Repeatedly in our discussions we come to a point when someone states that

> a) the point just made,

> b) a description of a social or physical phenomenon, or,

> c) a generalization or truism

is "the truth." In most kinds of inquiry we are deliberately trying to reach understanding of the truth – an accurate and trustworthy description of our subject. In those moments, I hear hints of uncertainty, or a dawning realization that what a member of the group asserts as true is not accepted as such by everyone.

To help us explore what we mean by truth and how we understand its function, we will consider the questions below.

1. What are we trying to assert or establish when we refer to truth, or "the truth?"
2. What characteristics (or criteria) establish that something is true?
3. Based on our examples, where does truth come from, or originate?
4. How many types of truth do we commonly invoke?
5. When is truth a tool? When is truth a weapon?
6. What do scientists question about creationism?
7. What do creationists question about evolution by natural selection?
8. Is a statement or description that is not the truth necessarily a lie?

To prepare for our discussion,

a. Write as many phrases or sentences that you use or hear frequently that refer to truth.
b. Make a list of examples where misunderstanding, opposition, or conflict arise from different beliefs/understanding of what is the truth.

Bring those to our meeting June 3.

A "Types of Truth" worksheet is attached. It is divided into four sections. Try to place your "truth" phrases or sentences in one of the sections.

Our discussion will examine whether using these four categories help us better understand:

- how we use the idea of truth, and,
- what it is we mean when we use the term

Types of Truth

Revealed	Experienced	Shared	Tested

What is Truth?

Definition of truth (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Truth)

plural **truths** <u>play</u>\ˈtrüthz, ˈtrüths\

1. ***1a*** *archaic* **:** <u>fidelity</u>, <u>constancy</u>**b :** sincerity in action, character, and utterance

2. ***2a*** *(1)* **:** the state of being the case **:** <u>fact</u> *(2)* **:** the body of real things, events, and facts **:** <u>actuality</u> *(3) often capitalized* **:** a transcendent fundamental or spiritual reality ***b* :** a judgment, proposition, or idea that is true or accepted as true *<truths of thermodynamics>****c* :** the body of true statements and propositions

3. ***3a* :** the property (as of a statement) of being in accord with fact or reality ***b*** *chiefly British* **:** <u>true</u> *2c* **:** fidelity to an original or to a standard

Definition of Truth (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/truth)

Pronunciation: /tro͞oTH/

NOUN (plural truths /tro͞oTHz/ /tro͞oTHs/)

1The quality or state of being true: *he had to accept the truth of her* <u>*accusation*</u>

1.1(also **the truth**) That which is true or <u>in accordance with</u> fact or reality:*tell me the truthshe found out the truth about him*

1.2A fact or belief that is accepted as true: *the* <u>*emergence*</u> *of scientific truths*

Examples of truth in a sentence

1. At some point you have to face *the* simple *truth* that we failed.

2. Their explanation was simpler but came closer to *the truth*.

3. The article explains *the truth* about global warming.

4. A reporter soon discovered *the truth*.

5. Do you swear to tell *the whole truth* and nothing but *the truth*?

6. Her story contains *a grain of truth* but also lots of exaggeration.

Related Phrases

- bend the truth
- in truth
- nothing could be farther from the truth
- nothing could be further from the truth
- stretch the truth
- the gospel truth
- the naked truth
- the truth
- the truth of the matter
- to tell the truth

What is Truth?

Truism

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truism)

A **truism** is a claim that is so obvious or self-evident as to be hardly worth mentioning, except as a reminder or as a rhetorical or literary device, and is the opposite of falsism.[1]

The word may also be used with a different sense in rhetoric, to disguise the fact that a proposition is really just an opinion. Similarly, stating an accepted truth about life in general can also be called a truism.

Truthiness

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truthiness)

Stephen Colbert uses "Truthiness" on the debut episode of _The Colbert Report_.

Truthiness is a quality characterizing a "truth" that a person making an argument or assertion claims to know intuitively "from the gut" or because it "feels right" without regard to evidence, logic, intellectual examination, or facts.[1]

American television comedian Stephen Colbert coined the word in this meaning[2] as the subject of a segment called "The Wørd" during the pilot episode of his political satireprogram _The Colbert Report_ on October 17, 2005. By using this as part of his routine, Colbert satirized the misuse of appeal to emotion and "gut feeling" as a rhetorical device in contemporaneous socio-political discourse.[3]

Stereotype

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sterotype)

In social psychology, a **stereotype** is a thought that can be adopted about specific types of individuals or certain ways of doing things.[1] These thoughts or beliefs may or may not accurately reflect reality.[2][3]

Westerhoff, Jan. _Reality: A Very Short Introduction._ New York, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Five definitions of Reality (p. 34)

- That which appears to us [through our senses]
- What appears to most people
- What we don't make up
- What's there anyway
- The most fundamental building blocks of "the world"

Gaukroger, Stephen. _Objectivity: A Very Short Introduction._ New York, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Objectivity requires us to stand back from our perceptions, our beliefs and opinions, to reflect on them, and subject them to a particular kind of scrutiny and judgment. Above all, it requires a degree of indifference in judging that may conflict with our needs and desires. Yet objectivity has assumed an unassailable status. Values that have come to be associated with objectivity, such as impartiality and freedom from prejudice, now not only guide scientific enquiry, but have also been imported into moral and political realms. They are now regarded as underpinning notions of fairness and equality. (p. 1)

...judgment or theory should be (p. 10)

- Prejudice-free
- Assumption-free
- An accurate representation