

# [Philosophy study questions](https://assignbuster.com/philosophy-study-questions/)

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PHI 101C HW6 10/18/2012 Qiansongzi Chen 1. How might the constructive nature of your perceptions play a role in what you experience while you’re walking at night through a graveyard said to be visited by spirits of the dead? Constructive perception is in part something that our minds manufacture. Thus what we perceive is determined, not only by what our eyes and ears and other senses detect, but also by what we know, what we expect, what we believe, and what our physiological state is.

Just because something seems or feels real doesn’t mean that it is real. 2. What are some of the factors that could influence the accuracy of your memory of an event that happened three years ago? Ourmemoriesare also constructive and easily influenced by all sorts of factors: stress, expectation, belief, and the introduction of new information. Added to all this is the selectivity of memory. We selectively remember certain things and ignore others, setting up a recall bias. No wonder the recall of eyewitness is often unreliable. 3.

Let’s say that an incredible coincidence occurs in your life, and your friend argues that the odds against the occurrences are so astronomical that the only explanation must be a paranormal one. What is wrong with this argument? Just because something seems not so realistic, doesn’t mean it can only be explained by paranormal reasons. It’s an example of the appeal to ignorance. Just because you can’t show that the supernatural or paranormal explanation is false doesn’t mean that it is true. Unfortunately, although this reasoning is logically fallacious, it is psychologically compelling. 4.

How is it possible for the prophecies of Nostradamus to appear to be highly accurate and yet not be? Prophecies of Nostradamus can be highly accurate when they predict very general and broad things, when they predict a specific thing, it usually fails to be accurate. Also, people tent to only notice the things prophecies predict and turn out to be true, and ignore the things turn out to be false. 5. What is the principle that explains how much trust we should put inpersonal experienceas reliable evidence? It’s reasonable to accept personal experience as reliable evidence only if there’s no reason to doubt its reliability.

Personal experience alone generally cannot establish the effectiveness of a treatment beyond a reasonable doubt. 6. What is confirmation bias? How does it affect our thinking? Not only do we have a tendency to ignore and misinterpret evidence that conflicts with our own views; we also have tendency to look for and recognize only evidence that confirms them. We tend to look for confirming rather than disconfirming evidence, even though the latter can often be far more revealing. 7. What is the availability error? How does it affect our thinking?

The availability error occurs when people base their judgments on evidence that’s vivid or memorable instead of reliable or trustworthy. 8. How do confirmation bias and the availability error lead to superstitious beliefs? The availability error not only leads us to ignore the relevant evidence, it also leads us to ignore relevant hypotheses. For any set of data, it is, in principle, possible to construct any number of different hypotheses to account for the data. In practice, however, it is often difficult to come up with many different hypotheses.

As a result, we often end up choosing among only those hypotheses that come to mind, that are available. In the case of unusual phenomena, the only explanations that come to mind are often supernatural or paranormal ones. Many people take the inability to come up with a natural or normal explanation for something as proof that it is supernatural or paranormal. “ How else can you explain it? ” they often ask. 9. What is the argument from unnecessary restrictions? How can it be used to undercut supernatural or paranormal claims?

Unnecessary restriction also called unwarranted design, because the phenomena observed are more limited or restricted than one would expect if the hypothesis were true. To be acceptable, a hypothesis must fit the data: this means not only that the hypothesis must explain tha data, but also that the data explained must be consistent with what the hypothesis predicts. If the hypothesis makes predictions that are not borne out by the data, there is reason to doubt the hypothesis. 10. What is the representativeness heuristic? How does it affect our thinking?

We sometimes led astray by the representative heuristic, the rule of thumb that like goes with like. And we are generally poor judges of probabilities and randomness, which leads us to erroneously believe that an event could not possibly be a mere coincidence. 11. Why can’t personal experience alone establish the effectiveness of a treatment? Case studies alone generally cannot establish the effectiveness of a treatment beyond a reasonable doubt. The reality is that personal experience alone generally cannot establish the effectiveness of a treatment beyond a reasonable doubt, but controlled scientific studies. 2. What is the placebo effect? A peculiar fact about people is that sometimes even if they are given a treatment that’s inactive or bogus, they’ll respond with an improvement in the way they feel. This response , called the placebo effect, is not all in the mind, it can involve both psychological and physiological changes. What exactly is behind this effect isn’t clear, but many experts say it depends on suggestibility, operant conditioning (previous experience with healing act), expectation, and other factors.