[Template:Distinguish](/wiki/Template:Distinguish" \o "Template:Distinguish) [Template:Good article](/wiki/Template:Good_article) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:God](/wiki/Template:God) [Template:Irreligion sidebar](/wiki/Template:Irreligion_sidebar) [Template:Certainty](/wiki/Template:Certainty)

**Agnosticism** is the view that the [truth values](/wiki/Truth_value) of certain claims – especially [metaphysical](/wiki/Metaphysics) and [religious](/wiki/Religion) claims such as [whether God](/wiki/Existence_of_God), the [divine](/wiki/Divinity), or the [supernatural](/wiki/Supernatural) exist – are unknown and perhaps [unknowable](/wiki/Uncertainty).[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) According to the philosopher [William L. Rowe](/wiki/William_L._Rowe), "agnosticism is the view that human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist."[[2]](#cite_note-2) Agnosticism is a [doctrine](/wiki/Doctrine) or set of [tenets](/wiki/Wikt:tenet)[[4]](#cite_note-4) rather than a religion as such.

[Thomas Henry Huxley](/wiki/Thomas_Henry_Huxley), an English biologist, coined the word "agnostic" in 1869.[[5]](#cite_note-5)Earlier thinkers, however, had written works that promoted agnostic points of view, such as [Sanjaya Belatthaputta](/wiki/Sanjaya_Belatthaputta), a [5th-century BCE Indian philosopher](/wiki/Ancient_Indian_philosophy) who expressed agnosticism about any [afterlife](/wiki/Afterlife);[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8) and [Protagoras](/wiki/Protagoras), a [5th-century BCE Greek philosopher](/wiki/Ancient_Greek_philosophy) who expressed agnosticism about "the gods".[[9]](#cite_note-9) The [Nasadiya Sukta](/wiki/Nasadiya_Sukta) in the [Rigveda](/wiki/Rigveda) is agnostic about the [origin of the universe](/wiki/Origin_of_the_universe).[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[Template:TOC limit](/wiki/Template:TOC_limit)

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## Defining agnosticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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Being a scientist, above all else, [Huxley](/wiki/Thomas_Henry_Huxley) presented agnosticism as a form of demarcation. A hypothesis with no supporting objective, testable evidence is not an objective, scientific claim. As such, there would be no way to test said hypotheses, leaving the results inconclusive. His agnosticism was not compatible with forming a belief as to the truth, or falsehood, of the claim at hand. [Karl Popper](/wiki/Karl_Popper) would also describe himself as an agnostic.[[13]](#cite_note-13) According to philosopher [William L. Rowe](/wiki/William_L._Rowe), in this strict sense, agnosticism is the view that human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist.<ref name=RoweRoutledge/>

Others have redefined this concept, making it compatible with forming a belief, and only incompatible with absolute certainty. [George H. Smith](/wiki/George_H._Smith), while admitting that the narrow definition of atheist was the common usage definition of that word,[[14]](#cite_note-14) and admitting that the broad definition of agnostic was the common usage definition of that word,[[15]](#cite_note-15) promoted broadening the definition of atheist and narrowing the definition of agnostic. Smith rejects agnosticism as a third alternative to theism and atheism and promotes terms such as [agnostic atheism](/wiki/Agnostic_atheism) (the view of those who do not *believe* in the existence of any deity, but do not claim to *know* if a deity does or does not exist) and [agnostic theism](/wiki/Agnostic_theism) (the view of those who do not claim to *know* of the existence of any deity, but still *believe* in such an existence).<ref name=Smith1979>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) </ref>[[16]](#cite_note-16)<ref name=barker-agnostic-atheism> [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) </ref>

Most recently, the terms [apathetic and pragmatic agnosticism](/wiki/Apatheism) have been coined with regard to the view that there is no proof of either the existence or non-existence of any deity, but since any deity that may exist appears unconcerned for the universe or the welfare of its inhabitants, the question is largely academic and that their existence therefore has little to no impact on personal human affairs and should be of little theological interest.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

### Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

*Agnostic* ([Template:Ety](/wiki/Template:Ety)) was used by Thomas Henry Huxley in a speech at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in 1869 to describe his philosophy, which rejects all claims of spiritual or mystical knowledge.[[18]](#cite_note-18)<ref name=EB-Agnosticism> [Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia)</ref>

Early [Christian](/wiki/Christian) church leaders used the [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) word [*gnosis*](/wiki/Gnosis) (knowledge) to describe "spiritual knowledge". Agnosticism is not to be confused with religious views opposing the ancient religious movement of [Gnosticism](/wiki/Gnosticism) in particular; Huxley used the term in a broader, more abstract sense.[[19]](#cite_note-19)Huxley identified agnosticism not as a creed but rather as a method of [skeptical](/wiki/Skepticism), evidence-based inquiry.[[20]](#cite_note-20) In recent years, scientific literature dealing with neuroscience and psychology has used the word to mean "not knowable".[[21]](#cite_note-21)In technical and marketing literature, "agnostic" can also mean independence from some parameters—for example, "platform agnostic"<ref name=SparkSheet>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) </ref> or "hardware agnostic".<ref name=Datacenterdynamics>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Qualifying agnosticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Scottish Enlightenment](/wiki/Scottish_Enlightenment) philosopher [David Hume](/wiki/David_Hume) contended that meaningful statements about the universe are always qualified by some degree of doubt. He asserted that the fallibility of human beings means that they cannot obtain absolute certainty except in trivial cases where a statement is true by definition (e.g. [tautologies](/wiki/Tautology_(logic)) such as "all bachelors are unmarried" or "all triangles have three corners").[[22]](#cite_note-22)

### Types[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

Strong agnosticism (also called "hard", "closed", "strict", or "permanent agnosticism")

The view that the question of the existence or nonexistence of a deity or deities, and the nature of ultimate reality is unknowable by reason of our natural inability to verify any experience with anything but another subjective experience. A strong agnostic would say, "I cannot know whether a deity exists or not, and neither can you."[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25);Weak agnosticism (also called "soft", "open", "empirical", or "temporal agnosticism"): The view that the existence or nonexistence of any deities is currently unknown but is not necessarily unknowable; therefore, one will withhold judgment until evidence, if any, becomes available. A weak agnostic would say, "I don't know whether any deities exist or not, but maybe one day, if there is evidence, we can find something out."[[23]](#cite_note-23)[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

### Greek philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

Agnostic thought, in the form of [skepticism](/wiki/Philosophical_skepticism), emerged as a formal philosophical position in [ancient Greece](/wiki/Ancient_Greece). Its proponents included [Protagoras](/wiki/Protagoras), [Pyrrho](/wiki/Pyrrho), [Carneades](/wiki/Carneades), [Sextus Empiricus](/wiki/Sextus_Empiricus)[[26]](#cite_note-26)and, to some degree, [Socrates](/wiki/Socrates), who was a strong advocate for a skeptical approach to [epistemology](/wiki/Epistemology).[[27]](#cite_note-27) [Pyrrho](/wiki/Pyrrho) said that we should refrain from making judgment as we can never know the true reality. According to Pyrrho, having opinion was possible, but certainty and knowledge are impossible.[[28]](#cite_note-28)[Carneades](/wiki/Carneades) was also a skeptic in relation to all knowledge claims. He proposed a probability theory, however. According to him, certainty could never be attained.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [Protagoras](/wiki/Protagoras) rejected the conventional accounts of the gods. He said:[[9]](#cite_note-9) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Hindu philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Throughout the history of [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism) there has been a strong tradition of philosophic speculation and skepticism.[[30]](#cite_note-30)[[31]](#cite_note-31) The [Rig Veda](/wiki/Rig_Veda) takes an agnostic view on the fundamental question of how the universe and the gods were created. [Nasadiya Sukta](/wiki/Nasadiya_Sukta) (*Creation Hymn*) in the tenth chapter of the Rig Veda says:[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[34]](#cite_note-34)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Hume, Kant, and Kierkegaard[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle),[[35]](#cite_note-35)[Anselm](/wiki/Anselm_of_Canterbury),[[36]](#cite_note-36)<ref name=williams>[Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia)</ref> [Aquinas](/wiki/Aquinas),[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[38]](#cite_note-38)and [Descartes](/wiki/Descartes)[[39]](#cite_note-39)presented arguments attempting to rationally prove the existence of God. The skeptical empiricism of [David Hume](/wiki/David_Hume), the [antinomies](/wiki/Antinomy) of [Immanuel Kant](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant), and the existential philosophy of [Søren Kierkegaard](/wiki/Søren_Kierkegaard) convinced many later philosophers to abandon these attempts, regarding it impossible to construct any unassailable proof for the existence or non-existence of God.[[40]](#cite_note-40) In his 1844 book, [*Philosophical Fragments*](/wiki/Philosophical_Fragments), Kierkegaard writes:[[41]](#cite_note-41)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

[Hume](/wiki/David_Hume) was Huxley's favourite philosopher, calling him "the Prince of Agnostics".[[42]](#cite_note-42) [Diderot](/wiki/Denis_Diderot) wrote to his mistress, telling of a visit by Hume to the [Baron D'Holbach](/wiki/Baron_D'Holbach), and describing how a word for the position that Huxley would later describe as agnosticism didn't seem to exist, or at least wasn't common knowledge, at the time.

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Thomas Henry Huxley[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:ThomasHenryHuxley.jpg)[Thomas Henry Huxley](/wiki/Thomas_Henry_Huxley) Agnostic views are as old as [philosophical skepticism](/wiki/Philosophical_skepticism), but the terms agnostic and agnosticism were created by [Huxley](/wiki/Thomas_Henry_Huxley) to sum up his thoughts on contemporary developments of metaphysics about the "unconditioned" ([William Hamilton](/wiki/Sir_William_Hamilton,_9th_Baronet)) and the "unknowable" ([Herbert Spencer](/wiki/Herbert_Spencer)). Though Huxley began to use the term "agnostic" in 1869, his opinions had taken shape some time before that date. In a letter of September 23, 1860, to [Charles Kingsley](/wiki/Charles_Kingsley), Huxley discussed his views extensively:[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[44]](#cite_note-44)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

And again, to the same correspondent, May 6, 1863:[[45]](#cite_note-45)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Of the origin of the name agnostic to describe this attitude, Huxley gave the following account:[[46]](#cite_note-46)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In 1889, Huxley wrote:

Therefore, although it be, as I believe, demonstrable that we have no real knowledge of the authorship, or of the date of composition of the Gospels, as they have come down to us, and that nothing better than more or less probable guesses can be arrived at on that subject.[[47]](#cite_note-47)

### William Stewart Ross[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[William Stewart Ross](/wiki/William_Stewart_Ross) wrote under the name of Saladin. He championed agnosticism in opposition to the [atheism](/wiki/Atheism) of [Charles Bradlaugh](/wiki/Charles_Bradlaugh) as an open-ended spiritual exploration.[[48]](#cite_note-48)In *Why I am an Agnostic* (c. 1889) he claims that agnosticism is "the very reverse of atheism".[[49]](#cite_note-49)

### Robert G. Ingersoll[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:RobertGIngersoll.jpg)[Robert G. Ingersoll](/wiki/Robert_G._Ingersoll) [Robert G. Ingersoll](/wiki/Robert_G._Ingersoll), an [Illinois](/wiki/Illinois) lawyer and politician who evolved into a well-known and sought-after orator in 19th-century America, has been referred to as the "Great Agnostic".[[50]](#cite_note-50) In an 1896 lecture titled *Why I Am An Agnostic*, Ingersoll related why he was an agnostic:[[51]](#cite_note-51)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In the conclusion of the speech he simply sums up the agnostic position as:[[51]](#cite_note-51)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

### Bertrand Russell[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Russell1907-2.jpg)[Bertrand Russell](/wiki/Bertrand_Russell) [Bertrand Russell's](/wiki/Bertrand_Russell) [pamphlet](/wiki/Pamphlet), [*Why I Am Not a Christian*](/wiki/Why_I_Am_Not_a_Christian), based on a speech delivered in 1927 and later included in a book of the same title, is considered a classic statement of agnosticism.[[52][52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53)He calls upon his readers to "stand on their own two feet and look fair and square at the world with a fearless attitude and a free intelligence".[[54]](#cite_note-54) In 1939, Russell gave a lecture on *The existence and nature of God*, in which he characterized himself as an atheist. He said:[[55]](#cite_note-55)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

However, later in the same lecture, discussing modern non-anthropomorphic concepts of God, Russell states:[[56]](#cite_note-56)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In Russell's 1947 pamphlet, *Am I An Atheist or an Agnostic?* (subtitled *A Plea For Tolerance in the Face of New Dogmas*), he ruminates on the problem of what to call himself:[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In his 1953 essay, *What Is An Agnostic?* Russell states:[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[60]](#cite_note-60)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Later in the essay, Russell adds:[[61]](#cite_note-61)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Leslie Weatherhead[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Wikiquote](/wiki/Template:Wikiquote) In 1965 Christian theologian [Leslie Weatherhead](/wiki/Leslie_Weatherhead) published *The Christian Agnostic*, in which he argues:[[54]](#cite_note-54)[[62]](#cite_note-62)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Although radical and unpalatable to conventional theologians, Weatherhead's *agnosticism* falls far short of Huxley's, and short even of *weak agnosticism*:[[54]](#cite_note-54)[[62]](#cite_note-62)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Charles Darwin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Charles_Darwin_seated_crop.jpg) [Charles Darwin](/wiki/Charles_Darwin)

Raised in a religious environment, [Charles Darwin](/wiki/Charles_Darwin) studied to be an Anglican clergyman. While eventually doubting parts of his faith, Darwin continued to help in church affairs, even while avoiding church attendance. Darwin stated that it would be "absurd to doubt that a man might be an ardent theist and an evolutionist".<ref name=Fordyce>[Letter 12041](http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-12041) – Darwin, C. R. to Fordyce, John, May 7, 1879. [Archived](http://www.webcitation.org/6QhA2bpBR) from the original on June 29, 2014.</ref><ref name=spencer>[Darwin's Complex loss of Faith](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/sep/17/darwin-evolution-religion) [*The Guardian*](/wiki/The_Guardian) September 17, 2009. [Archived](http://www.webcitation.org/6QhA8c6DM) from the original on June 29, 2014</ref> Although reticent about his religious views, in 1879 he wrote that "I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. – I think that generally ... an agnostic would be the most correct description of my state of mind."<ref name=Fordyce/><ref name=Belief>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|Percentage of people in various European countries who said: "I don't believe there is any sort of spirit, God or life force." (2005)](/wiki/File:Europe_No_Belief_enhanced.svg)[[63]](#cite_note-63)

[Demographic](/wiki/Demographic) research services normally do not differentiate between various types of non-religious respondents, so agnostics are often classified in the same category as [atheists](/wiki/Atheism) or other [non-religious](/wiki/Irreligion) people.[[64]](#cite_note-64) A 2010 survey published in [*Encyclopædia Britannica*](/wiki/Encyclopædia_Britannica) found that the non-religious people or the agnostics made up about 9.6% of the world's population.<ref name=eb-2010>[Template:Cite encyclopedia](/wiki/Template:Cite_encyclopedia) </ref> A November–December 2006 poll published in the [*Financial Times*](/wiki/Financial_Times) gives rates for the United States and five European countries. The rates of agnosticism in the United States were at 14%, while the rates of agnosticism in the European countries surveyed were considerably higher: Italy (20%), Spain (30%), Great Britain (35%), Germany (25%), and France (32%).[[65]](#cite_note-65) A study conducted by the [Pew Research Center](/wiki/Pew_Research_Center) found that about 16% of the world's people, the third largest group after [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) and [Islam](/wiki/Islam), have no religious affiliation.[[66]](#cite_note-66)According to a 2012 report by the Pew Research Center, agnostics made up 3.3% of the US adult population.[[67]](#cite_note-67)In the *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, conducted by the Pew Research Center, 55% of agnostic respondents expressed "a belief in God or a universal spirit",[[68]](#cite_note-68)whereas 41% stated that they thought that they felt a tension "being non-religious in a society where most people are religious".[[69]](#cite_note-69) [thumb|400px|left|Proportion of atheists and agnostics around the world](/wiki/File:Irreligion_map.png)

According to the 2011 [Australian Bureau of Statistics](/wiki/Australian_Bureau_of_Statistics), 22% of [Australians](/wiki/Australians) have "no religion", a category that includes agnostics.[[70]](#cite_note-70)Between 64% and 65%[[71]](#cite_note-71)of [Japanese](/wiki/Japanese_people) and up to 81%[[72]](#cite_note-72)of [Vietnamese](/wiki/Vietnamese_people) are atheists, agnostics, or do not believe in a god. An official [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) survey reported that 3% of the EU population is unsure about their belief in a god or spirit.[[73]](#cite_note-73)

## Criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Agnosticism is criticized from a variety of standpoints. Some religious thinkers see agnosticism as limiting the mind's capacity to know reality to [materialism](/wiki/Materialism). Some atheists criticize the use of the term agnosticism as functionally indistinguishable from atheism; this results in frequent criticisms of those who adopt the term as avoiding the atheist label.<ref name=EB-Agnosticism/>

### Theistic[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

Theistic critics claim that agnosticism is impossible in practice, since a person can live only either as if God did not exist (*etsi deus non-daretur*), or as if God did exist (*etsi deus daretur*).<ref name=SM> [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=FF>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web) </ref><ref name=CCC>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Religious scholars such as Laurence B. Brown criticize the misuse of the word agnosticism, claiming that it has become one of the most misapplied terms in metaphysics. Brown raises the question, "You claim that nothing can be known with certainty ... how, then, can you be so sure?"<ref name=Islamrel>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[74]](#cite_note-74)

#### Christian[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

According to [Pope Benedict XVI](/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XVI), strong agnosticism in particular contradicts itself in affirming the power of reason to know scientific [truth](/wiki/Truth).<ref name=YOJC/><ref name=TT/> He blames the exclusion of reasoning from religion and ethics for dangerous pathologies such as crimes against humanity and ecological disasters.<ref name=YOJC>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) </ref><ref name=TT>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[75]](#cite_note-75)"Agnosticism", said Ratzinger, "is always the fruit of a refusal of that knowledge which is in fact offered to man ... The knowledge of God has always existed".<ref name=TT/> He asserted that agnosticism is a choice of comfort, pride, dominion, and utility over truth, and is opposed by the following attitudes: the keenest self-criticism, humble listening to the whole of existence, the persistent patience and self-correction of the [scientific method](/wiki/Scientific_method), a readiness to be purified by the truth.<ref name=YOJC/>

The [Catholic Church](/wiki/Catholic_Church) sees merit in examining what it calls "partial agnosticism", specifically those systems that "do not aim at constructing a complete philosophy of the unknowable, but at excluding special kinds of truth, notably religious, from the domain of knowledge".[[76]](#cite_note-76) However, the Church is historically opposed to a full denial of the capacity of human reason to know God. The [Council of the Vatican](/wiki/Council_of_the_Vatican) declares, "God, the beginning and end of all, can, by the natural light of human reason, be known with certainty from the works of creation".[[76]](#cite_note-76) [Blaise Pascal](/wiki/Blaise_Pascal) argued that even if there were truly no evidence for God, agnostics should consider what is now known as [Pascal's Wager](/wiki/Pascal's_Wager): the [infinite](/wiki/Infinity) expected value of acknowledging God is always greater than the finite expected value of not acknowledging his existence, and thus it is a safer "bet" to choose God.<ref name=PKPW>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[Peter Kreeft](/wiki/Peter_Kreeft) and Ronald Tacelli cited 20 arguments for God's existence,[[77]](#cite_note-77) asserting that any demand for evidence testable in a laboratory is in effect asking God, the supreme being, to become man's servant.<ref name=JON>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

### Atheistic[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

According to [Richard Dawkins](/wiki/Richard_Dawkins), a distinction between agnosticism and atheism is unwieldy and depends on how close to zero a person is willing to rate the probability of existence for any given god-like entity. About himself, Dawkins continues, "I am agnostic only to the extent that I am agnostic about fairies at the bottom of the garden."[[78]](#cite_note-78) Dawkins also identifies two categories of agnostics; "Temporary Agnostics in Practice" (TAPs), and "Permanent Agnostics in Principle" (PAPs). Dawkins considers temporary agnosticism an entirely reasonable position, but views permanent agnosticism as "fence-sitting, intellectual cowardice".[[79]](#cite_note-79)[Template:Failed verification](/wiki/Template:Failed_verification)

## Related concepts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Ignosticism](/wiki/Ignosticism) is the view that a coherent definition of a deity must be put forward before the question of the existence of a deity can be meaningfully discussed. If the chosen definition is not coherent, the ignostic holds the [noncognitivist](/wiki/Theological_noncognitivism) view that the existence of a deity is meaningless or empirically untestable.[[80]](#cite_note-80) [A.J. Ayer](/wiki/Alfred_Ayer), [Theodore Drange](/wiki/Theodore_Drange), and other philosophers see both atheism and agnosticism as incompatible with ignosticism on the grounds that atheism and agnosticism accept "a deity exists" as a meaningful proposition that can be argued for or against.[[81]](#cite_note-81)[[82]](#cite_note-82)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

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