




 <b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>
 <b>LESSON TOPIC</b>	Rene Descartes – Meditations on First Philosophy - Rationalism/Doubt and scepticism
 <b>GRADE</b>	15-18 years old
 <b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Students will learn about the life and times of philosopher Rene Descartes and will be introduced to the notion of Rationalism and the First Meditation from his famous publication “Meditations on First Philosophy”, subtitled “What can be called into doubt”</p> <p><b>Students will be able to/it will help students to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify relevant information about the philosopher Rene Descartes.</li> <li>• Understand the notion of Rationalism.</li> <li>• Explain the principles of the first meditation – doubt and scepticism/Dream Argument/Evil Demon Argument</li> </ul>
 <b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	Lesson: 60 minutes
 <b>PREPARATION</b>	30 Minutes

**MATERIALS**

Interactive board

- Device with Internet connection for each student
- Account with [Insert Learning](#)
- Account with [Quizalize](#)
- Handout
- Quiz
- Resources:
  - [First Meditation Text](#)
  - [Philosophy: Rene Descartes](#)
  - [First Meditation 10 Key points](#)

**TECHNIQUES**

- General Discussion with students.
- With the computer – interactive videos and online quiz.

**FORM OF WORK**

- Group activity



## LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW

### Preparation:

- Gather relevant information about the lesson topic.
- Set up instructional Videos and insights in text with [Insert Learning](#) (see explanatory tool sheet n°14)
- Prepare Quiz with [Quizalize](#). (see explanatory tool sheet n°21)
- Prepare Handout for homework.

### Introduction:

- René Descartes was a French mathematician, natural scientist, and philosopher best remembered for coining the phrase ‘Cogito, ergo sum’ (‘I think, therefore I am’). He wrote in physiology, cosmology, coordinate geometry, and optics, but he is best known as the ‘father of modern philosophy’. His *Meditations* would change philosophical thought and introduce a new school of thought: rationalism. His *Discourse* laid the foundation for both his epistemology and metaphysics. Rationalists believe that reason should be used to learn about the world rather than relying on the falsity of the senses.
- Discussion about the life of Rene Descartes, his school of thought and his famous publications.

### Implementation

Write on the board the following phrase: “If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things” and ask students what they think about it and if they have heard it before.

- Load up the text with interactive videos and discussion questions you have prepared on Insert Learning and have students watch the instructional video about Rene Descartes.
- Start a discussion with students about what they have learned in the video.
- Explain key notions such as Rationalism, doubt and scepticism and the process to seek universal truths as described by Descartes in the first meditation “What can be called into doubt”
- Have students watch the instructional video about the First Meditation.
- Pause video at 2.43 – Engage students in discussion about the senses and perception.

Paragraph 6 – Discussion question - Can we fully trust our senses?

- Pause video at 3.17 – Engage students in discussion and explain the Dream Argument.

Paragraph 6 – Discussion question- How can we be certain that dreams are not real?

- Pause video at 4.49 – Engage students in discussion about the Evil Demon Argument.

Paragraph 8 – Discussion question: Is it possible that we are all deceived by an Evil Demon?

### Summary:

- Summarize the contents of the lesson.
- Ask students how they feel about Descartes’ method of seeking the truth.
- Is Descartes right about setting aside his false beliefs in order to seek the truth?
- Take questions/concerns from students.
- Have students complete the quiz you have prepared on Quizalize.
- Provide feedback and clear out any misconceptions.

**Homework:**

Distinguishing between dreaming experience and waking experience (Handout)

In meditation 1, Descartes concludes that “there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep.

- Identify at least 5 differences between dreaming experience and waking experience.
- Can any of these differences be used to prove that you are not now dreaming?

Students complete the handout at home and discuss their answers during the next lesson.