

# Assignment 1

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Title:

*Objectivity is Impossible*

**Name:** Beau Lebens  
**Student Number:** 09918322  
**Unit Name:** REA11 (Applied Reasoning)  
**Email Address:** beau@dentedreality.com.au  
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## **Objectivity is Impossible**

If we are all to be reasonable, then we must all be objective. Are we reasonable? Are we objective? To be objective is to remove bias and influence from our thought and justification processes and our selves entirely. These biases and influences will cloud our judgment and skills of observation, leading us to believe fallacy to be fact, and thus have us conclude the untrue to be true. By following nothing but the truth, we are to find the undeniable answers to all questions.

For years, humans have strived to be objective, in the belief that behind all things lays a “permanent ahistorical matrix or framework” (Bernstein, as cited in Allen). This belief leads us to conclude that if we can be completely objective and thus access this framework of truth, then we will be able to truly understand things in a timeless manner which will remain consistent to all people, in all places, at all times (Allen). The problem with objectivity is that it is a human creation, and thus already tainted by human perceptions and definitions. Throw into this mix the ambiguity of our own languages and other forms of communication and we are well ‘behind the 8-ball’ before we even attempt to attain such a god-like goal as objectivity.

As humans, we can never be truly objective if for no other reason than because we are, in fact, humans. As animals of the Earth, our perceptions are already biased by the world in which we live and the events herein. Would a creature from another planet have a similar view of the importance of Earth? Can one person objectively sentence another to death? Our very existence causes biases that we cannot escape, and yet we strive to achieve the status of being truly objective, in the hope that this will elevate our understanding of the world and thus reveal the ultimate truths of existence.

Most philosophers agree that our personality and our perception of the world are shaped by society and by the people and things around us to some extent. These factors also create biases and influences within our mental models which,

as they did with the philosophers of Ancient Greece, cause us to draw one conclusion from a set of facts, where someone else may draw another. This situation begins to demonstrate that even as autonomous, thinking beings; we are affected in fundamental ways (the interpretation of facts!) by the society and culture in which we exist. If philosophers themselves are affected by the times in which they live, then are we not bound to the same fate?

Given the fact that our own observations and definitions of truth are based on our senses, it seems obvious that being completely objective is not possible. Our own senses play tricks on us, can be tricked by others and can simply observe things in a different manner to another person – so what is truth and what is fiction? What is real and what is not? If we knew, would it do us any good? Would we be able to explain it to each other anyway, given the ambiguities of our spoken *and* written language?

**References:**

Allen, M. (2003) *Reading 1.2 - Reasoning has a History*. Retrieved June 19, 2003, from [http://webct.curtin.edu.au/webct/courses/302048\\_a/arolam1r2.html#object](http://webct.curtin.edu.au/webct/courses/302048_a/arolam1r2.html#object) (authentication required for access)