

# Realist Guide Study Guide

## Chapter 1

1. What is meant by a person's 'reality mentality'?
2. What happens in an act of knowledge?
3. What is a fundamental difference between sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge?
4. Why must one who denies sense knowledge logically be a solipsist?
5. If "all knowledge has its starting point with sensation of the outside world", why does it follow that "knowledge is dependent on reality"?
6. In what way do the senses assist the intellect in its pursuit of truth?
7. The text provides an example of the senses only knowing what is individual or singular. Make up your own alternative example.
8. Why can the intellect attain truth, while the senses, strictly speaking, cannot attain truth?
9. What does the word 'is' mean?
10. Why would it be unlikely to find someone on a remote island with a high level of education?
11. Explain in what ways a realist makes proper use of his will, in the formation of his epistemology.
12. Why would someone, in general, choose to reject his sense knowledge or his intellectual knowledge?
13. Does the fact that our senses show sticks in ponds as being bent and the reality around us to be constantly changing mean that we should doubt our senses? Why or why not?
14. Explain why, for both the idealist and empiricist:
  - a. Truth is subjective.
  - b. It makes no sense to communicate using words.
15. The book offers arguments for realism.
  - a. Why are the words 'negative' and 'positive' used to describe two of the arguments?
  - b. Why does the fact that the notion of 'being' cannot be taught lend support to realism?
  - c. Why is the proof presented in the book called an 'indirect' proof?
  - d. Why wasn't a direct proof for realism used?
16. What are two negative consequences for one who chooses not to be a realist?

## Chapter 2

1. In what way does sense data manifest that it is incomplete as knowledge?
2. In what three ways is causal knowledge superior to sense knowledge?
3. List the four causes and their definitions, as given in the book. Then provide your own example of the four causes.
4. How does the book argue that a material being must have four causes for it to exist?
5. What are causal chains and why do they exist?
6. What are the two main types of effects for which the mind must seek causes, and what chains of causality correspond to them?
7. Read the example used to illustrate the two chains of causality for a hanging chandelier. Then come up with your own example.
8. What are two main properties of a first cause?
9. Why are those who ask the question "Who made God?" implying that there must be a cause for everything?
10. Prove that there is a real distinction between essence and existence in the things around us.
11. Use the fact of that real distinction to prove that God exists.
12. Explain why your proof from question 11 is scientific or certain.
13. Explain what occasionalism is and why it 'destroys the entire edifice of our knowledge'.
14. Why can't materialists account for creatures acting?
15. What does it mean that God creates 'from nothing'?
16. Why doesn't a thing change when it is created?
17. Why doesn't God change when He creates?
18. Why must God have infinite power to create?
19. How is it that God and creatures can act at the same time, without interfering with one another?
20. Why is it necessary to have two levels of agents, God and creatures, for the world around us to be knowable?

## Chapter 3

1. What are the three characteristics of every body of knowledge?
2. Why must different methods be used to understand different aspects of reality?

3. What are two meanings of the word 'science'?
4. Explain the connection between the senses and matter, quantity, and change.
5. What is meant by 'exact science'?
6. Why doesn't the scientific method work as well for biology as it does for physics?
7. Explain what is meant by the study of 'physical bodies as such' and then explain why physics studies 'physical bodies as such', while biology does not.
8. List the four causes and state what the scientific method is able to reveal about them for a given material body.
9. List the four causes, state how they apply to a cockatoo, and then indicate the degree to which each cause can be discerned by the human mind, and why.
10. Under what circumstances is 'science' in its modern sense able to provide 'science' in its Aristotelian sense?
11. Prove in general that science, in its modern sense, is not the highest form of human knowledge.
12. Why does modern science rely specifically on a realist epistemology?
13. What is the difference between immediate causes and ultimate causes?
14. Where, typically, would someone's philosophy come from who grows up:
  - a. in Saudi Arabia
  - b. in a secular democracy
  - c. in a practicing Catholic family
15. What are fideistic religions and why do they tend to be cults?
16. What is the proper way for a religion to establish that it is the true religion?
17. What are two key tests of a religion's reasonableness?
18. Why do religion and science come into conflict in today's world?
19. What would an empiricist deny of reality and what would an empiricist affirm of reality, in relation to the four causes?
20. Why do miracles make scientific endeavour impossible?
21. Why can't God change the laws of nature?
22. Say God enables St Joseph of Cupertino to levitate. Explain how this is a suspension of the laws of nature, not a changing of the laws of nature.
23. Why is the Catholic Church so careful in judging whether a miracle has truly taken place in a given circumstance?

## Chapters 4-7

Read chapters 4-7 of *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science*, and argue from it that one's idea of God has a great effect on one's ability to understand reality.

Your paper is to be between 2000-3000 words. You are to make the paragraph below the opening for the paper.

“Over the centuries, cultures and peoples have had markedly different ideas about God, in His role as the ultimate principle of the universe. Pagans identified God with the universe, Catholics considered God as a wise creator, and Muslims and Protestants thought of God as an arbitrary ruler. For each of these peoples, their God-idea determined their attitude toward reality and, more specifically, their ability to understand reality. The right idea of God made for intellectual success, while the wrong idea of God made for intellectual disaster. This paper will attempt to show the relationship between a culture's or thinker's idea of God and their success in intellectual pursuits.”