

# What are rationalism and empiricism: descartes and hume

[Philosophy](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The paper "What Are Rationalism and Empiricism: Descartes and Hume" is a great example of a philosophy assignment. Explicitly contradicting the emphasis on sense-based experience which the Aristotelian school of thought proposed, Descartes presents his argument for rationalism by executing around relations of ideas. Since a priori knowledge is essential to rationalists, conceptions of philosophy ought to be formulated in the context of logical rationalization or one that is carried out via deductive cognition. Descartes, hence, substantiates his perspective of rationalism with a series of cognitive exercises as indicated by his program on 'Meditations' whereby a rational meditator is claimed to seek truths by the intellect in full measure beyond any regard to senses. Empiricism after Hume's philosophy, however, requires an a posteriori knowledge apart from analytical endeavor for such theory posits that matters of fact in the world may only be ascertained by perceiving through the senses. In the light of an empirical attempt for one to obtain certainty with truths that may be contingent, Hume necessitates engagement with observations wherein an observer becomes capable of designating philosophical connections with contiguity and identity of objects.

Descartes is suspicious of the senses because for him, in order to fathom a significant truth, one must doubt all perceived knowledge. Since preconceptions are normally acquired by the senses then these senses should be subject to skepticism as well. Once the intellect has been purged of its old content with the attached senses by the method of doubt, only then can skepticism be defeated on its own ground in the process of rebuilding knowledge upon pure cognition that enables a rational person to yield to

clarity and distinction of ideas. On the other hand, Hume suspects reasoning on the basis of arguing that causes and effects are physically adjacent in space so “ the causal inference must be grounded in experience, not in any intuitive knowledge of ‘ essences’”. If causes exist in reality, according to Hume, no reasoning can possibly channel this information to people unless sense perception is employed.