[Template:Other uses](/wiki/Template:Other_uses" \o "Template:Other uses) **Knowledge** is a familiarity, [awareness](/wiki/Awareness) or understanding of someone or something, such as [facts](/wiki/Fact), [information](/wiki/Information), [descriptions](/wiki/Description), or [skills](/wiki/Skills), which is acquired through [experience](/wiki/Experience) or [education](/wiki/Education) by [perceiving](/wiki/Perception), [discovering](/wiki/Discovery_(observation)), or [learning](/wiki/Learning).

Knowledge can refer to a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It can be implicit (as with practical skill or expertise) or explicit (as with the theoretical understanding of a subject); it can be more or less formal or systematic.[[1]](#cite_note-1) In [philosophy](/wiki/Philosophy), the study of knowledge is called [epistemology](/wiki/Epistemology); the philosopher [Plato](/wiki/Plato) famously defined knowledge as "[justified true belief](/wiki/Justified_true_belief)", though this definition is now agreed by most analytic philosophers to be problematic because of the [Gettier problems](/wiki/Gettier_problems). However, several definitions of knowledge and theories to explain it exist.

Knowledge acquisition involves complex [cognitive](/wiki/Cognition) processes: [perception](/wiki/Perception), [communication](/wiki/Communication), and [reasoning](/wiki/Reasoning);[[2]](#cite_note-2) while knowledge is also said to be related to the capacity of *acknowledgment* in human beings.[[3]](#cite_note-3)

## Theories of knowledge[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Knowledge-Reid-Highsmith.jpeg)[Robert Reid](/wiki/Robert_Reid_(painter)), *Knowledge* (1896). [Thomas Jefferson Building](/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson_Building), Washington, D.C. [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The definition of knowledge is a matter of ongoing [debate](/wiki/Debate) among [philosophers](/wiki/Philosopher) in the field of [epistemology](/wiki/Epistemology). The classical definition, described but not ultimately endorsed by [Plato](/wiki/Plato),[[4]](#cite_note-4) specifies that a [statement](/wiki/Statement_(logic)) must meet three [criteria](/wiki/Wikt:criterion) in order to be considered knowledge: it must be [justified](/wiki/Theory_of_justification), [true](/wiki/Truth), and [believed](/wiki/Belief). Some claim that these conditions are not sufficient, as [Gettier case](/wiki/Gettier_case) examples allegedly demonstrate. There are a number of alternatives proposed, including [Robert Nozick's](/wiki/Robert_Nozick) arguments for a requirement that knowledge 'tracks the truth' and [Simon Blackburn's](/wiki/Simon_Blackburn) additional requirement that we do not want to say that those who meet any of these conditions 'through a defect, flaw, or failure' have knowledge. [Richard Kirkham](/wiki/Richard_Kirkham) suggests that our definition of knowledge requires that the evidence for the belief necessitates its truth.[[5]](#cite_note-5) In contrast to this approach, [Ludwig Wittgenstein](/wiki/Ludwig_Wittgenstein) observed, following [Moore's paradox](/wiki/Moore's_paradox), that one can say "He believes it, but it isn't so," but not "He knows it, but it isn't so."[[6]](#cite_note-6) He goes on to argue that these do not correspond to distinct mental states, but rather to distinct ways of talking about conviction. What is different here is not the mental state of the speaker, but the activity in which they are engaged. For example, on this account, to *know* that the kettle is boiling is not to be in a particular state of mind, but to perform a particular task with the statement that the kettle is boiling. Wittgenstein sought to bypass the difficulty of definition by looking to the way "knowledge" is used in natural languages. He saw knowledge as a case of a [family resemblance](/wiki/Family_resemblance). Following this idea, "knowledge" has been reconstructed as a cluster concept that points out relevant features but that is not adequately captured by any definition.[[7]](#cite_note-7)