==Study Guide:== Introduction to Metaphysics/ Russell's Appearance and Reality

1. **Basic Metaphysical Properties**

- **==Objects/Properties:==**
  What are things? What defines an object and its properties?
- **==Cause:==**
  How can one thing bring about another? What is causation?
- **==Change:==**
  When can we say something has truly changed? What are the criteria for identifying change?
- **==Time:==**
  Do causes happen in one place and/or in a moment, or do they stretch over time and space? How are events connected in time?
- **==Being:==**
  Can things have ideas? If so, what are ideas? What qualifies as something capable of holding ideas?
- **==Language and Meaning:==**
  What do ideas mean? Can they change depending on how we talk about them? How does language influence our understanding?

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2. Primary and Secondary

- **==Subjective:==**
  - Describes things as they appear from you or someone's personal point of view.
  - Introduces bias
  - **==Example:==** Your feelings or experiences, which others can't see or know.
- **==Objective:==**
  - Describes things as they are, independent of personal feelings or perspectives.
  - Is supposed to be unbiased
  - **==Example:==** The height of a building.

Primary vs. Secondary Properties

- **Primary Properties:**
  - ==Objective qualities of an object==, independent of the observer (e.g., size, shape, motion, spatial extension).
  - Example: A table's rectangular shape can be measured.

- **Secondary Properties:**
  - ==Subjective qualities of an object==, dependent on the observer (e.g., color, taste, smell).
  - Example: An apple's redness exists in the mind as mental experience.

2. **Bertrand Russell's** *Appearance and Reality*

- **Key Ideas:**
    - To do philosophy, one must not be <u>dogmatic</u> and should question all knowledge.
    - Knowledge begins with present experiences, but immediate observations can be misleading. According to Russell, our first impressions of any observation is likely to be wrong.
    - The essay you read contains several arguments defending that our first impression from sense is mistaken. These are shown below:

- **Core Issues with Perception:**

    - **Color**: the table appears to have different colors based on lighting and perspective, showing contradictions in sensory observation. Think of how we walked around the classroom and saw the reflection of light change on the gray desk.
        - The contradiction then becomes, is the desk dark grey or light grey?
    - **Shape:** a rectangular table appears to change shape depending on the angle of view, leading to discrepancies between "real" shape and perceived shape.
        - The contradiction then becomes, is the desk square or not square?
    - **Texture:** smoothness seen by the naked eye contrasts with roughness observed under a microscope. Trusting the microscope also raises questions, as a more powerful one could change our knowledge over and over again.
        - The contradiction then becomes, is the desk smooth or is it rough?

Take-aways

- Our senses don't always agree with an object's true properties.
- What we think is "real" is often based on appearances that change, not on what we directly perceive. How we define reality should not change.
- Russell encourages us to question whether objects are truly real if our senses can't fully agree on them.

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4. Realism vs. Nominalism (From the Homework)

What is a Universal Property? A universal is a quality or characteristic that many things can share. It's like a common feature that helps us group things together.

The debate around this is whether universals exist in actual things (*Realist*), or their made-up ideas used to make sense of the world (*Nominalist*).

- **Realism:**
    - Universal properties (e.g., redness, roundness) exist independently of our perception.
    - Universals are real and not merely concepts or words—it exists in the actual thing!
    - **Example:** Properties like the roundness of an object is a real thing in an object and could exist even without humans existing. Even if humans didn't exist, a circular object's property of roundness would still be real.
- **Nominalism:**
    - Universals are not real; they are just names or labels for groups of similar things.
    - **Example:** A strawberry, a stop sign, and a fire truck are all called "red," but "red" is just a label we use to describe them, not something that exists by itself.