

**Abigail Rios**  
**Week 2 Assignment**

**1. List and explain three of the reasons Descartes gives for doubting what he thought he knew.**

1. He remarked of the philosophy he had learned at school that despite having been taught for many centuries, it contained 'no point that was not disputed and hence doubtful'. He felt as though he couldn't build on something shaky.
2. He wants to make sure that what he comes up with is the truth or validity. He also says that senses have failed before, so who's to say that you can't trust them.
3. Descartes also wanted to start a new philosophy and tear down other "accepted opinions.

I believe that Descartes just wanted to get his own truth, not accept what he's been thought because -as we learned- everything could be doubted and it makes sense. Theoretically, you can doubt everything, but it doesn't mean you'll get answers. He even proved it. In the end, the only thing that was left was *Cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am.

**2. While still in the realm of doubt, what does Descartes say about the general sciences and mathematics and their place in our knowledge?**

"The argument next turns to the abstract propositions of mathematics, which seem to be immune from the previous doubts since their truth does not depend on whether their objects exist; but even these are called into question by the thought that an all-powerful God might make me go wrong 'every time I add two and three'."

What I understood from that part of the chapter is that even though the general sciences and mathematics are supposed to be stable and sure, but Descartes starts to believe that some sort of high power could "trick" or make him think that certain numbers make sense. I mean, wouldn't someone be able to say that about anything? Even, cogito ergo sum is questionable to me because you can say that God is making us think that we have a conscious when we really do not. I think that's a bit of a stretch, but I also think that what Descartes said was a bit of a stretch as well.

**3. What does Descartes ultimately argue is a strong and unshakeable basis for knowledge? How does he make his case?**

Descartes ultimately argues that one thing that is strong and an unshakeable basis for knowledge is his own mental existence. He believed that the simple fact that he could think meant that he existed, or at least his mind did. The fact that he could even doubt confirmed some reality of existence to him.

He builds his knowledge based on his inner self.

**1. Explain some of the reasons Locke believes there are no innate ideas.**

There are a few reasons why Locke believes that there are no innate ideas. He says that if there were any innate ideas, it would be universally known, but they're no universally known ideas that people are born with. He believes that your ideas are developed by experience.

**2. What is the significance of "children" and "idiots" in Locke's argument?**

Locke speaks on "children" and "idiots" in his argument to support his idea that there are no innate ideas. That's because children do not know much and idiots either. If children and idiots could have these "universal ideas," then maybe, just maybe Locke would have said something else. However, I don't know why he didn't consider that children's mind develops at a different level and idiots, simply don't have the same capacity as other people. Does that prove his point about "universal ideas?"

**3. Explain the concept of the "tabula rasa".**

John Locke compares the mind to a "Tabula Rasa" or a blank slate. The idea is that we are all born with nothing in our minds, just emptiness, and blankness. It means that identity comes from things that we experience after birth. That's

how we are given our identity, through future events, through experiences! That also means that we aren't born with knowledge, just the basic senses. Ultimately, John Locke would say our identity is based on our circumstances and what we learn around us.

**4. Describe in your own words what Locke means by "sensation" and "reflection" in describing the acquisition of knowledge.**

Sensation and reflection are two kinds of experiences in how you acquire knowledge. According to Locke, because of "sensation," you are able to know *how* something appears to be. For example, if someone looks at the wall and sees a pink flower painted on the wall, but a light was shining on this wall into your eyes, this idea of the color pink entered your mind. Locke would say that the sensation of color entered your mind. That's how knowledge would be achieved, through our senses, not depending on anything else. As far as "reflection" goes, Locke says that we have simple ideas of reflection. Reflection comes from an individual's actions or operations.