

Gettier on the JTB theory

The JTB theory is an attempt to give an *analysis* of the concept of knowledge. It tries to “break the concept down” by giving *necessary and sufficient* conditions for knowledge.

JTB:

A person Q knows that P if and only if:

- 1) Q believes that P
- 2) Q is justified in believing that P
- 3) P is true

Let's first consider whether these are *necessary* conditions for knowledge

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A person Q knows that P if and only if:

- 1) Q believes that P
 - 2) Q is justified in believing that P
 - 3) P is true
-

First, let's remove (1). Can we imagine a case in which I know something without *believing* it?

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A person Q knows that P if and only if:

- 1) Q believes that P
 - 2) Q is justified in believing that P
 - 3) P is true
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Next, let's remove (2). Can I know something without being *justified* in believing it?

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A person Q knows that P if and only if:

- 1) Q believes that P
 - 2) Q is justified in believing that P
 - 3) P is true
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Finally, let's consider (3). Can I know something that isn't true?

It looks like the conditions above may well be *necessary* to constitute knowledge. But are they *sufficient*? Gettier doesn't think so, and he offers two examples to support his view.

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CASE 1: Jones and the job interview.

Gettier claims that Smith has a belief that is true and justified. He does not think, however, that we will intuitively grant that Smith *knows* that “the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.”

Intuition test 1: Does this case really satisfy the three JTB conditions?

Intuition test 2: Do we want to say that Smith knows that “the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket”?

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CASE 2: Smith and the unidentified car

Gettier claims that Smith has a belief that is true and justified. He does not think, however, that we will intuitively grant that Smith *knows* that “either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona”.

Intuition test 1: Does this case really satisfy the three JTB conditions?

Intuition test 2: Do we want to say that Smith knows that “either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona”.