

GRE写作重点话题：质疑精神(Skepticism)GRE考试 PDF转换  
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有用 Skepticism Skepticism refers to the philosophic position holding that the possibility of knowledge is limited either because of the limitations of the mind or because of the inaccessibility of its object. It is more loosely used to denote any questioning attitude. Extreme skepticism holds that no knowledge is possible, but this is logically untenable since the statement contradicts itself. During the Renaissance the influence of ancient skepticism was reflected preeminently in the writings of the 16th-century French philosophical essayist Michel de Montaigne. The greatest exponent of modern skepticism was the 18th-century Scottish empiricist philosopher David Hume. In his Treatise of Human Nature (1739-1740) and An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (1748), Hume questions the possibility of demonstrating the truth of beliefs about the external world, causal connections, future events, or such metaphysical entities as the soul and God. The 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, while attempting to overcome Humes skepticism, denied the possibility of knowing things in themselves or of achieving metaphysical knowledge. In the 19th century, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche denied the possibility of complete objectivity, and thus of objective knowledge, in any field. The 20th-century American philosopher George Santayana, claiming to have taken Humes skepticism a step further,

maintained, in his work *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923), that belief in the existence of anything, including oneself, rests on a natural, but irrational impulse. Elements of skepticism may be found in other modern schools of philosophy, including pragmatism, analytic and linguistic philosophy, and existentialism.

**Philosophical skepticism** In philosophical skepticism, pyrrhonism is a position that refrains from making truth claims. A philosophical skeptic does not claim that truth is impossible (which would be a truth claim). The label is commonly used to describe other philosophies which appear similar to philosophical skepticism, such as "academic" skepticism, an ancient variant of Platonism that claimed knowledge of truth was impossible. Empiricism is a closely related, but not identical, position to philosophical skepticism. Empiricists see empiricism as a pragmatic compromise between philosophical skepticism and nomothetic science. philosophical skepticism is in turn sometimes referred to as "radical empiricism." Philosophical skepticism originated in ancient Greek philosophy. One of its first proponents was Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360-275 B.C.), who traveled and studied as far as India, and propounded the adoption of practical skepticism. Subsequently, in the New Academy Arcesilaos (c. 315-241 B.C.) and Carneades (c. 213-129 B.C.) developed more theoretical perspectives, by which conceptions of absolute truth and falsity were refuted. Carneades criticized the views of the Dogmatists, especially supporters of Stoicism, asserting that absolute certainty of knowledge is impossible. Sextus Empiricus (c. A.D. 200), the main authority for Greek skepticism, developed the position further, incorporating

aspects of empiricism into the basis for asserting knowledge. 100Test  
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