

The following **definitions** of some major “-ists” and “-isms” are from:

Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation, and from these three internet sites:

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txo/philterm.htm>

<http://www.creatorix.com.au/philosophy/t03/t03b.html>

<http://www.philosophypages.com/>

<http://www.saint-andre.com/ismbook/ism3.html> (The Ism Book)

Two words dealing with one’s attitude and perspective toward human existence:

worldview & weltanschauung

a comprehensive interpretation or image of the universe and humanity; German for a comprehensive and usually personal conception or view of humanity, the world, or life

What do these terms deal with; what pattern do you notice?

pessimist/pessimism

somebody who always expects the worst to happen in every situation

cynic/cynicism

somebody who believes that human actions are insincere and motivated by self-interest

skeptic/skepticism

1. an attitude marked by a tendency to doubt what others accept to be true
2. a doubting attitude toward religious beliefs
3. the doctrine that holds that true knowledge is not possible

realist/realism

somebody who is sensible, practical, and not concerned with abstract theories or idealistic views of life

idealist/idealism

1. somebody who rejects practical considerations in favor of the pursuit of perfection
2. somebody who aspires to or lives in accordance with high standards or principles
3. a type of philosophy in which Ideas are the basic or ultimate reality

optimist/optimism

1. the tendency to believe, expect, or hope that things will turn out well
2. the attitude of somebody who feels positive or confident

What do these terms deal with; what pattern do you notice?

theist/theism

belief that one God created and rules humans and the world, not necessarily accompanied by belief in divine revelation such as through the Bible; belief in the existence of a god or gods

deist/deism

a belief in God based on reason rather than revelation, and involving the view that God has set the universe in motion but does not interfere with how it runs.

agnostic/agnosticism

somebody who believes that it is impossible to know whether or not God exists

atheist/atheism

somebody who does not believe in God or deities

What do these terms deal with; what pattern do you notice?

nihilist/nihilism

1. the general rejection of established social conventions and beliefs, especially of morality and religion
2. a belief that life is pointless and human values are worthless
3. the belief that there is no objective basis for truth
4. the belief that all established authority is corrupt and must be destroyed in order to rebuild a just society

relativist/relativism

the belief that concepts such as right and wrong, goodness and badness, or truth and falsehood are not absolute but change from culture to culture and situation to situation

solipsist/solipsism

the belief that the only thing somebody can be sure of is that he or she exists, and that true knowledge of anything else is impossible

hedonist/hedonism

1. a devotion, especially a self-indulgent one, to pleasure and happiness as a way of life
2. a philosophical doctrine that holds that pleasure is the highest good or the source of moral values

objectivist/objectivism

a philosophical belief that moral truths or external objects exist independently of the individual mind or perception

absolutist/absolutism

a philosophical theory in which values such as truth or morality are absolute and not conditional upon human perception

What do these terms deal with; what pattern do you notice?

materialist/materialism

the theory that physical matter is the only reality and that psychological states such as emotions, reason, thought, and desire will eventually be explained as physical functions

empiricist/empiricism

the philosophical belief that all knowledge is derived from experience and not from reason

positivist/positivism

the theory that knowledge can be acquired only through direct observation and experimentation rather than through metaphysics and theology

pragmatist/pragmatism

1. a straightforward practical way of thinking about things or dealing with problems, concerned with results rather than with theories and principles
2. a philosophical view that a theory or concept should be evaluated in terms of how it works and its consequences as the standard for action and thought.

utilitarian/utilitarianism

the ethical doctrine that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the criterion of the virtue of action

existentialist/existentialism

1. concerned with or relating to existence, especially human existence
2. in the context of existentialism, involved in or vital to the shaping of an individual's self-chosen mode of existence and moral stance with respect to the rest of the world
3. a 20th-century philosophical movement that denies that the universe has any intrinsic meaning or purpose and requires individuals to take responsibility for their own actions and shape their own destinies

What do these terms deal with; what pattern do you notice?

determinist/determinism

the doctrine or belief that everything, including every human act, is caused by something and that there is no real free will

fatalist/fatalism

the philosophical doctrine holding that all events are fated to happen and that human beings cannot therefore change their destinies

stoic/Stoicism

somebody who appears unaffected by emotions, especially somebody admired for showing patience and endurance in the face of adversity; an ancient Greek school of philosophy that asserted that happiness can only be achieved by accepting life's ups and downs as the products of unalterable destiny.