

## Empirical Skepticism

1. What is Empirical Skepticism?
2. What is the external world?
3. Which of these options are good examples of things in the external world?
  - ☐ God
  - ☐ chairs
  - ☐ trees
  - ☐ people
  - ☐ colors and sounds
4. Describe Descartes's Dreaming case.
5. Describe Putnam's Brain in a Vat (BIV) case.
6. What are some relevant differences between the Dreaming and BIV cases?
7. How does the possibility of someone be dreaming of be a BIV undermine knowledge about the external world, according to Empirical Skepticism? How must be knowledge understood for this argument to work? Is that how we *ordinarily* think about knowledge? Use examples to answer these questions.

8. Consider the following objection: "Empirical Skepticism is false because something outside the mind must be the cause of our perceptual experiences". Is this a good objection? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Consider the following objection: "Empirical Skepticism is false because dreams are not as vivid as the experiences I have right now". Is this a good objection? Why?

True or false?

10. \_\_\_\_ Empirical Skepticism denies that there is an external world.
11. \_\_\_\_ Optical illusions support Empirical Skepticism.
12. \_\_\_\_ BIV requires that there is an external world; therefore Empirical Skepticism is false.
13. \_\_\_\_ Given the laws of physics, the Dreaming and BIV cases are impossible; therefore Empirical Skepticism is false.

Possible objections to Empirical Skepticism:

- a) Inductive reasoning
  
  
  
- b) Single Premise Closure is false
  
  
  
- c) Dreaming and BIV cases are not possible
  
  
  
- d) Burden of the proof

Composing philosophy papers can be a big challenge. Understanding the key questions and developing a clear, logical response are essential to all argumentative essays, including those that describe and analyze philosophical arguments. Check these websites for tips on how to write a good philosophy paper:  
[https://prezi.com/z4h1\\_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/](https://prezi.com/z4h1_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/)  
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.