

Knowledge and Reality

The Definition of Knowledge

Is the concept of knowledge definable in terms of more basic concepts?

Essential Reading

- Gettier, Edmund (1963), "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?", *Analysis*, vol. 23, no. 6, pp. 121-3
- Goldman, Alvin (1967), "A Causal Theory of Knowing", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 64, no. 12, pp. 357-72
- Nozick, Robert (1981), *Philosophical Explanations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 172-96
- Craig, Edward (1986), "The Practical Explication of Knowledge", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*, vol. 87, pp. 211-26

Additional Reading

- Radford, Colin (1966), "Knowledge: By Examples", *Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 1-11
- Unger, Peter (1968), "An Analysis of Factual Knowledge", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 65, no. 6, pp. 157-70
- Goldman, Alvin (1976), "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 73, no. 20, pp. 771-91
- Craig, Edward (1990), *Knowledge and the State of Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

Even More Additional Reading

I prefer to approach this topic through the classic articles above. Once you have done that, however, you may like to see how the debate subsequently developed (perhaps when you come to revise this topic later). Here are some suggested post-1990 readings.

- Zagzebski, Linda (1994), "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 174, pp. 65-73
- Merricks, Trenton (1995), "Warrant Entails Truth", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 841-55
- Ryan, Sharon (1996), "Does Warrant Entail Truth?", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 183-92
- Williamson, Timothy, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, Oxford: University Press, pp. 1-20
- Blome-Tillmann, Michael (2007), "The Folly of Trying to Define Knowledge", *Analysis*, vol. 67, no. 3, pp. 214-9
- Kearns, Stephen (2007), "In Praise of Folly: A Reply to Blome-Tillmann", *Analysis*, vol. 67, no. 3, pp. 219-22
- Schroeder, Mark (2015), "Knowledge is Belief for Sufficient (Objective and Subjective) Reason", *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, vol. 5, pp. 226-52

Past Paper Questions

- "Knowledge should not be analysed in terms of belief, since belief is not relevant to knowing how." Discuss. (2001, 2)
- Is the concept of knowledge definable in terms of more basic concepts? (2002, 4)

- Could one dispense with the concept of knowledge and replace it with justified belief? (2003, 3)
- “Attempts to analyse knowledge inevitably lead to a dead end.” Discuss. (2005, 6)
- Is knowledge a natural kind? (2006, 1)
- Are there arguments that establish that knowledge is indefinable? (2008, 5)
- Is knowledge just a true belief that is “safe from error”? (2009, 5a)
- Is knowledge just a belief that in Nozick’s sense “tracks the truth”? (2009, 5b)
- Suppose that I would still believe P, were P false. Does it follow that I do not in fact know that P? (2010, 1b)
- “Propositional knowledge does not reduce to the conjunction of other conditions.” Discuss. (2011, 1)
- “Any episode of belief-formation is an instance of countless processes, some reliable and some unreliable.” Does this observation doom reliabilism? (2013, 3b)
- “It’s too easy to come up with counterexamples to putative analyses of knowledge in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, so we should abandon the attempt to construct such analyses.” Is this a compelling argument? And should we give up the project of analysing knowledge? (2014, 4)