

# What is knowledge Key terms

## Three different types of knowledge

### Propositional knowledge (knowing that)

Can always be expressed in language. It is a sentence that makes a claim about the world such as 'I am hungry' or 'There are 4 fish in the bowl'.

What is asserted by such sentences are called propositions.

So factual knowledge is called propositional knowledge. SO THIS WHOLE TOPIC IS CONCERNED WITH THIS TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE.

### Acquaintance knowledge, (knowing of)

Obtained by a direct experience, interaction, between a person and the object the person is perceiving. For example, Dean knows the President of America.

### Ability knowledge, or practical knowledge, (knowing how).

Required to do a particular kind of skill, day-to-day, hands-on experience. For example, Dean knows how to ride a bike. It is contextual, and helps you acquire the specific techniques that enable you to gain a particular skill or ability.

## Linda Zagzebski: the nature of definition

### Different types of definitions of knowledge.

- Some objects have a real essence, a cause that makes a thing the way it is, for example, water is the way it is because of its chemical composition H<sub>2</sub>O, therefore, if an object has a real essence, then it can have a real definition.
- In contrast, some objects do not have a cause that makes them that thing, for example, weeds. There is no genetic difference between a weed and non-weeds. It's a question of which plants a human wants in their garden, we can define the term 'weeds' but it is not a real definition as they do not have a real essence.
- Zagzebski is sceptical about whether knowledge can have a real essence, as the term knowledge varies so much, it could be a social construct, but we should treat knowledge as if it does have a real essence.
- Zagzebski says we should avoid these 4 pitfalls when defining knowledge:
  1. Circularity: Definitions should not include the term being defined, e.g. justice is just.
  2. Obscure: Terms in any definition should not be more obscure than the original term.
  3. Negative: Defining a term by what it is does not help, e.g. defining a good act as 'one that is not wrong'.
  4. Ad hoc: Coming up with a definition that is specific to meeting a particular problem, e.g. defining knowledge as JTB that is not a Gettier counter-example.

## Necessary and sufficient conditions

**Necessary conditions:** Something you need in order to have the thing in question. A is a necessary condition for B, when you have to have A in order to have B. Water is a necessary condition of rain. You cannot have rain without water, yet, water is not enough to guarantee rain, as a lake is not rain, therefore, water is a necessary but not sufficient definition of rain.

**Sufficient condition:** A is a sufficient condition for B when you if you have A you must have B too. In other words, having A is enough or sufficient to guarantee that you have B. Means you will always have the thing in question. Being an aunt is a sufficient condition to have relatives.

Some conditions can be both sufficient and necessary when put together, for example, a bachelor is an unmarried man, these conditions are both necessary and sufficient to guarantee a bachelor as without these two conditions you cannot be a bachelor.

## Plato's definition of knowledge

### The tripartite definition of knowledge

Propositional knowledge is defined as justified true belief: S knows that p if and only if:  
S is justified in believing that p,  
p is true and  
S believes that p (individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions)  
When these conditions are met they are jointly sufficient to define knowledge.