

Reading Assignment 1: Feldman and Nagel on Epistemology

Assigned Reading

1. R. Feldman. *Epistemology*. Prentice Hall Foundations of Philosophy Series. Pearson Education Inc., 2003, Chap. 1-2
2. J. Nagel. *Knowledge: A very short introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 48-62. The assigned pages span the last two sections of chapter one, entitled “Spotting the Difference” and “Knowing vs. Thinking.”

Technical Requirements

Answer questions two, three, five, and eight below. Together, your answers should not be longer than a single typed page. Remember to provide page numbers indicating which passages you are paraphrasing. For the remaining optional questions, please write down the page numbers on which the authors address the question. See the document “Reading Assignment and Quiz Guidelines” for further instructions.

Questions

1. Describe two categories of things of which we have knowledge according to the standard view, and describe at least one source of knowledge of things in those two categories. Give examples of claims that you believe you know that concern things in the two categories you have chosen.
2. Summarize one of the challenges to the Standard View in your own words. If you have indicated that you would like to lead discussions on Thursday or Friday, summarize the skeptical challenge. If you chose Monday or Tuesday, summarize the relativistic challenge. Otherwise, summarize the naturalistic challenge.
3. Which types of English expressions does Feldman argue describe propositional knowledge? Which types of English expressions do not describe propositional knowledge?
4. What three components are part of the “traditional analysis of knowledge” according to Feldman? For two of the three criteria, provide an example to motivate the thesis that the criterion is necessary for knowledge. To do so, describe a circumstance in which the other two criteria are met but in which, intuitively, the person you are describing lacks knowledge.
5. State the *correspondence theory of truth* (CT) in your own words. Feldman discusses seven misconceptions about CT and then raises one puzzle case that he thinks might be problematic. Summarize three of the seven misconceptions with your own examples.
6. Feldman describes two circumstances in which people have “apparent knowledge” but not “real knowledge.” Describe a real example of each.
7. Illustrate the “cynical theory” of knowledge using your own example. What reasons does Nagel to to reject that theory?
8. According to Nagel, how often is the word “know” used in spoken English? How many different languages have a word like “know”, and how many English words have precise translations in so many other languages?
9. State Protagoras’ theory of knowledge in your own words. According to Nagel, what is the “high price to pay” for endorsing Protagoras’ theory?