

# reality

## surely we know what it is..?

*It's everything that actually exists, but does this mean a) everything that there is, whether or not it is observable, accessible or understandable by science, philosophy or any other system of analysis b) the views and experiences of a group of people c) we will live and die and that's it d) anything I want it to be. See below for some other ideas and questions about reality:*



### 'ultimate reality'

We can only take in a certain amount of information. If we have too much, our brains get stuck. This happens with the sheer amount of information available on the internet today



### Metaphysics = beyond physical

focuses on the nature of reality / attempts to find unity between experience and thought / has five strands: idealism, realism, pragmatism (sometimes called experientialism), existentialism and Scholasticism



### consensus reality

Beliefs about reality are formed by the collective views and experiences of a group of people

### realism

Aristotle said reality is the world of physical objects & exists independent of the human mind. The focus is on the body/objects. Truth is objective-what can be observed. He championed the scientific method



### anti-realism

the theory there is no objective reality, whether acknowledged explicitly or not

## nothing is real

Reality simply doesn't exist. Quantum theory shows that simply observing something changes the result, for example, The Double Slit experiment suggests that there are various realities, and every possible outcome takes place in a parallel universe. Each observer throughout the different universes would therefore see something different in the experiment.

This would mean that there are endless versions of 'reality'. This leads people to question whether the human mind itself is real. The mind develops moment by moment. These moments can be divided into past, present and future moments. There is no single mind



"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" Does it exist even if there is no one to see, touch, smell or hear it?

George Berkeley said: "to be is to be perceived"



"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one."

— Albert Einstein

"Distinctions drawn by the mind are not necessarily equivalent to distinctions in reality."

- St Thomas Aquinas

"Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced."

— Søren Kierkegaard

"Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality."

— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland



### existentialism

The world around us has no intrinsic meaning outside of human existence. Reality is subjective, so personal choice is fundamental. Existence comes before any definition of what we are. Kierkegaard is considered to be the founder of existentialism. Jean Paul Sartre said the existential moment was when a young person realises they must answer the questions: "Who am I and what should I do?"

### scholasticism/ thomism

Brings together idealist and realist philosophies, so the thought of Aristotle is fused with Thomas Aquinas. The logical and philosophical study of the beliefs of the Church is encouraged, as is scientific inquiry and religious belief

### artificial intelligence

Apple, IBM and Google are investing in AI. Everyday AI examples include iPhone Siri and Microsoft Windows 10 Cortana. What are the ethics of AI?

### brain in a vat (jar)

A mad scientist has removed your brain, puts it into a jar and keeps it linked to a computer which sends your brain information to trick you into thinking that you are still walking around in your body. How do you know that you are not a brain in a vat? For some, the conclusion is that, from the perspective of the brain itself, it is impossible to tell whether it is a brain in a vat or a brain in a skull.



It is thought that by 2040, computers will be as smart as humans. Already the Henn-na hotel in Japan which is staffed by robots. What will the world be like when A.I can experience empathy?