

Plato's Ideal World



- Plato believed that there are perfect forms of “things” but these “things” are not visible. These “ideal” forms exist in their purist form possible and they are unchanging.
- Plato imagined that there exists an ideal or perfect world beyond our own physical earth. The idea is that our earth is full of imperfections which have been copied from the true ideal world which is beyond us. (Is he hinting at heaven?)
- Ex) Ideal circle = the perfect circle exists in a world outside our world of existence and it sets the model for all circles.

- Plato used the term “form” to indicate the essence of any particular object. He believed a form for every particular item exists. This world of perfect forms can only be reached through pure thought rather than the senses.
- He believed that an “ideal human being” also exists.
- The highest form is that of “goodness”. To reach this ultimate realization is only through pure thought.
- According to Plato, the goal is to look beyond the changing surface of things to see the unchanging and timeless essence of forms.

- Plato believed two distinct levels of reality existed: Realm of Opinion (visible world) and Realm of Knowledge (intelligible world)
- Theory of Forms deals with both metaphysics and epistemology.

	Metaphysics	Epistemology
Realm of Knowledge	Higher Forms, Very Broad, Ideal Perfect version of a very broad idea (Ex Beauty)	Intelligence – Dialectic (questions and answers) Rational Intuition through philosophical conversation Ultimately Knowledge of the Good
	Lower forms, very specific Perfect Version of a Specific Object (Ex. Circle)	Understanding Math, Science, Evidence Understanding, thinking and reasoning from premise to conclusion using math/science
Realm of Opinion	Visible Objects You see the actual objects but do not question the nature of the objects	Belief (authority) You believe what you have been told
	Shadows (refutes relativists) Reflection of objects Takes shadows at face value	Imagination (refutes skeptics) What you perceive the world to be

- Plato believed the best way to achieve happiness is to move up from the Realm of Opinion to Realm of Knowledge

