

### Doctrine of the Illusion of Descartes

1. There are four possible principles that guide reality, if something is believed to exist, like a piece of chalk, or, God.
  - It [God] is an illusion.
  - It [God] is self-created.
  - It [God] is self-existent
  - It [God] is created by something that is self-existent.
2. Rene Descartes argued that the world and everything in it was an illusion. He is the father of modern rationalism.
3. In his day the authority of the Catholic Church was being challenged by the Reformation. If the church cannot solve disputes, what can be known? It is a good question .
4. Scientific authority was also under seize because of the Copernicus revolution who challenged Ptolemy. The telescope pointed to the heavens and discovered the earth moves.
5. A foundation was needed for truth. Clear and distinct ideas were needed for a foundation for the reconstruction of knowledge. Assumptions had to be challenged.
6. The process Descartes followed was to follow a plan of uncertainty based on skepticism. He began to doubt everything: his senses, what he had been taught, etc.
7. Maybe the world was created by a Deceiver who gives false illusions. How can a person really know that reality is how a person perceives it to be.
8. Subject – object problem. How can we know the world “out there” is how I perceive it?
9. The only thing he could not doubt was that he existed. *Cogito ergo sum*. “I think, therefore I am.” The one thing he could not doubt, when he was doubting, was that he was doubting! The one thing there was no doubt was that he doubted.
10. What is required for there to be doubt? Answer: cognition. Thought. Conscious thought. Without thinking there can be no doubting. If I am doubting there can be no doubt I am thinking.
11. Doubting requires a doubter just as thinking requires a thinker. If that is true then I must exist. That which does not think does not doubt and those who do not doubt cannot exist. I am thinking, therefore I am.
12. This exercise is not foolish or meaningless. As a mathematician he was looking for certainty at a philosophical level to equal what can be arrived at in mathematics. He wanted something more than senses for understanding.

13. He began with the knowledge of his own self existence. This is a position of self-consciousness presuppositional thinking. Self-consciousness is not dependent on external data.
14. The reason this is important is that it can dispose of the first option which is that reality is an illusion. The reality of self cannot be disproven. Something exists, if nothing else than he own consciousness.
15. To prove the existence of God, existence of something must be proven.
16. Some philosophers rejected *Cogito ergo sum* because of two assumptions his principle was based on.
  - He was assuming logic, he was assuming rationality.
  - He was assuming the law of causality. He said that to doubt meant a doubter.