

## **SOME KEY DEFINITIONS**

**ATTITUDE:** state of mind, behavior, or conduct regarding some matter, as indicating opinion or purpose; manner, disposition, feeling, position toward a person or thing.

**BELIEF:** acceptance of the truth or actuality of something without certain proof, whether it is based on reason, logic, scientific evidence, intuition, or faith. Conviction is a strong belief, regardless of the basis of the belief.

**BIAS:** a mental tendency, preference, or prejudice; inclination of outlook; a subjective point of view.

**CHAUVINISM:** militant glorification of one's country; vainglorious patriotism; unreasoning attachment and bias towards one's nation or other group, etc.

**DOGMATISM/CLOSED MIND:** positive or arrogant assertion, as of opinions or beliefs; beliefs accepted as true without being sufficiently tested by evidence; opposed to skepticism. A dogmatic person tends to reduce issues to black/white, either/or and sees no shades of gray; tends to avoid consideration of any information that conflicts with his/her beliefs.

**FACT:** something that actually exists or has actually occurred; something known by observation or experience to be true or real; reality or actuality, as distinguished from conjecture or fancy. A fact is a proposition about the material world, usually verifiable by simple perception.

**FAITH:** unquestioning confidence in or dependence on a person, statement, or thing as trustworthy; unquestioning belief without reason, logic, or rational proof; unquestioning belief in a divinity and the tenets of religion.

**HUBRIS:** wanton arrogance arising from overbearing pride or from passion.

**IDEALISM:** any of several theories that there is no reality, no world of objects or thing in itself apart from a reacting mind or consciousness, that only the mental is knowable, and therefore that reality is essentially spiritual or mental.

**IDEOLOGUE:** one who rigidly adheres to a belief system regardless of contradictory evidence. A “true believer”, a zealot. A form of dogmatism commonly applied to political beliefs.

**IDEOLOGY:** the ideas or manner of thinking characteristic of an individual or group; especially, the ideas and objectives that influence a whole group or national culture.

**INTUITION:** a direct knowledge or awareness of something without conscious attention or reasoning; nonintellectual perception or apprehension.

**JINGOISM:** boasting of one's patriotism and favoring an aggressive foreign policy.

**OBJECTIVE:** free from, or independent, of personal feelings, opinions, prejudice; detached; unbiased; pertaining to what is external to or independent of the mind; real (opposed to subjective).

**OPINION:** a conclusion or judgment held with confidence, but falling short of positive knowledge (an opinion may be either a judgment in a matter of objective fact or truth, or it may express one's feeling in what is a matter of evaluation rather than fact; impression refers to the first reaction of the mind, before the due consideration that warrants an opinion or sentiment).

**PAROCHIALISM:** narrowness of view; provincialism (narrow, uncultured).

**PERCEPTION:** the act or process of becoming aware of something through the senses; apprehension with the mind.

**PREJUDICE:** a judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without thoughtful examination of the pertinent facts, issues, or arguments; especially an unfavorable, irrational stereotyped opinion; the act or state of holding preconceived, irrational opinions (may refer to a strong emotional bias; an inclination that prevents a fair weighing of issues).

**REALISM:** philosophical doctrine that things have reality apart from the conscious perception of them; opposed to idealism.

**REALITY:** the fact, state, or quality of being genuine; that which exists, as contrasted with what is fictitious or merely conceived of.

**REASON:** the faculty of thinking logically and rationally; power of drawing conclusions or making inferences.

**SCIENCE:** systemized knowledge based on empirical evidence gathered under carefully prescribed methods designed to produce objective, precise evidence free of bias and subjectivity. Use of the scientific method of inquiry *assumes* a closed universe in which all phenomena have a cause-effect relationship and that the nature of those relationships can be found through observation. Transcendental events, such as religious beliefs dealing with afterlife, the soul, etc., are not considered appropriate for scientific inquiry.

**SKEPTICISM:** a doubting or incredulous state of mind; disbelieving attitude; in philosophy, the doctrine that absolute knowledge is unattainable and that judgments must be continually questioned and doubted in order to attain approximate or relative certainty. A basic tenet of science.

**SOCIOCENTRISM:** activities oriented around one's own social group (ethnic, national, religious, etc.); belief that values of that group are superior to, and a basis for judging, other groups; moral obligations are higher toward group members than to out groups.

**SUBJECTIVE:** relating to, proceeding from, or taking place within an individual's mind, emotions, etc. (opposed to objective); originating from or influenced by one's personal interests, prejudices, emotions, etc.

**VALUE:** the desirability or worth of a thing; intrinsic worth; utility; attributed or assumed valuation.

**XENOPHOBIA:** hatred or distrust of foreigners or strangers.