

+ Warm-up

Grab a piece of paper and answer the following questions:

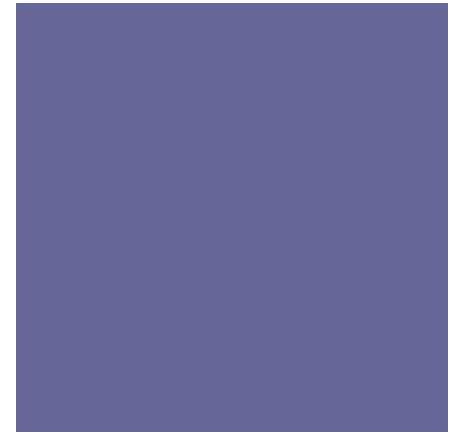
- List 3 sentences you believe are definitely true (Dan's, for example: "Today is Monday", " $2+2=4$ ", and "The earth revolves around the sun").
 - Then, list what evidence you could learn that would make you doubt that belief (example: I'd doubt "Today is Monday" if I learned that my computer calendar froze several days ago)
- List 3 sentences you believe are definitely false (Dan's, for example: "The moon is made of green cheese", "I am president of the United States", and "it's ok to steal for no reason.")
 - Then list what evidence you could learn that would make you believe this sentence was true (example: I'd believe "I am president of the United States" if I read about it on several reliable news websites)





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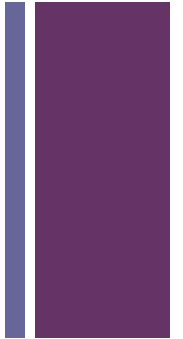
a place to grow



Wonder, Reason, and Judge: An Introduction to Philosophy

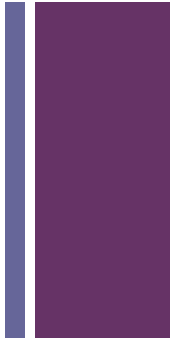
Dr. Dan Peterson
7/7/2025

+ Two Starting Questions



- 1. What is Philosophy *about*?
- 2. What do philosophers *do*?

+ Two Starting Questions



- 1. What is Philosophy *about*?
 - Almost anything!
 - Reality, existence, knowledge, language, science, art, morality, politics, culture, education, and more!

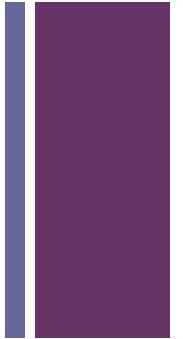
- 2. What do philosophers *do*?
 - Ask questions and try to give answers
 - Use logic and reasoning

+ Starting Point for Philosophy: Wonder

- Philosophy generally starts by asking a general question:
 - Would it be wrong for me to cheat off my friend's homework if they're okay with me doing it?
 - Why can adults vote for president but not kids?
 - Do my doodles in math class count as art?
 - Does God exist?
 - What is the meaning of life?

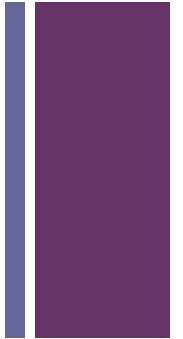


+ Definitions



- That wonder leads to us trying to figure out answers to our questions.
- But before we can even answer the questions, we need to figure out what the questions mean. Definitions can help us (if they're good ones!)
 - “Wrong”, “art”, “God”, and “meaning of life” all need definitions.
 - A **counterexample** to a definition is a specific example that shows the definition isn't a good one.
 - A definition is usually like “ $X = Y$ ”. A counterexample is an X that's not a Y, or a Y that's not an X.
 - Example: “Banana = yellow fruit” has a counterexample: a lemon!

+ Counterexample Game



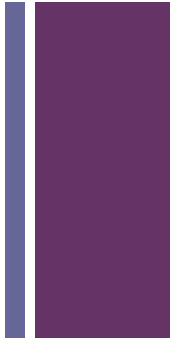
Start of game: pick a term.

Step 1: one player provides one part of the term's definition.

Step 2: another player gives a counterexample to current definition.

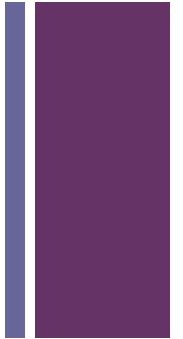
Step 3: the player who gave the counterexample adds a new part of the definition or replaces part of that definition, and the game repeats.

+ Counterexample Game: Example



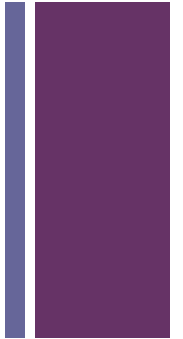
Horse

+ Horse



- “Horse” = “animal”
 - Counterexample: chickens are animals that aren’t horses.
- “Horse” = “4-legged animal”
 - Counterexample: dogs are 4-legged animals that aren’t horses.
- “Horse” = “Tall 4-legged animal”
 - Counterexample: giraffes are tall 4-legged animals that aren’t horses.
- “Horse” = “Tall 4-legged animal that people can ride”
 - Counterexample: elephants are tall 4-legged animals that people can ride that aren’t horses

+ Group Counterexample Game 1



Truck

+ Team Counterexample Game 2



Sweater

+ Group Definitions

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

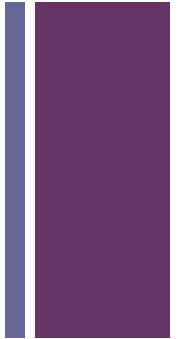


+ Team Counterexample Game 3



Knowledge

+ Reasons



- Another important set of tools for philosophers, along with definitions, are **reasons**.
- Reasons are answers to “why?” questions. They’re claims that, if true, give us reason to believe something else.
- Reasons come in different forms: evidence, arguments, and even shared feelings all give us reasons to believe something.
 - Example: the fact that ice cream is delicious is a reason to eat it!

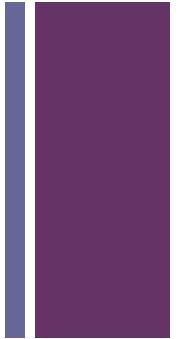
+ Reason Game



- Write a sentence you believe and a sentence you know is false.
- Then, write three reasons why someone might believe each of the sentences you've just written (3 reasons for each sentence)
- We will try to guess the sentences from your reasons alone!



Reason Game Example: guess the sentence from reasons for belief!



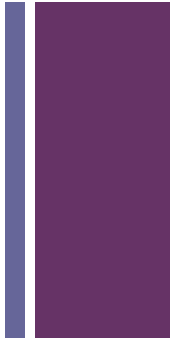
■ Sentence 1

- I remember it being June last month.
- The calendar on my computer tells me that it's July.
- When I go outside, it feels pretty hot.

■ Sentence 2

- Cut, dried grass in the summer is brown.
- Kentucky is called the bluegrass state.
- People who are color-blind see grass as being a different color from what I see when I look at grass.

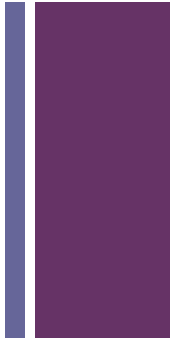
+ Wonder, Reason, Judgement



- Start with **wonder** and come up with the question you're interested in solving.
- Try to define important terms and give a reasonable solution to the problem.
- Think up some **reasons** that support your solution and all the **reasons** that suggest it's wrong.
- After you've considered all the reasons for and against your solution, **judge** whether it's a good one.



Today's plan: 2 Areas in Philosophy



- Aesthetics/Philosophy of Art

- What counts as art? What does art do for us?

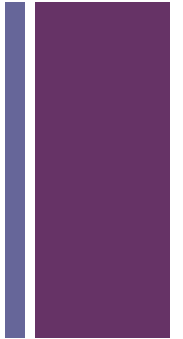
- Ethics

- Is it ever okay to lie? How do we figure out when it's right or wrong to do something?



Philosophy of Art

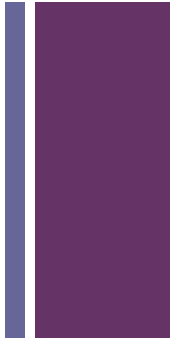
+ Activity 1: Draw!



Take the next 8 minutes to draw 2 drawings:

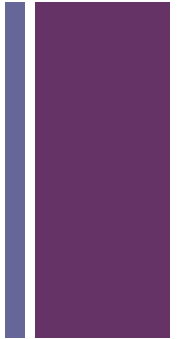
- For your first drawing, try to draw a work of art.
- For your second drawing, try to draw something that is not art.

+ Discussion Questions



- What was the difference between your two pictures?
- Do you disagree with anyone else's pictures that were supposed to be "art" or "not art"? Why?
- What reasons do you have for thinking that a particular drawing is art or not art?

+ Thought Experiment



Imagine that your teacher came into your classroom extremely excited one day and told you that he had drawn a fantastic picture of each one of his students. You ask to see the picture he drew of you, and here's what he shows you:

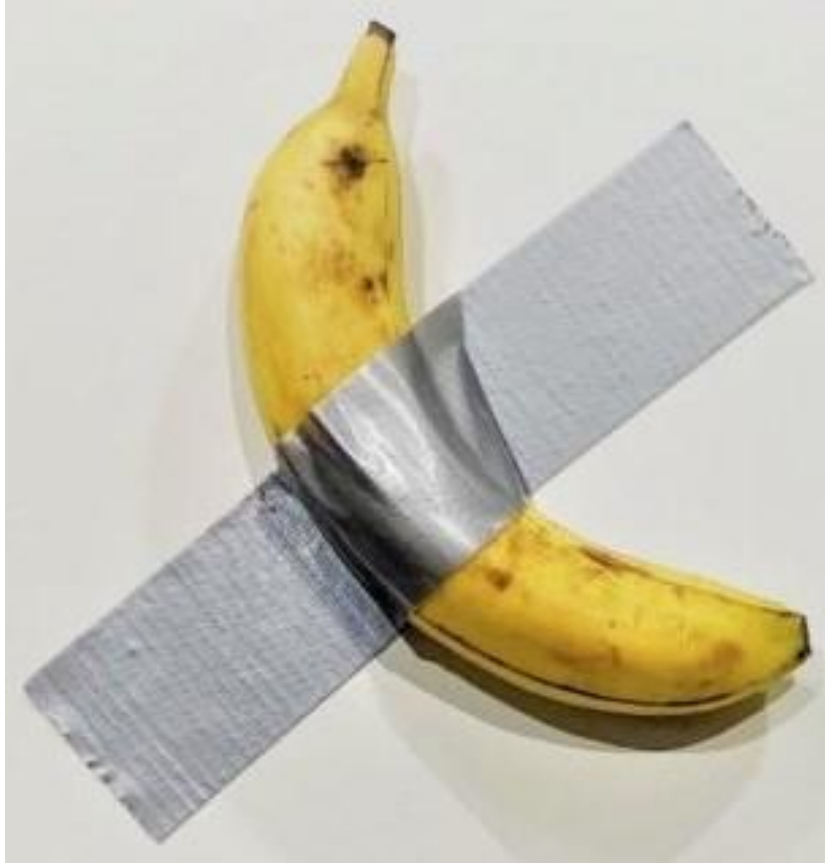


What would your reaction be? Would you be excited? Insulted? Why?

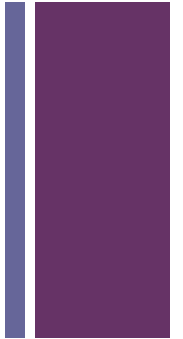
+ Counterexample Game: Art



+ Is this art?



“Comedian” by Maurizio Cattelan, 2019



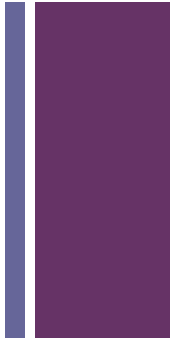
+ Is this art?



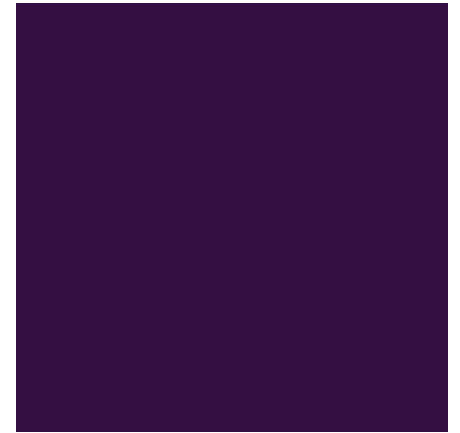
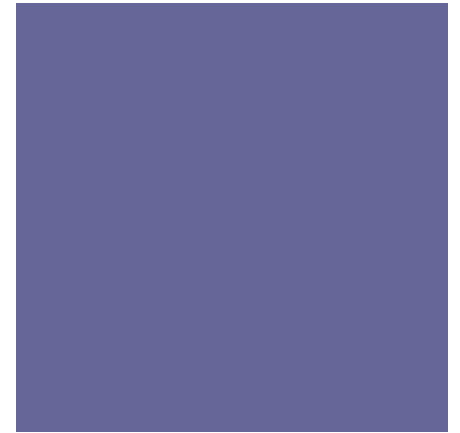
Vs.



+ Final Questions



- Does art have to have an artist? Is AI-generated or computer-generated artwork really art? Why?
- Is there such a thing as “bad art” or “good art”? What about “high art” or “low art”? What’s the difference?
- Does the difference between art and non-art (or good and bad art) just depend on different people’s tastes? If I like *Comedian* better than the *Mona Lisa*, is that opinion just as good as the opposite opinion?



Ethics



What Should You Do, Case 1

You're walking down the street one day when you hear someone shout "Hey, excuse me!" behind you and run up towards you. It's a well-dressed woman holding a wallet, and you can see a crisp \$100 bill sticking out of the wallet. "Sorry," she says, out of breath, when she reaches you. "I just found this wallet on the sidewalk and wondered if it might be yours". It's not, but you can think of lots of things you could do with \$100. **Should lie to the woman and take the wallet or tell truth?**



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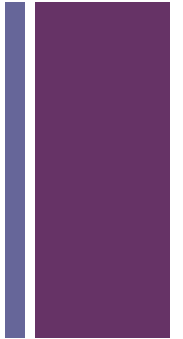
What Should You Do, Case 2



You are sitting at home one day when there's a knock on your door. It's your good friend, who tells you that there's a murderer with an axe who's chasing him, and he needs to hide in your house. You let him in, and a few minutes later there's another knock on your door. This time, it's a man with an axe who asks if your friend is inside, and he says he'll take your silence as a "yes". **Do you lie to the man and save your friend, or do you tell him the truth?**



+ Discussion Questions



- Did you say the same thing about whether lying was wrong in both case 1 and case 2? Why or why not?
- Is it ever okay to lie? Is it ever wrong to lie? How can you tell?
- How does it feel when others lie to you? How do you feel when you lie to others?
- What even counts as a lie anyway?

+ Counterexample Game: Lie



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+ Brainstorming

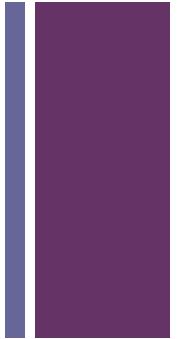


Can we come up with some rules for when it would be wrong to lie? Think about potential counterexamples to the rules you formulate (where following the rule would make you do something wrong)

Rules:

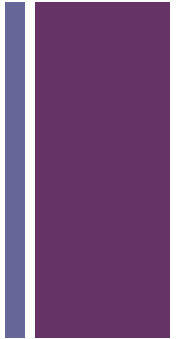
- 1.**

+ Bonus Questions



- Is it wrong to tell a “white lie” like “your dress looks beautiful” when your sister is about to head off to a dance if this lie makes someone feel good?
- Is breaking the promise the same thing as lying? For instance, if you promised your friend that you’d come to their party and then didn’t, did you lie? Does it matter whether or not you had an excuse? Does it matter whether or not you had a **good** excuse?
- What if we turned our attention away from lying and towards something else like stealing? Can we figure out good rules to follow for stealing like those we figured out for lying?

+ Final Questions



- What question we considered today are you left **wondering** about?
- What new **reason** for believing something new or something that you already believed did you discover today?
- Have you **judged** that one of the central questions from today's workshop has a clear answer? If so, which one, and what's the answer?

+ Philosophy Q&A

