

# [Wittgenstein, for each language-game: "what is common to](https://assignbuster.com/wittgenstein-for-each-language-game-what-is-common-to/)

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Wittgenstein, theAustrian philosopher who worked on logic, philosophy of language, mathematicsetc. wrote the paper PhilosophicalInvestigations. In his paper, he begins with a quote from St. Augustine’s Confessiones which describes a processof learning language through the process of learning the names of objects.

Butthen an issue arises when discussing the connection between word and a thing. This entails the core relationship that joins language to the world. In thephilosopher’s paper, he argues that the meaning of words cannot be rigidlydefined. I agree and disagree on a small point with Wittgenstein’s view andwill discuss my opinion through the two points and conclude that the meaning ofthe word cannot have a distinct meaning. To explain, in his paper Philosophical Investigations, as mentioned previously he citesSaint Augustine’s Confessiones; Wittgensteincites his work to illustrate the first beliefs and goals of language whichWittgenstein says: “ give us a particular picture of the essence of humanlanguage. It is this: ‘ the individual words in language name object- sentencesare combinations of such names … every word has meaning.” (Wittgenstein 2).

Wittgenstein argues that Saint Augustine’s definition is a limited view of how languageworks. Though, he does admit that Augustine’s conception of how to learn theproper names and significance of objects by ostensive teaching, which is a wayof defining words by pointing to an object and naming it, has some form ofrelevance, this is a form of “ language-game”. This practice of language iscommonly used to teach children primitive language, according to Wittgenstein. Inaddition, the philosopher explains that the use of language-games is useful asthey have an important function on language in different contexts and therule-governed character of language, but this does not mean there are strictand definite systems of rules for each language-game: “ what is common to allthese activities and what makes them into language or parts of language”(Wittgenstein 65). Language-games are examined for their insights oncharacteristic of language. In addition, he frequently brings up mechanics andmetaphors to help the reader to understand his arguments. In this example, thebuilder and his assistant only use four terms screaming “ block!”, “ pillar!”,” slab!” and “ beam!”. This is used to illustrate the part of the Augustinianview of language which might be correct but is limited.

In contrast, Wittgenstein argues that even though Augustine describes system ofcommunication, language is much more complex and richer than the simple namingand recognition described by Augustine: “ But assimilating the descriptions of theuses of words in this way cannot make the uses themselves anymore like oneanother. For, as we see, they are absolutely unlike” (Wittgenstein 6) Also, Wittgenstein states that language allows words to execute a wide variety offunctions, he illustrates this notion through the comparison of a toolbox, thefunction of the words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. But, asWittgenstein notices, they all look alike: “ Of course, what confuses us is theuniform appearance of word when we hear them spoken or meet them in script andprint. For their application is not presented to us so clearly. Especially whenwe are doing philosophy!” (Wittgenstein 6) The problem with the relation between the word and the thing as thefundamental relationship that links language to the world.

“ For a largeclass of cases of the employment of the word ‘ meaning’- though not for all-this word can be explained in this way: the meaning of a word is its use in thelanguage” (Wittgenstein 43) This citation explains what is the change ofperspective, which is Wittgenstein’s thought which consists of a change from aconception of meaning as representation.