

Second Writing Exercise: De-Jargoning Kant

In this writing exercise, you will work on one of the most important skills for any philosopher, and one that is especially valuable when we do work in the history of philosophy: **de-jargoning**, i.e., clearly restating another person's position in your own familiar terms without using any technical terms; it helps to supplement your restatement with concrete examples or analogies or illustrations along the way. For the purpose of this exercise, you needn't worry so much about being concise. That's *always* a good thing, but you will almost certainly need to use more words that Kant does to explain what he is saying!

One aim of the exercise is for you to learn that de-jargoning is not just a matter of translating a passage into more familiar terms. It is a matter of trying to *teach* someone what the philosopher is saying. (And there is no better way to learn something than to have to teach it to someone else!) So while you are doing the exercise, imagine yourself *teaching* the material to your two audiences.

The assignment

Here is the passage for de-jargoning:

“All analytic judgments rest entirely on the principle of contradiction and are by their nature *a priori* cognitions, whether the concepts that serve for their material be empirical or not”
(*Prolegomena* §2, H 17).

1. Circle all the words in the passage that you think count as jargon or technical terms (i.e., words that might need some explaining).
2. Now de-jargon the passage, i.e., re-write it using ordinary, familiar language and *not* using the words that you circled. You will de-jargon it **twice**:
 - a. De-jargon and re-write the passage for your roommate or, more generally, a thoughtful college student who is not taking the course and hasn't done any philosophy.
 - b. De-jargon and re-write the passage for your (imaginary, if need be) a 10-year-old relative—a sibling or cousin.

As you de-jargon the passage, keep in mind that concrete examples, concrete metaphors and analogies, and even visuals can be very helpful in communicating ideas to your audience. Make use of them!

Do not exceed **250 words** on either de-jargoning of the passage. (You may use fewer!)

3. Reflection: which term was the hardest to de-jargon and why do you think that is? (E.g., was the trouble that for the 10-year-old it was hard to figure out how you might visualize the concept? E.g., was it that there is a similar term in today's language that blocks our ability to get our heads around Kant's use of the term?)

Due date/time: 9 p.m. Friday 20 April 2018 on the Canvas site.