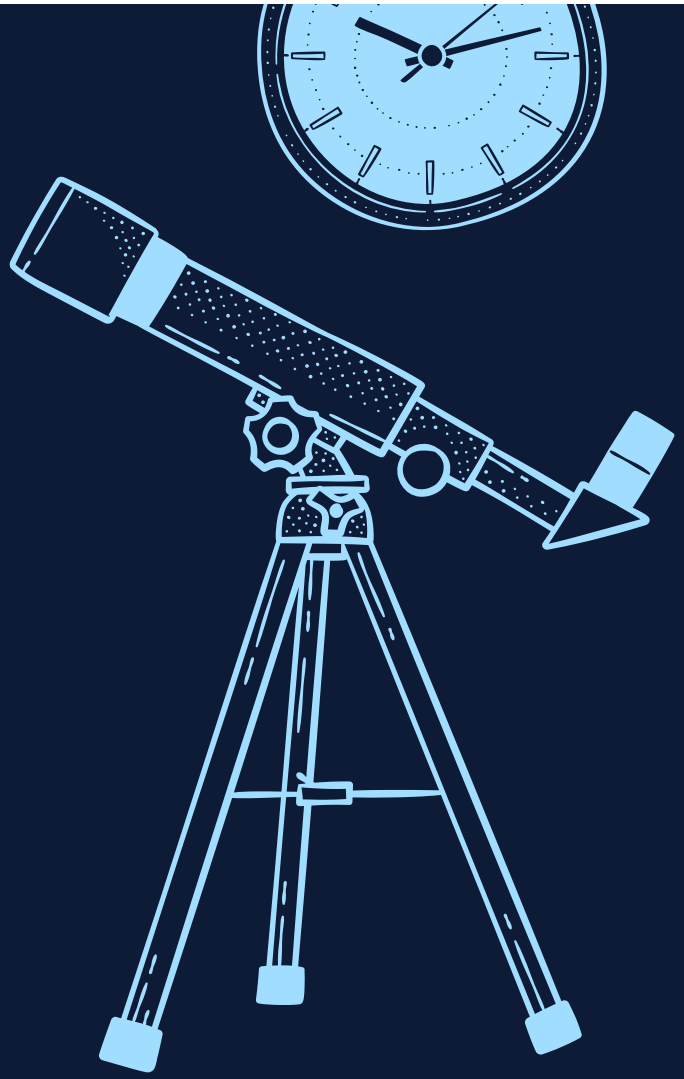
2023

Y6 Revision

Key Questions
Key Pointers



Back to Basics...

Why ask questions?

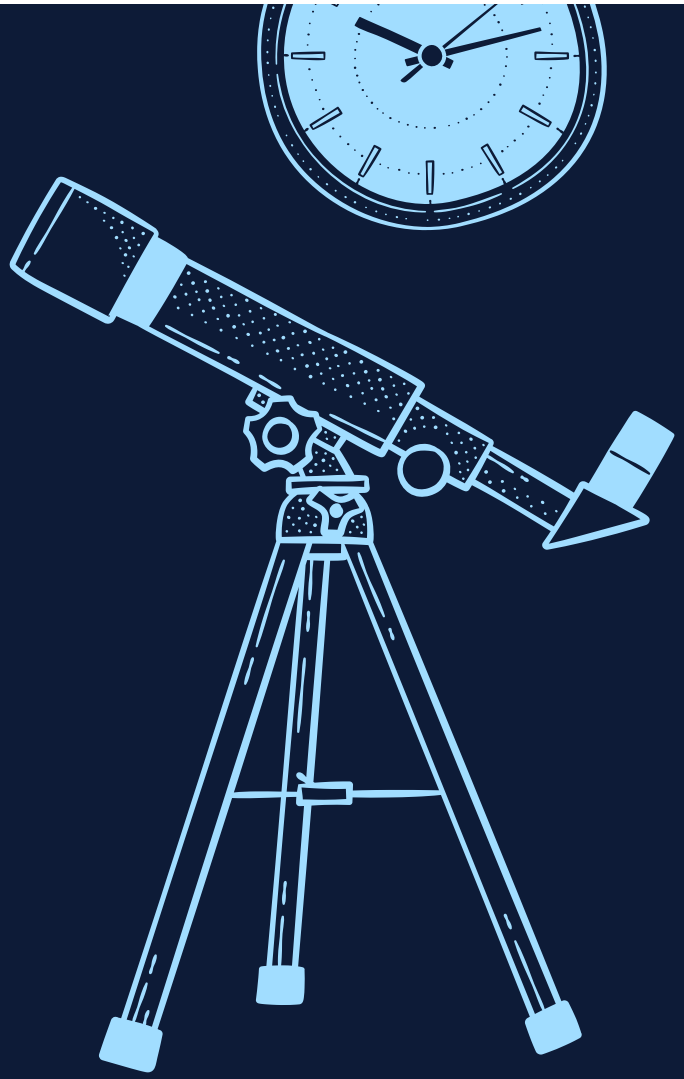
- First step towards knowledge creation
- Don't want to take our knowledge for granted

What kind of questions?

- Logical
- Metaphysical
- Epistemological
- Ethical
- Aesthetic

What's the link between questioning & inquiry?

- Models of questioning e.g., Socratic questioning, etc.
- Process of inquiry: observation, description, questioning, constructing possible answers, 'testing out' answers



Back to Basics...

What is knowledge?

- Personal knowledge
- Common sense knowledge
- Practical knowledge
- Propositional knowledge
- Cultural knowledge
- Academic knowledge

Related questions

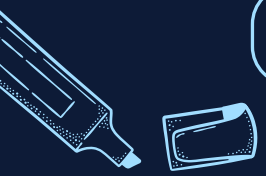
- How do we derive / construct knowledge?
- Why is academic knowledge prized above other kinds of knowledge today?
- How has knowledge been viewed differently over time?

What is knowledge?

If you don't believe something, you can't claim to know it. Knowledge involves a personal acceptance or conviction of a particular proposition.

Knowledge must be true; otherwise, it would be a false belief or a misconception. If you think you know something that is actually false, your claim to knowledge is invalidated.

Without justification, a belief could be arbitrary or unsupported. If you claim to know something but lack any good reasons or evidence for that belief, it becomes questionable whether you truly possess knowledge.



Belief **Truth** **Justification**

What is knowledge?

Related Questions

- Why do we want surety for our knowledge claims?
- Why is certainty ultimately not a requirement for knowledge?
- Why is it that the three conditions for knowledge can be fulfilled but we hesitate to grant the claim the status of knowledge? (Gettier problem)
  - ➢ Unlucky Clock example
  - ➢ Fake Barns example
- Why is knowledge (JTB) valued over true beliefs / justified beliefs?

Gettier

Gettier Problems

- Unlucky Clock example
- Fake Barns example

Response: Epistemic Luck

What kinds of luck can affect the standing of when a belief can be considered knowledge?

Response: Defeasibility Theory

A belief can still count as knowledge even if it is subject to potential defeat by new evidence. In Gettier cases, a belief that seems justified might be overridden by additional info that reveals its lack of genuine justification.

Response: Reliabilism

Knowledge is a true belief that is produced by a reliable cognitive process. This distinguishes between beliefs formed through reliable processes and luck.

Gettier

Response: Virtue Epistemology

Emphasize the importance of intellectual virtues or qualities that a knower possesses. Knowledge is seen as a belief that is both true and formed through the exercise of intellectual virtues, such as careful reasoning and reliable judgment.

Response: Modal Conditions

Modal conditions consider counterfactual scenarios and examine whether a belief would still be true in similar possible worlds where circumstances are slightly different.

Truth: Correspondence

A statement or belief is true if and only if it accurately corresponds to or reflects a fact or state of affairs in the external world. Truth is a matter of the relationship between propositions and the reality they describe. It is determined by how well it aligns with the objective facts of the world.

"The sky is blue" is true iff the sky actually possesses the quality of blueness.
"The cat is on the mat" is true iff there is indeed a cat situated on a mat.

Strengths: Straightforward and intuitive way to understand truth by emphasizing the connection between language and reality.
Often associated with common-sense notions of truth.

Critiques: Can be difficult to define precisely, especially when dealing with abstract or complex concepts. May not address statements about fictional or abstract entities.

Truth: Coherence

A statement or belief is true if and only if it coheres or fits well with a set of other beliefs or statements within a system or network of knowledge. Truth is seen as the result of internal consistency and logical coherence among various propositions.

Truth emerges from the interconnections and relationships among multiple statements. If a statement aligns with and supports the overall web of beliefs and knowledge, it is considered true.

Strengths: Highlights the importance of consistency and logical harmony in determining truth. Particularly useful for dealing with complex or abstract ideas that may not have a clear correspondence to concrete reality.

Critiques: Coherence alone may not be sufficient to establish truth, as a set of internally consistent but false beliefs could exist. There can also be cases where a belief coheres with a particular system of thought but still fails to correspond to reality.

Truth: Pragmatic

A statement is true if it is useful, functional, or leads to successful results in practice. The truth of a statement is determined by its practical implications.

If a belief leads to successful predictions, problem-solving, or desirable outcomes, it is considered true. Truth is viewed as a tool for effective action. It focuses on the practical consequences and utility of a belief or statement.

Strengths: emphasizes the role of truth in guiding human action and decision-making. It aligns well with scientific and empirical approaches, where theories are considered true if they lead to successful predictions and technological advancements.

Critiques: Overly permissive! As it could lead to accepting contradictory or unfounded beliefs if they are deemed useful in certain contexts. It might also struggle to address cases where a belief's utility is not immediately apparent.

Justification: Foundationalism

Justified beliefs are built upon a foundation of basic, self-evident, or indubitable beliefs. These foundational beliefs do not require further justification and serve as the starting points for acquiring other justified beliefs.
Justification is achieved by tracing beliefs back to these foundational propositions.

Strengths: Other justified beliefs can be built on these justified beliefs through reasoning.

Critiques: Do truly indubitable or self-evident beliefs exist?
Which beliefs can serve as proper foundations?

Justification: Coherentism

he justification of a belief comes from its coherence within a broader network or system of beliefs. A belief is justified if it fits well with other beliefs in a way that forms a coherent and logically consistent structure / enhances the coherence of the whole structure.

Strengths: emphasizes the connections among beliefs.

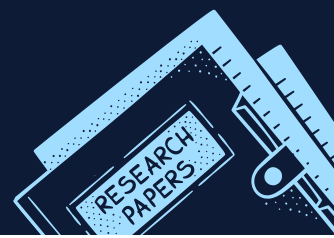
Critiques: This can allow for circular reasoning, where beliefs justify each other without external reference, and that it might not account for cases where an isolated belief is true but not well-connected to other beliefs.

Justification: Reliabilism

A belief is justified if it is produced by a reliable process that tends to yield true beliefs more often than not. The emphasis is on the track record of the process rather than on the internal structure of beliefs. It focuses on the reliability of the cognitive processes or methods used to form beliefs.

Strengths: does away with the need for looking for connections to other beliefs.

Critiques: How to define and identify reliable cognitive processes?
Is reliability alone sufficient for justification? Especially when the process might be reliable by chance rather than by design.
Reliability itself needs justification!



Justification: Infinitism

Infinitism proposes that a belief can be justified through an infinite chain of reasons or evidence. Unlike foundationalism, infinitism does not require basic beliefs but allows for an ongoing process of justification.

Strengths: does not require basic beliefs (unlike Foundationalism)

Critiques: What's the practicality of infinite chains of justification?
Potential for regress.

Justification:

Internalism/Externalism

Internalism emphasizes that justification is solely determined by factors that are accessible to the individual's conscious awareness.
Externalism, on the other hand, allows for factors outside of conscious awareness (e.g., causal relationships) to contribute to justification.

Strengths: explores the possibility of knowledge construction outside of 'known' understanding

Critiques: Does Internalism adequately account for all aspects of justification? Do external factors play a role?

How is knowledge constructed?

Logical reasoning from general principles/ideas to particular instances.
If the premises are true, the conclusion must be true.

Start from a specific observation to form general conclusions. /
Using an observation to formulate a theory or idea.
The conclusion is not guaranteed, but the probability of its truth increases with more reliable evidence.

Inferring which of several explanations for particular observed facts is the most compelling one. Abductive arguments involve drawing a conclusion from assumptions or a best guess, making their conclusion possibly false.

Deductive Reasoning

Abductive Reasoning

Inductive Reasoning

Agrippan Trilemma

philosophical argument that highlights the challenges inherent in attempting to provide a foundation for knowledge / to justify beliefs.

01

Provide reasons / evidence for a belief.

- But this leads to an infinite regress of justification

02

Using the belief itself as justification (circular reasoning)

- But this does not provide solid foundation for knowledge

03

Not providing a reason (dogmatism)

- Avoids the challenge of justifying beliefs altogether, but it doesn't satisfy the desire for a rational and reasoned foundation for knowledge

How is knowledge constructed?

Modes of Inquiry

Mathematical Inquiry

What assumptions must hold for mathematical inquiry to proceed?
What is the role of logic in knowledge construction?
Does the number sense exist?

Scientific Inquiry

What is the basis of scientific knowledge?
What is the role of inductive reasoning in knowledge construction?
Are observation and testing the best forms of knowledge construction?

Social Science Inquiry

What is the basis of social science knowledge?
What are the differences between science and social science inquiry?
What major investigative approaches guide inquiry in social science?

How is knowledge constructed?

Modes of Inquiry

Historical Inquiry

What is the basis of historical knowledge?
What is the role of evidence in knowledge construction?

Ethical Inquiry

What is the basis of moral and ethical knowledge?
What is the role of intuition in moral inquiry?

Aesthetic Inquiry

What is the basis of aesthetic knowledge?
Why is knowledge often constructed from justified subjective propositions?
What is the role of opinion in aesthetic inquiry?

What makes knowledge valid?

Facts

Reasoning

Arguments

Logic

Rationalism

Largely based on the belief that knowledge is acquired mainly through the use of reason. Sensory perceptions are viewed as unreliable.

Empiricism

Largely based on the view that reality is derived ultimately from what we experience through our senses. Emphasis is placed on the checking of ideas against experience.

What makes knowledge valid?

Methodology

Different fields of knowledge construct knowledge differently.

The Subjective Inquirer

Outlining saves time in the writing process. By having a clear structure in place, you can proceed with writing without getting stuck or having to backtrack frequently.

Questioning Sources of Knowledge and Authorship

How credible are knowledge claims?
What sources do knowledge claims depend on?
How strong does justification need to be?

Conflict between different fields of knowledge

What conflicts exist between knowledge fields? Why?
What fundamental differences are there in the way knowledge is constructed?

How is knowledge affected by society?

Belief Structures

National identity, religion, race and ethnicity affect individuals
Can consequently affect their position in the construction of knowledge

- National ID: Cultural perspectives, education system, media influence, language and communication
- Religion: Epistemology, moral & ethical framework, worldview & interpretation
- Race and Ethnicity: Socialisation & perspective, historical narratives, critical consciousness

How is knowledge affected by society?

Western & Eastern Constructions of Knowledge

Generally more philosophical nature of Eastern knowledge
Contact between the two traditions
Role of power in the ascendancy of Western ideas

How is knowledge affected by society?

Gender

Physiological, social, philosophical considerations in different societies
How do these affect individuals and societies as a whole?

Shared historical background

History, heritage, shared identity
How do these concepts affect individuals and societies?

Political Constructs

Kingship, Democracy, Socialism
How do these concepts affect the construction of knowledge?

How should knowledge be used?

Who controls knowledge in society?
What power structures within society affect the access to knowledge?

The question of ethics in society

What is the relationship between individual choice and societal constraints?
Free will, determinism, morality, utilitarianism, natural law.

The ethics of inquiry

What is the place of ethics in different forms of inquiry?
What issues concern the ethical use of knowledge?
Is there an inherent ethical dimension in knowledge construction, or only the use/misuse of knowledge that can be considered in ethical terms?

Knowledge and Power

What is the relationship between power and knowledge construction?
'Soft' power of influence and persuasion (advertising, cultural imperialism) vs.
'Hard' power (weapons technology)