed through all of recorded human history. It is unique to humans because of our unique form of thinking. Its importance is based on this nature, specifically, man's ability to abstract. Art is a little understood tool of man to bring meaning to abstract concept. Esthetics is important because it delves into the reason why art has always existed, the burning need of mankind through the ages to see the world in a different, clear way. It further evaluates art by the standard of human life, and whether it accomplishes the job of satisfying man's intellectual needs, or whether it tends to hurt or make worse those needs.

## What are the key elements of a proper Esthetics?

Art is a selective recreation of reality. Its purpose is to concretize an abstraction to bring an idea or emotion within the grasp of the observer. It is a selective recreation, with the selection process depending on the value judgments of the creator. These value judgments can be observed and evaluated via the field of ethics.

### a. Basics

## Why Men Need Art

The word "art" is used so often and so loosely, it seems it can be applied to anything at all. A word that can be used to describe anything, though, is a word that has no meaning. To derive the meaning of the word, we must first explore what human need it fulfills.

Man is a conceptual being. He thinks not only in specifics, but in abstracts. To gain further knowledge of the world, he builds abstracts on top of abstracts. Each step higher brings him a wider grasp of reality.

Each step also takes him farther from the clarity that comes from direct perception. This is not to say that his abstractions are false. If his use of reason is vigorous enough, the abstractions will correspond to reality. The difficulty is in then using the abstractions for further reasoning.

Concepts are integrations of particulars. They can be formed through integration of perceptions directly, or they can be formed through abstractions of other concepts. The second route, while producing valid concepts, does not require the perception of the particulars. They are induced, but need not have been directly perceived.

This brings us to the crux of the problem. Many abstracts lack the immediacy of those based on perception. The higher the level of abstraction, the more difficult it is to fully grasp it. Art is the tool that makes it possible to grasp complex abstractions.

## Art

Art satisfies an important [need for men](#). It brings complex abstractions closer to the perceptual level, enabling men to more fully grasp them. Art accomplishes this through a process of embodying the abstraction in the form of a concrete.

Art does not just concretize the abstraction by merely creating an instance of it. Art attempts to embody the abstraction. It creates a single instance, but the instance is based on the essential nature of the concept. When we form a [concept](#), we omit all of the non-essential qualities. The abstraction that remains is based only on essential characteristics. It is these characteristics that art tries to produce in a single concrete form.

The result really is an embodiment of the abstraction. The product retains only what the artist deems important. Since it consists of just the essential aspects of the abstraction, and contains all of the essentials, it allows the abstraction to be grasped directly as an entity.

The importance of this tool of cognition is incalculable. By portraying the abstraction in this way, it gains the immediacy of a perceivable concrete. It magnifies the usefulness of the concept by allowing a more thorough [integration](#) and understanding of it. Instead of trying to understand things in term of an abstraction of many entities, the single concrete embodiment serves as a perfect example of the abstraction.

To bring the abstraction into clarity, it needs to be created in its essential form. To be meaningful, it needs to be created in a recognizable form. To this end, art is a selective re-creation of reality.

Art is selective. The artist must pick not only the form in which he intends to create the art, but he must pick a subject. This subject is not random. It is picked by the artist for some significance it has for him. The choice of the subject is based on the artist's philosophy. Importance to the artist is based on his world-view. The subject is that which the artist believes has a wide-reaching importance to himself. The content is based on his [sense of life](#). His emotional evaluation of the aspects of reality he finds important

Art is a re-creation. It is created in order to grasp clearly an aspect of the artist's world view. If the concretization of the idea happened naturally, one would not have a problem of bringing the abstraction to a perceivable form. It would already be done. Art is an attempt to fill a gap. It is an act of creation to bring into the world a clear representation of an aspect of one's world-view.

Art is a re-creation of reality. Its purpose is to embody an idea, showing that it can exist in reality. If the creation required non-real qualities in order to be able to embody the idea, it could not be convincing. If an artist, in trying to show that man should live a life devoid of 'materialism', had to resort to describing an imaginary being that required no food, protection from the elements, or any other human need, it would rob the creation of the ability to concretize an abstractions in order to achieve further understanding or efficacy.

An artist does need to create that which doesn't exist already, or in a sufficiently consistent form. To this end, the artist isn't replicating reality. Fiction is a form of art that doesn't mirror reality. But the artist, in order to convey the message, must not only show what the message is, but how it can exist in reality. If he fails in the second half, it will

undermine the first. To this end, the imaginary or impossible can supplement the art, but cannot serve as its foundation. This is why art needs to be a selective recreation of reality.

## Sense Of Life

A Sense of Life is an emotional evaluation of the world. It is subconsciously formed through a process of emotional [integration](#). It integrates one's emotions and value-judgments. Since it is an automatic process, it begins with one's first emotional judgments about the world long before the capacity to rationally judge the world has been achieved. It is because of this that one's Sense of Life can differ radically from one's explicit metaphysical view. Although the two relate, and affect one another, there is no causal connection.

A Sense of Life differs from simple [emotions](#). It is not an emotional evaluation of one's metaphysical views, whether implicit or explicit. A Sense of Life is not programmed by a single evaluation. It is an integration of countless evaluations. Over the course of one's life, it integrates emotions and value-judgments related to all aspects of living. A Sense of Life is the sum of these emotions and value-judgments. This is the method by which it acts as an emotional evaluation of the world. Not directly through a concept of the world and an appropriate judgment, but a complex summation of judgments about every aspect of the world one has made.

### **b. Specifics**

## Esthetics of Literature

Literature is the selective recreation of reality through the use of [concepts](#). Since concepts are accessed through [words](#), language is the direct medium. The purpose of literature is to embody abstract concepts. To do this, it uses language to create detailed concretes. It attempts to bring the conceptual to the perceptual level. In this respect, it must create the [perceptions](#) through the use of language.

There are numerous variations of [art](#) that are based on literature. Novels, poems, stories, and others use only language to convey the subject. These are forms of literature. Others, such as plays or movies, involve other artistic mediums, such as acting. Although based on literature, which is their most important root, they incorporate other tools to make the concretization clearer. They still embody the abstract through the use of concepts, making them a form of literature.

Literature is one of the basic branches of [Esthetics](#). It satisfies a particular human need. It allows the embodiment of abstract concepts through the use of concepts. Other forms of art aimed at fulfilling this particular need are derivatives of literature, requiring it as the basic mechanism.

## Painting

Painting is the selective recreation of reality through the use of a two-dimensional drawing. It is a category of art that includes drawings, paintings, and sketches. Its purpose is to clarify particular concepts by making them directly perceivable. By bringing a

concept to the level of perception, it makes it possible to contemplate the subject in essentials with visual clarity.

Making a concept visually perceivable is achieved through a process of creating a visual integration. Since concepts are formed by selecting essential criteria, and abstracting away any non-essential characteristic, the resulting mental unit consists of only the important features. Similarly, a visual integration is possible. By abstracting away the non-essential visual features, the painting is left with a visual equivalent of a concept. If done correctly and well, the painting will portray the essential characteristics of an object.

The result of such a visual integration is that the subject will look not only real, but will appear to be the perfect representation of an object. This in spite of the fact that one may never have seen an object that looked quite like it. It will look like the subject should look, and not what it does look like.

## Esthetics of Sculpture

Sculpture is the selective recreation of reality through the use of three-dimensional shape. As a visual art, its purpose is the same as that of [Painting](#). It attempts to embody a concept by forming a visual equivalent of the concept. This requires a visual integration that parallels a conceptual integration.

Since shape is the characteristic sculptures are able to convey, the concepts being concretized must have an element of shape involved. Moreover, shape must be an important feature of the concept. The human body has been the primary subject of sculpture. Other objects, such as animals, are possible.

## Music

Music is the selective recreation of reality through sounds. It creates patterns of sound that convey emotion, moods, and behavior. The artist chooses the content to be expressed by the music, and the style by which it is conveyed. Only certain sound patterns can be recognized and integrated by our sense. The music must exist as an entity, which can be recognized as a single, integrated whole.

Music is a powerful medium to express [emotion](#). It recreates aspects of our lives that are recognizable. A piece of music may be quick moving, expressing energy, purposefulness, or excitement. Music can model human voice patterns, especially those filled with emotions. Passion, hate, fear, and sadness can all be recognized in certain musical patterns. Music has the ability to express emotion through recognizable patterns.

Music attempts to embody an emotion. By recreating patterns associated with human emotion, it recreates the emotion. We are able to grasp the emotional content, and react emotionally to it. As an embodiment of the emotion, we are able to perceive it directly. Music provides a clear concretization of the emotion, allowing us to more fully grasp it.

People react to music with their [sense of life](#). The music presents an emotion, but the emotion is not directly felt. It is like experiencing the emotions of other people. You recognize the emotion, and react to it depending on your own mood, emotions, or sense of

life. A song that expresses joy may make some people react with joy of their own. Others may feel revulsion, or sadness. When one mourns from the death of a loved one, joyful music may seem ghastly.

### **c. Technicalities**

## **Drama**

Drama is a derivative art form based on Literature. Through the use of performance, concepts can be further concretized. Instead of using words to describe the actions of people, a more direct recreation of reality is possible through acting. This allows a more effective method of expressing actions and human expression.

Drama requires literature. Acting can help to concretize certain concepts, but it cannot itself embody the abstraction. In this case the embodiment occurs through the use of concepts, showing the essential characteristics of the abstraction.

## **Dance**

Dance is a derivative art form based on music. It is the selective recreation of reality through human movement. The dance is organized and selected by the music it is to accompany. It adds to music, but is not an art form by itself. The music is the primary. It is what brings the expression into existence as an entity. Dance cannot do this without music. The human movements are meaningless without the integrating nature of music.

Dance accompanies music by further concretizing certain aspects of music. Music recreates the human expressions of emotion, mood, and attitude. It is these expressions that dance compliments, allowing them to be grasped visually as well. Human movement can enable a clearer expression of mood and attitude, since these are often expressed through movement.

Dance can express joy and happiness by a light, energetic bouncing, like children playing. It can express sadness and grief by showing a slow, stumbling movement. It can show excitement by being fast and full of energy. In this way, dance enhances music, as well as allows aspects of it to be perceived directly.

## **Song**

Song is a derivative art form based on music. It is the use of the human voice to enhance music. This magnifies the ability of music to express emotions. Human voice is THE auditory method of conveying emotion.

The voice can express any emotion, from love to anger to sadness. Set to music, it amplifies this effect. It strengthens the emotional content of the voice by accentuating parts of it. For instance, love can be brought out by expressing joy and liveliness in addition to the passionate voice.

Song also adds words to music. In this way, it combines literature with music. The words can produce a story, or they can be used as poetry. By combining the two forms of art,

they can enhance each other. The music can add emotion, allowing further concretizing of the concepts the literature is attempting to concretize. The literature can provide context for the music, allowing it to be concretized as well. The two make a powerful combination.

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# **A**-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

## **A Priori Knowledge**

*Genus:* [Knowledge](#)

*Differentia:* Existing Prior to experience

*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Absolute**

*Genus:* Condition of validity

*Differentia:* Unconditional / always true

## **Abstraction**

*Genus:* Mental process

*Differentia:* Forms a generalization from particulars

## **Agnosticism**

*Genus:* Position on the existence of [God](#)

*Differentia:* The claim of non-belief in God and the non-disbelief in God - that the state of Gods existence is unknowable

*Comment:* This is an example of the [evasion](#) of the [Law of Excluded Middle](#).

## **Altruism**

*Genus:* Code of [Ethics](#)

*Differentia:* The welfare of others is the standard of the good / holds the [sacrifice](#) of the self to others as the good

*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Amoralism**

*Genus:* Code of [Ethics](#)

*Differentia:* There is no right or wrong, no standard of value by which to judge actions

## **Anarchy**

*Genus:* [Political](#) Theory

*Differentia:* [Government](#) is unnecessary and [evil](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Anti-Concept**

*Genus:* [Concept](#)

*Differentia:* Unusable term that destroys a valid concept

## **Anti-Conceptual Mentality**

*Genus:* Mentality

*Differentia:* The tendency to think only in concretes and not in [principles](#)

## **Antitrust**

*Genus:* [Law](#)

*Differentia:* Regulations on successful businesses

*Comment:* Tries to promote economic competition through force - the only way to destroy competition. It is based on a false notion of competition.

*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Arbitrary**

*Genus:* Judgment of the validity of a claim

*Differentia:* Not based on any evidence for or against

## **Argument From Analogy**

*Genus:* [Inductive](#) Proof

*Differentia:* Because two things are similar in some respects, they are likely to be similar in other respects

### **Argument From Analogy for Other Minds**

*Genus:* [Argument From Analogy](#)

*Differentia:* Claims that because you have a mind and act rationally, other people who act rationally also have minds.

### **Argument From Design**

*Genus:* [Argument From Analogy](#)

*Differentia:* Claims the existence for [God](#) because some complicated things are made by people therefore complicated natural phenomena must also have some designer i.e. God

*Comment:* Violates [Occam's Razor](#), among other things

### **Argument From Intimidation**

*Genus:* Argument

*Differentia:* Claim that the denial of the validity of an argument is immoral

*Comment:* This is a logical fallacy which appeals to moral self-doubt.

### **Aristotle**

*Genus:* Philosopher

*Differentia:* Developer of the laws of logic; believed that reality is real and knowable

### **Asceticism**

*Genus:* [Ethical](#) System

*Differentia:* Holds that true meaning and beauty can only be non-physical, and therefore one should refrain from all physical pleasures

### **Atheism**

*Genus:* Position on the existence of [God](#)

*Differentia:* The non-belief in God

### **Axiom**

*Genus:* Statement

*Differentia:* An irreducible primary that is logically undeniable

*Link:* [Article](#)

## **A-B** [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

### **Beauty**

*Genus:* Trait

*Differentia:* A sense of harmony

### **Behaviorism**

*Genus:* Branch of psychology

*Differentia:* Acceptance that men's actions are merely a direct response to external stimuli

*Comment:* This denies [Free Will](#).

### **Belief**

*Genus:* Mental process

*Differentia:* The acceptance that an idea is true

*Comment:* Belief omits degrees.

### **Benevolent Universe Premise**

*Genus:* View of the world

*Differentia:* The universe is neutral - it simply is; but man, if acting in accordance with reality can achieve his values and flourish

## A-B- **C** -D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z

### **Capitalism**

*Genus:* A social system

*Differentia:* Based on individual [rights](#) including [property rights](#), meaning that all property is privately owned

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Causality**

*Genus:* Relationship

*Differentia:* Describes how all causes have specific effects / all actions have specific reactions according to the nature of the entities involved

*Comment:* This is the law of [identity](#) applied over time

### **Certainty**

*Genus:* Degree of belief

*Differentia:* When there are no doubts - all evidence is for and there is no evidence against a proposition

*Comment:* Certainty is contextual.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Chance**

*Genus:* Explanation

*Differentia:* Describes future events that are unknown or past events with unclear causes

### **Character**

*Genus:* Aspect of a person's personality

*Differentia:* That which is shaped by the fundamental [moral values](#) he accepts and automatizes

### **Charity**

*Genus:* Gift

*Differentia:* Motivated by pity

### **Closed Minded**

*Genus:* Mentality

*Differentia:* Rational evasion of new ideas

*Comment:* Opposite of [Open Minded](#)

### **Civil Disobedience**

*Genus:* Crime

*Differentia:* Committed as a protest against a specific law

### **Collective Rights**

*Genus:* A set of privileges

*Differentia:* Granted to groups under the pretense of "rights"

*Comment:* This is based on the false notion of positive rights.

### **Collectivism**

*Genus:* A view of the individuals position in society

*Differentia:* Man is a generic cog in the machine of society with society as the basic unit of reality and values

### **Common Good**

*Genus:* [Value](#)

*Differentia:* Of value to a group

*Comment:* A group is only a collection of individuals and as such, can not value

anything apart from what individuals in that group individually value. "Common Good" is a fallacious concept based on the premise of [collectivism](#).

### **Communism**

*Genus:* Type of [government](#)

*Differentia:* Explicit Common ownership of all property and people

*Comment:* 100 million murdered and counting

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Community Service**

*Genus:* Action

*Differentia:* A contradictory term ostensibly meaning to provide a service to the community

*Comment:* It is not a service because it is typically done without compensation and it is not value providing to the community since a community can have no standard of value.

### **Compassion**

*Genus:* Empathy

*Differentia:* Towards suffering people that you value

*Comment:* Compassion for evil people is [context-dropping](#).

### **Concept**

*Genus:* Mental Abstraction

*Differentia:* Integrates two or more particulars into a common mental unit

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Consciousness**

*Genus:* State of existence

*Differentia:* Characterized by having an awareness of reality

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Conservative (political)**

*Genus:* Political position

*Differentia:* Generally supports government intervention in social issues but supports freedom in economic issues

### **Context**

*Genus:* Information

*Differentia:* Specific background or circumstance relevant to a topic

### **Context-Dropping**

*Genus:* Action

*Differentia:* Ignoring contextual details that are relevant and important to an idea

### **Contract**

*Genus:* Agreement

*Differentia:* Legally binding specification of the terms of a trade that takes place over time

### **Contradiction**

*Genus:* Relationship between two ideas

*Differentia:* Both the ideas can not be true because each necessitates the falsity of the other

*Comment:* Contradictions, by definition, do not exist.

### **Corollary**

*Genus:* Idea

*Differentia:* Necessitated by the truth of another idea or ideas

### **Cosmology**

*Genus:* Science

*Differentia:* Studies the origin and nature of the universe

### **Cosmology, Monistic**

*Genus:* Cosmology

*Differentia:* Traces the origin of the universe to a single substance

### **Cosmology, Pluralistic**

*Genus:* Cosmology

*Differentia:* Traces the origin of the universe to multiple substances

### **Creation**

*Genus:* Action

*Differentia:* To rearrange existents in a purposeful manner

### **Culture**

*Genus:* Set of ideas, traditions and beliefs

*Differentia:* Shared by a group of people

### **Cynicism**

*Genus:* Attitude or perspective

*Differentia:* Looking at things with the view that man is evil

*Comment:* People are cynical of government. They think that politicians do things to further their own personal goals, instead of the goals shared by the rest of the populace

## **A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z**

### **Deduction**

*Genus:* Mental process of forming conclusions based on premises

*Differentia:* Goes from the general to the specific

*Comment:* Traditionally philosophers have treated Deduction as the only means to certainty. This is misbegotten.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Definition**

*Genus:* Description

*Differentia:* Fundamentally describes a concept

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Deflation**

*Genus:* Change in the money supply

*Differentia:* Decrease

### **Democracy**

*Genus:* Type of government

*Differentia:* Rule by the people

*Comment:* In true democracy, all government decisions are made by vote.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Determinism**

*Genus:* Theory of causality

*Differentia:* Everything in the universe is predetermined directly by previous events

*Comment:* This is often used as a method of denying free will, but that denial is a dropping of context.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Dogma**

*Genus:* A set of [beliefs](#)  
*Differentia:* Accepted on [faith](#)

## **Duty**

*Genus:* A moral obligation  
*Differentia:* Caused by an obedience to a higher authority  
*Link:* [Article](#)

**E** [A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

## **Economic Interventionism**

*Genus:* [Government](#) policy  
*Differentia:* [Forceful](#) manipulation of the free market in the hopes of achieving some particular end  
*Comment:* This **never** works out well.

## **Economic Power**

*Genus:* Power to persuade  
*Differentia:* Gained through trade and production  
*Comment:* The opposite of [political power](#)

## **Economy**

*Genus:* System  
*Differentia:* Of production, trade, and consumption

## **Egalitarianism**

*Genus:* Ethical belief  
*Differentia:* That mean should be equal  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Egoism**

*Genus:* Ethical system  
*Differentia:* The self is the standard of value  
*Comment:* Variants of Egoism include [Hedonism](#) and [Rational Egoism](#)

## **Either-Or**

*see:* [Law of Excluded Middle](#)

## **Emergency**

*Genus:* Event or Situation  
*Differentia:* Unexpected event causing temporary conditions where human survival is impossible

## **Emotions**

*Genus:* Subconscious responses  
*Differentia:* Automated; triggered and programmed by ones thoughts and value judgments  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Empiricism**

*Genus:* [Epistemological](#) theory  
*Differentia:* Experience is the sole source of [knowledge](#)  
*Comment:* Denies the knowledge gained by abstract reasoning (i.e. [induction](#) and [deduction](#)).

## **Enlightenment, Age of**

*Genus:* Period of history  
*Differentia:* 18th century; period when [reason](#) was accepted as valid and respected

## **Entity**

*Genus:* [Existent](#)

*Differentia:* As a particular and discrete unit

### **Environmentalism**

*Genus:* [Ethical](#) system

*Differentia:* Holds nature untainted by man as the [standard of value](#)

*Comment:* The [corollary](#) to this is that man and anything that man does is [evil](#).

### **Epicureanism**

*Genus:* [Hedonism](#)

*Differentia:* Standard of value is happiness or the avoidance of pain

### **Epistemological**

*Genus:* Nature of a [concept](#)

*Differentia:* Concept is a [mental entity](#)

*Comment:* As opposed to being a physical entity or an [intrinsic](#) property

### **Epistemology**

*Genus:* Branch of [philosophy](#)

*Differentia:* Dealing with [knowledge](#), how it is gained, and its relationship to reality

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Esthetics**

*Genus:* Branch of [Philosophy](#)

*Differentia:* Deals with art and its purpose

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Ethics**

*Genus:* Branch of [Philosophy](#)

*Differentia:* Deals with how man should act

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Evasion**

*Genus:* Mental process

*Differentia:* Intentional attempt to deny, overlook, or ignore information or ideas

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Evil**

*Genus:* Characteristic of an action

*Differentia:* Opposes a moral [standard of value](#)

### **Existence**

*Genus:* Collection of entities

*Differentia:* Including everything that has actual being

*Comment:* This include mental entities existing as mental entities

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Existent**

*Genus:* Thing

*Differentia:* That exists

*Comment:* This includes entities, attributes, and actions.

### **Existentialism**

*Genus:* [Philosophy](#)

*Differentia:* Holds that there is no [intrinsic](#) meaning or [purpose](#), therefore it is up to each individual to determine his own meaning and purpose and take responsibility for his actions. Views the world as "absurd".

*Link:* [External Article](#)

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-**F**-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

**Faith**

*Genus:* [Belief](#)

*Differentia:* Accepted without [reason](#) or evidence and often in spite of evidence

*Link:* [Article](#)

**False**

*Genus:* Identification of a proposition

*Differentia:* Not corresponding to reality

**Fatalism**

*Genus:* [Determinism](#)

*Differentia:* Holds that all future events are determined by fate and unalterable

**Focus**

*Genus:* Mental action

*Differentia:* Direct the mind toward a particular topic

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Force**

*Genus:* A method of creating or sustaining any interaction

*Differentia:* Not voluntary by all parties

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Fraud**

*Genus:* Deception

*Differentia:* Employed to gain [value](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Free Market**

*Genus:* [Freedom](#)

*Differentia:* People can trade their goods and services by mutual consent, without coercion

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Free Speech**

*Genus:* [Freedom](#)

*Differentia:* People are permitted to speak without interference or punishment of the government

*Comment:* This freedom does not require others to provide you with the means to speak

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Free Will**

*Genus:* An ability

*Differentia:* The mind's power to make choices

*Link:* [Article](#)

**Freedom**

*Genus:* Action

*Differentia:* Voluntary, in the absence of coercion

**Fundamental**

*Genus:* Attribute (of an attribute)

*Differentia:* Within a context, the most important characteristic

*Link:* [Article](#)



## A-B-C-D-E-F-**G**-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z

### **God**

*Genus:* A being

*Differentia:* Omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omnipresent, unlimited creator of the universe

*Comment:* It's defined by it's lack of characteristics and limits. [Invalid concept](#).

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Gold Standard - a system of money**

*Genus:* System of money

*Differentia:* Characterized by the actual use some commodity

*Comment:* Historically, gold was one such standard that tended to work the best in the free market.

### **Government**

*Genus:* Organization

*Differentia:* Within a specific geographic location that is dominant in physical [force](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Guild Socialism**

*Genus:* Socialism

*Differentia:* Public ownership is divided by profession

*Comment:* The grouping of all men of a certain profession into one group with that group deciding what and how the work should be done, and receiving the benefits of its labor. All other men outside the group must be barred from that profession.

## A-B-C-D-E-F-G-**H**-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z

### **Happiness**

*Genus:* A state of consciousness

*Differentia:* Based on the achievements of one's values, it is characterized by pleasure and satisfaction

### **Hedonism**

*Genus:* Ethical system

*Differentia:* The standard of value is whatever gives you pleasure

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Hierarchy of Knowledge**

*Genus:* A structure of knowledge

*Differentia:* Some ideas are based on the others, forming multiple levels of abstraction, where the base is [perception](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Human Rights**

*see:* [Rights](#)

### **Humility**

*Genus:* [virtue/anti-concept](#)

*Differentia:* Evading one's possession of other virtues

*Comment:* Humility demands that you never take credit for your virtues. It is the opposite of [pride](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-**I**-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z

### **Identity**

*Genus:* Aspect of [existence](#)

*Differentia:* All characteristics of an [entity](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Ideology**

*Genus:* A set of beliefs

*Differentia:* Describes perfection or a worthy aim

### **Imagination**

*Genus:* Mental faculty

*Differentia:* The ability to rearrange observations into forms which one has not directly perceived

### **Implicit Knowledge**

*Genus:* Knowledge

*Differentia:* Hasn't been identified explicitly, but is used in the process of reasoning nonetheless

*Comment:* Most aspects of philosophy are grasped implicitly before they are properly defined. An example is the concept of [existence](#), which is required for any other knowledge, but can go left implicit throughout one's life.

### **Inalienable Rights**

*Genus:* [Rights](#)

*Differentia:* Refers to the fact that rights are inalienable, meaning they cannot be removed from the bearer for any reason

### **Independence**

*Genus:* Virtue

*Differentia:* Never requires or desires the unearned

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Individualism**

*Genus:* A view of the individuals position in society

*Differentia:* Society is merely a sum of individuals

### **Induction**

*Genus:* Mental process of forming conclusions based on premises

*Differentia:* Goes from the specific to the generic

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Infinity**

*Genus:* A conceptual tool used to indicate a measurement

*Differentia:* Without a particular boundary / unbounded

*Comment:* This contradicts the [law of identity](#), so should be recognized as a metaphysical impossibility.

### **Inflation**

*Genus:* Change in the money supply

*Differentia:* Increase

*Comment:* Often accompanied by a general increase in prices, the term is mostly misused to refer to the price increases, which is just a possible effect.

### **Initiation of Force**

*Genus:* Act

*Differentia:* One man causing the beginning of a not mutually voluntary

relationship  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Instinct**

*Genus:* Knowledge  
*Differentia:* Automatic and innate, prescribing actions required for survival  
*Comment:* Instincts are not actually a form of knowledge, although the effect is the same. Knowledge is the product of a mental process. Instincts bypass this entirely.

### **Integrity**

*Genus:* Virtue  
*Differentia:* Practicing one's convictions  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Intellectuals**

*Genus:* People  
*Differentia:* Involved in complex, abstract reasoning

### **Intelligence**

*Genus:* A mental faculty  
*Differentia:* The capacity to acquire and apply knowledge

### **Intrinsic**

*Genus:* The source of an attribute  
*Differentia:* The attribute is inherent in the entity  
*Comment:* Intrinsic means the attribute exists without relation to another object.

### **Intrinsic Theory of Value**

*Genus:* A theory of the source of [values](#)  
*Differentia:* Values exist as an aspect of a physical object, without relation to the valuer  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Introspection**

*Genus:* Process of cognition  
*Differentia:* Directed inwards or at one's mental or psychological state

### **Invalid Concept**

*Genus:* A mental construct  
*Differentia:* The product of an attempt to integrate contradictions and errors, or to use a word without having a specific [definition](#)  
*Comment:* An invalid concept superficially appears to be a concept, but it has no referents in reality, and can not be used meaningfully.

### **Irrationalism**

*Genus:* An epistemological belief  
*Differentia:* Reason is not valid or useful

### **Isolationism**

*Genus:* A position on foreign policy  
*Differentia:* Having no concern for the rest of the world  
*Comment:* This is an [anti-concept](#). Although defined as above, it is used to refer to any foreign policy aimed at national self-interest. It's a smear to be used against anyone who argues against a foreign policy.

**A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z**

### **Justice**

*Genus:* Virtue  
*Differentia:* Treating others as they deserve to be treated  
*Link:* [Article](#)

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-**K**-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Kant, Immanuel**

*Genus:* Philosopher  
*Differentia:* Believed that reality as we see it is distorted, and the true reality is unknowable

### **Knowledge**

*Genus:* A mental construct  
*Differentia:* Grasps an aspect of reality

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-**L**-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Laissez-Faire**

*see:* [Free Market](#)

### **Language**

*Genus:* A system of symbols  
*Differentia:* Each symbol, or word, refers to a concept  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Law**

*Genus:* A rule  
*Differentia:* Pre-defined, specifying the permissible actions of men  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Law of Excluded Middle**

*Genus:* Logical axiom  
*Differentia:* A proposition is either true or false, but cannot be both or neither.

### **Learning**

*Genus:* A mental process  
*Differentia:* Acquiring [knowledge](#) through instruction or study

### **Liberal**

*Genus:* A political belief system, or a person who accepts the system  
*Differentia:* To believe that the initiation of [force](#) should not be permitted in any aspect of life  
*Comment:* This definition above is the true, original definition of the term. In America the term has been changed to mean the opposite, including the left-wing and other socialists.

### **Libertarians**

*Genus:* People with a particular political system of beliefs  
*Differentia:* They believe that the initiation of [force](#) should not be permitted in any aspect of life

### **Life**

*Genus:* A process  
*Differentia:* Self-sustaining and self-generated action

### **Logic**

*Genus:* An art or process  
*Differentia:* Removing or preventing contradictions in one's thoughts or ideas  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## Love

*Genus:* Emotion

*Differentia:* Based on a positive value-judgment, it is positive and often intense

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-**M**-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z

## Malevolent Universe Premise

*Genus:* View of the world

*Differentia:* The premise that the universe is somehow **out to get you** or is unfit for human life.

*Comment:* According to this premise, our very survival is a desperate, unhappy fight against insurmountable odds.

## Man

*Genus:* An animal

*Differentia:* One possessing a rational faculty

*Comment:* In the context of philosophy, man refers to a human being, regardless of gender.

## Market Value

*Genus:* [Value](#)

*Differentia:* Defined through a market process, it is the price at which buyers and sellers agree to trade

## Materialism

*Genus:* [Ethical](#) theory

*Differentia:* [Values](#) consist only of material goods

## Mathematics

*Genus:* [Science](#)

*Differentia:* The relationship and properties of quantities, through the use of numbers

## Matter

*Genus:* [Entity](#)

*Differentia:* Takes up space and physically exists

## Mental Entity

*Genus:* [Entity](#)

*Differentia:* Existing in someone's mind.

*Comment:* This includes thoughts, ideas, and memories.

*Link:* [Article](#)

## Mental Integration

*Genus:* Mental process

*Differentia:* Taking isolated ideas and consolidating them into a new unified whole

*Link:* [Article](#)

## Meritocracy

*Genus:* Type of [government](#) / [anti-concept](#)

*Differentia:* Those with the most ability rule

*Comment:* The only way to determine the most able would be through a free market which is not possible in [politics](#).

## Metaphysically Given

*Genus:* Attribute of existents

*Differentia:* Exists as it is independent of man; natural phenomenon

*Comment:* The Metaphysically Given is not true or false, but is the standard of judging true or false.

### **Metaphysical Realism**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical belief](#)

*Differentia:* That the world around us exists and is independent of our thoughts or feelings

### **Metaphysics**

*Genus:* Branch of [philosophy](#)

*Differentia:* Dealing with existence and the nature of the universe

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Mill, John Stuart**

*Genus:* Philosopher and Economist

*Differentia:* Exponent of [Utilitarianism](#)

### **Minority Rights**

*Genus:* [Collective rights](#)

*Differentia:* Applicable to minorities

### **Miracle**

*Genus:* Event

*Differentia:* Caused by supernatural forces which supposedly contradict [causality](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Mixed Economy**

*Genus:* [Economy](#)

*Differentia:* Part [free market](#) and part [socialist](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Monopoly**

*Genus:* Political privilege

*Differentia:* Government forcibly prohibits competition

*Comment:* Using monopoly to mean "Dominant in market share" is an [anti-concept](#) which [evades](#) the difference between [economic power](#) and [political power](#).

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Morality**

*Genus:* Code of action

*Differentia:* Defines how man should live his life

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Motion**

*Genus:* Change of identity

*Differentia:* Change in something's position

### **Mysticism**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) system

*Differentia:* Claims that there are realities other than that which we perceive

*Comment:* All mysticism is [arbitrary](#).

*Link:* [Article](#)

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-**N**-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **National Rights**

*Genus:* [Collective rights](#)

*Differentia:* Applied to nations

### **Natural Theology**

*Genus:* Method of studying God  
*Differentia:* Through reason alone  
*Comment:* As opposed to [Revealed Theology](#)

### **Naturalism**

*Genus:* [Esthetic](#) category  
*Differentia:* Subject and style should imitate reality precisely

### **Nature**

*see:* [Existence](#)

### **Necessity**

*Genus:* Thing  
*Differentia:* Required to achieve some specific end

### **Needs**

*Genus:* Requirements  
*Differentia:* For survival

### **Nihilism (1)**

*Genus:* [Skepticism](#)  
*Differentia:* The denial of all [existence](#)

### **Nihilism (2)**

*Genus:* View on meaning and [value](#)  
*Differentia:* Meaning and value do not exist  
*Comment:* This view assumes that meaning and value must be [Metaphysical](#), when they are in fact [Epistemological](#) -- i.e. meaning and value are not physical, they are [mental entities](#).

### **Nominalism**

*Genus:* Epistemological and Metaphysical theory  
*Differentia:* Various objects labeled by the same term have nothing in common but their name  
*Comment:* This denies the validity of [concepts](#)

### **Non-Existence**

*Genus:* Conceptual tool  
*Differentia:* Refers to the lack of a particular things existence  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Non-Objective Law**

*Genus:* [Law](#)  
*Differentia:* Characterized by lack of definition or the inability to be applied consistently

### **Non-value**

*Genus:* Goal  
*Differentia:* That is not desired or useful

### **Number**

*Genus:* Concept  
*Differentia:* Quantity of units

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-**O**-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Objective Law**

*Genus:* [Law](#)  
*Differentia:* Characterized by a clear definition or the ability to be applied consistently

### **Objective Theory of Value**

*Genus:* Theory of the source of [values](#)

*Differentia:* Values are derived from an evaluation of the facts of reality based on a [standard of value](#)

### **Objectivity**

*Genus:* Act

*Differentia:* Referencing reality

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Occam's Razor**

*Genus:* General rule

*Differentia:* The fewer assumptions that a theory makes, the better it is.

*Comment:* To deny this rule is to state that adding any number of unnecessary assumptions to a theory does not impact its plausibility. For example, consider these two theories: 1) The sum of the three interior angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees; 2) The sum of the three interior angles of a right triangle equal 180 degrees. Occam's Razor suggests that 1) is a more useful, precise, and correct theory, because it makes the same assertion with fewer assumptions.

### **Omnipotent**

*Genus:* Measurement of ability

*Differentia:* Having unlimited power or all-powerful

*Comment:* This is a logically impossible attribute as shown by the following example: Given that X is omnipotent, can X create a rock that X can not lift? Whether yes or no, there is something not within X's power, and thus X is not omnipotent.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Ontology**

*Genus:* Branch of [Metaphysics](#)

*Differentia:* Dealing with the nature of being and existence

*Comment:* For example: studying the fact that all existents have identity

### **Open Minded**

*Genus:* Mentality

*Differentia:* Accepting of new ideas

*Comment:* Opposite of [closed minded](#), but sometimes used incorrectly to mean openness any new idea no matter how wrong or useless

### **Original Sin**

*Genus:* Religious [belief](#)

*Differentia:* That man by his nature is wicked an evil

*Comment:* Traces from the mythology of Adam and Eve and that whole apple nonsense.

*Link:* [Article](#)

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-**P**-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Pacifism**

*Genus:* [Political belief](#)

*Differentia:* Using force is always wrong

*Comment:* This includes a renunciation of retaliatory force. It would only take 1 thug to destroy a society of pacifists. Open season on Pacifists!

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Pain**



*Genus:* Physical response to stimuli  
*Differentia:* Unpleasant and negative

### **Parasite**

*Genus:* Living entity  
*Differentia:* Survives by feeding off another living entity

### **Perception**

*Genus:* Faculty  
*Differentia:* Automatic integration of sensory stimulus  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Philosophy**

*Genus:* A system of [beliefs](#)  
*Differentia:* Regarding the fundamental nature of existence, man, and man's relationship to existence  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Plato**

*Genus:* Philosopher  
*Differentia:* Believed that reality is how we perceive it; that reality consists of universals and we perceive it in the form of particulars  
*Comment:* The ultimate [collectivist](#), since we are all aspects of the same universal entity of man.

### **Platonic Realism**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) theory  
*Differentia:* [Abstractions](#) exist as real entities in another dimension that we perceive as imperfect reflections in the form of particulars

### **Pleasure**

*Genus:* Physical response to stimuli  
*Differentia:* Enjoyable and positive

### **Political Power**

*Genus:* Power to kill  
*Differentia:* Gained physical force, often wielded by or using the [government](#)  
*Comment:* The opposite of [economic power](#)

### **Politics**

*Genus:* Branch of [philosophy](#)  
*Differentia:* Applies [ethics](#) to a society of people and the proper rules governing that society  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Pollution**

*Genus:* Environmental condition  
*Differentia:* Hazardous to man's health

### **Polylogism**

*Genus:* [Epistemological](#) theory  
*Differentia:* There is more than one kind of [logic](#) different logic applies for different people  
*Comment:* This invalidates the whole notion of logic.

### **Possible**

*Genus:* Condition of validity  
*Differentia:* There is little evidence for and no evidence against

### **Pragmatism**

*Genus:* [Philosophical](#) system  
*Differentia:* There are no [absolutes](#) do whatever works and don't question

anything

*Comment:* It is a [contradiction](#) to claim that there are no absolutes, because that would be an absolute

### **Pride**

*Genus:* [Virtue](#)

*Differentia:* Respecting oneself

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Primacy of Consciousness**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) theory

*Differentia:* Reality is a product of ones mind and that [knowledge](#) of reality is gained through [introspection](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Primacy of Existence**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) theory

*Differentia:* Reality exists independent of ones mind and that [knowledge](#) of reality is gained through [perception](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Principle**

*Genus:* [Abstraction](#)

*Differentia:* [Fundamental](#) and wide-reaching

### **Prior Certainty of Consciousness**

*Genus:* [Epistemological](#) assumption

*Differentia:* Assume the existence of your consciousness without relation to the outside world

*Comment:* A starting point from which people try to derive existence which is misbegotten because an awareness has to be aware of something in the first place.

### **Profit**

*Genus:* A result of an action

*Differentia:* A net benefit of the difference between the total value gained and the value lost

### **Proof**

*Genus:* Evidence or argument

*Differentia:* Gives compelling reason to accept an argument as true

### **Property Rights**

*see:* [Right, Property](#)

### **Psychology**

*Genus:* [Science](#)

*Differentia:* How people think

### **Public Interest**

*see:* [Common Good](#)

### **Purpose**

*Genus:* An attribute of an action

*Differentia:* Acting in order to achieve some result

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-**Q**-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#) [A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-

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### **Rational Egoism**

*Genus:* Ethical System

*Differentia:* One's life is his standard of value, and reason is the method of determining morality

### **Rationalism**

*Genus:* [Epistemological](#) theory

*Differentia:* [A priori](#) reasoning is the means of gaining knowledge

*Comment:* Rationalism has many variants, but its main thrust is the denial of empirical evidence. It claims that knowledge is only gained through deductive reasoning, and denies the validity of induction and of sensory data.

### **Rationalization**

*Genus:* Action

*Differentia:* Devising self-satisfying but incorrect reasons to explain something

### **Reason**

*Genus:* Faculty

*Differentia:* Identifies and integrates [perceptions](#)

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Reason as the only means of gaining knowledge**

*Genus:* Rule of [knowledge](#) acquirement

*Differentia:* Only through experience and the integration of that experience through reason can one gain knowledge. Any notions, [whims](#), or A Priori knowledge which is not founded in reality and reason is arbitrary and should not be considered knowledge.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Redistribution of Wealth**

*Genus:* Theft

*Differentia:* Taking wealth from one person or group, and giving it to another person or group

*Comment:* Often done by a government. Usually not recognized as theft since it is legal.

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Religion**

*Genus:* A system of [beliefs](#)

*Differentia:* Based on explicit faith of the supernatural

*Comment:* Usually involving supernatural beings that one worships or fears.

### **Representative Government**

*Genus:* Type of government

*Differentia:* Decisions of the government are made by a subset of the people who allegedly speak for the others

### **Retaliatory Force**

*Genus:* Type of force

*Differentia:* Preventing or putting an end to an involuntary interaction by any means necessary

### **Retroactive Law**

*Genus:* Law

*Differentia:* Although specified at a particular time, applies to a time period before that

*Comment:* A retroactive law nullifies the objectivity of the law, which is the purpose of having laws. It becomes nothing but a statement of the intent to punish people for actions that were legal when performed.

### **Revealed Theology**

*Genus:* Method of studying God  
*Differentia:* Through scriptural revelations  
*Comment:* As opposed to [Natural Theology](#)

## **Rights**

*Genus:* Recognition  
*Differentia:* Of that which is necessary for a rational being to live in a society  
*Comment:* Basically this entails the right to life, with the other rights being corollaries. The key to the first sentence is *in a society*. Food, shelter, clothing, etc., are not rights, but [needs](#).  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Right to Life**

*Genus:* Right  
*Differentia:* Freedom to promote one's life without the interference of others  
*Comment:* Ultimately, the recognition that each individual is sovereign. Corollaries to this are the right to free speech, liberty, and property, among others.  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Right, Free Speech**

*Genus:* Right  
*Differentia:* The recognition that speaking other than slander is not an initiation of force  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Right, Liberty**

*Genus:* Right  
*Differentia:* The obligation of others to not initiate force on the individual  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Right, Property**

*Genus:* Right  
*Differentia:* The ability to use in any way that which one produces or trades for  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Rights of the Accused**

*Genus:* Legal Right  
*Differentia:* Restrictions on the use of force against an individual to ensure it is retaliatory force only  
*Comment:* Examples include a right to a trial jury, the legal presumption of innocence, and a speedy trial

## **Rule of Law**

*Genus:* A political system  
*Differentia:* The use of force in society is determined by pre-defined, objective laws  
*Link:* [Article](#)

## **Russell, Bertrand**

*Genus:* Philosopher  
*Differentia:* Famous for his works in seeming paradoxes, especially his own Russell's paradox

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## **Sacrifice**

*Genus:* Exchange  
*Differentia:* The voluntary exchange of a [value](#) for a [non-value](#)

**Sanction of the Victim**

*Genus:* Permission or approval

*Differentia:* Granted by a victim to the person or group that is attacking him

**Scholasticism**

*Genus:* Philosophical system

*Differentia:* Developed in the middle ages, combined Christianity with philosophical and deductive inquiry

*Comment:* Ask such useful and significant questions as "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?"

**Science**

*Genus:* Body of knowledge

*Differentia:* Gained through the study of the Law of Identity as it is applied to nature

**Self**

*Genus:* Identity

*Differentia:* Of a particular individual

**Self-Defense**

*Genus:* Defense or protection

*Differentia:* For oneself, against destructive force

**Self-Esteem**

*Genus:* Attitude about oneself

*Differentia:* The belief that one is competent and capable, and that one's life is worthy of living

**Self-Evident**

*Genus:* Judgment about the validity of a premise

*Differentia:* Obvious without need for proof or argument

*Comment:* Perception is self-evident. Concepts or ideas, though, only appear to be when one is very familiar with them.

**Self-Interest**

*Genus:* Ethical judgment

*Differentia:* Whether an action promotes one's life and goals

**Selflessness**

*Genus:* Ethical motivation

*Differentia:* No concern for one's self or life

**Sensations**

*Genus:* Physical responses

*Differentia:* Triggered by external events, they are the most basic sense data

**Service**

*Genus:* Exchange

*Differentia:* Providing work for compensation

*Comment:* Some have tried to corrupt this to mean work without compensation.

**Similarity**

*Genus:* Relationship

*Differentia:* Sharing attributes, but with different measurements

**Skepticism**

*Genus:* Belief

*Differentia:* All knowledge (everything) should be doubted

**Socialism**

*Genus:* Type of [government](#)

*Differentia:* Public ownership of the means of production

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Socrates**

*Genus:* Philosopher

*Differentia:* Popularized the question and answer method of inquiry, in which a hypothesis was analyzed to deduce consequences

### **Solipsism**

*Genus:* View

*Differentia:* You are the only mind which exists and everything that you experience and sense is only part of your consciousness.

*Comment:* This is usually refuted through [argument from analogy](#) between your mind and those you see around you.

### **Soul-Body Dichotomy**

*Genus:* Philosophical premise

*Differentia:* The spiritual and physical existence were different and opposed to one another

*Comment:* Also known as Mind-Body dichotomy. False dichotomy. The mind and body, or spiritual enlightenment and physical survival, are compatible and mutually supporting. To live, man must use his mind. To gain knowledge is to gain knowledge about reality.

### **Sound Argument**

*Genus:* [Valid argument](#)

*Differentia:* With a true premise

### **Space**

*Genus:* A relational concept

*Differentia:* Refers to the area between two objects that have different positions

### **Standard of Value**

*Genus:* Ethical criteria

*Differentia:* The goal by which an action is judged to be moral or immoral

### **Statism**

*Genus:* Political position

*Differentia:* The government should have unlimited power to fulfill its goals

### **Stoicism**

*Genus:* School of Philosophy / World View

*Differentia:* There is some natural (or divine) order to the universe and that man has a duty to act according to this order. It holds that only through reason and an indifference to pleasure and pain can one understand this order and thus know how to act.

### **Stolen Concept Fallacy**

*Genus:* Use of a [concept](#)

*Differentia:* Undermine the concept itself by attacking the roots by which it depends

*Comment:* An example is the attempt to "prove that logic is not sound". Proof is a concept derived from logic. Without logic, there can be no proof.

### **Stylization**

*Genus:* Esthetic component

*Differentia:* To represent in essential characteristics

### **Subjective Theory of Value**

*Genus:* Theory of the source of [values](#)

*Differentia:* Values are based on the will of the valuer, without relation to the facts of reality

### **Subjectivism**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) and [Epistemological](#) theory

*Differentia:* Reality is generated or controlled by a conscious mind

*Comment:* Subjectivism equates Metaphysics with Epistemology. The world is a figment of your imagination.

### **Supernaturalism**

*Genus:* [Metaphysical](#) theory

*Differentia:* Another kind of existence is out there, interacts with our world, and is not limited by the [Law of Identity](#)

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### **Tabula Rasa**

*Genus:* A biological and [epistemological](#) theory

*Differentia:* Man's mind, when first born, contains no [knowledge](#), and must act in order to acquire it

### **Taxation**

*Genus:* Theft

*Differentia:* Legal government confiscation of property

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Teleology**

*Genus:* Attribute of a philosophical system

*Differentia:* System attempts to explain a series of events in terms of goals or purposes

*Comment:* Usually attempts to explain natural phenomena in terms of design.

### **Theism**

*Genus:* Belief

*Differentia:* In [supernatural](#) beings called [gods](#) that control reality

### **Theocracy**

*Genus:* Political system

*Differentia:* A particular [religious](#) group is the government, and acts to promote their religion

### **Time**

*Genus:* A relational concept

*Differentia:* Between two events, measured in the duration of an action

*Comment:* A year is one revolution of the earth around the sun.

### **Transcendentalism**

*Genus:* [Epistemological](#) system

*Differentia:* Ignoring or discounting empirical [knowledge](#) for [a priori knowledge](#)

### **Tribalism**

*Genus:* [Collectivism](#)

*Differentia:* The society is a subset of all of the people

*Comment:* In this view, there is more than one collective group. Each group then interacts with one another. Individuals are still considered generic, unimportant building blocks.

### **True**

*Genus:* Identification of a proposition

*Differentia:* Corresponding to reality

### **Truth**

*Genus:* Identification

*Differentia:* The non-contradictory identification of reality

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-**U**-[V](#)-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Ultimate Value**

*Genus:* A [value](#)

*Differentia:* Source of all other values

*Comment:* To value something, you have to value it for the effect it will have. But you have to value that effect as well. This means that each value requires a higher level value to which you are ultimately aiming. This is your ultimate value. Life is that ultimate value.

### **Union**

*Genus:* A group of employees

*Differentia:* Organized ostensibly to negotiate collectively with employers such items as job definitions, compensation, hours worked, etc.

*Comment:* In practice it usually involves coercion of employers, union members, and non-union employees through violence and intimidation.

### **Universe**

*Genus:* A sum of [existents](#)

*Differentia:* The total sum of everything that exists

### **Utilitarianism**

*Genus:* [Ethical](#) system

*Differentia:* Value is measured as "utility", with the standard of value for everyone as the maximization of overall utility for the group.

[A](#)-[B](#)-[C](#)-[D](#)-[E](#)-[F](#)-[G](#)-[H](#)-[I](#)-[J](#)-[K](#)-[L](#)-[M](#)-[N](#)-[O](#)-[P](#)-[Q](#)-[R](#)-[S](#)-[T](#)-[U](#)-**V**-[W](#)-[X](#)-[Y](#)-[Z](#)

### **Valid Argument**

*Genus:* [Deductive](#) Argument

*Differentia:* Containing a premise which necessitates the conclusion

*Comment:* Neither the premise nor the conclusion have to be true for an argument to be valid.

An example of an untrue valid argument is: "All cows have five legs, and each cow leg has one hoof; therefore all cows have 5 hoofs." If the premise were true, so would be the conclusion. A valid argument with true premises is called a [sound argument](#).

### **Value**

*Genus:* Goal

*Differentia:* Which one acts to gain or keep

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Virtue**

*Genus:* [Moral](#) Habit

*Differentia:* Through which a [value](#) is achieved

*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Volition**



*Genus:* Mental Faculty  
*Differentia:* The ability and need to focus  
*Link:* [Article](#)

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V- **W** -X-Y-Z

### **Welfare State**

*Genus:* Political system  
*Differentia:* Characterized by the redistribution of wealth  
*Link:* [Article](#)

### **Whim**

*Genus:* Notion / Idea  
*Differentia:* Sudden and arbitrary and not checked against reason

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W- **X** -Y-Z A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-

J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X- **Y** -Z A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-

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