

Essay Guideline: Berkeley on Unperceived Objects

Essay Question: Present, explain, and evaluate Berkeley's arguments that unperceived physical objects cannot exist.

Before beginning this essay assignment, be sure you read the section of the Berkeley chapter on unperceived objects.

Outline

- I. Explain the role of Berkeley's arguments about unperceived objects in his idealism.
 1. Berkeley's idealism states that a physical object is *not* a lump of matter. Instead, physical objects are clusters of ideas in the mind.
 2. The arguments for the impossibility of unperceived objects are used to support Berkeley's idealism and undermine views (such as Locke's) that regard physical objects as external, independent lumps of matter.
- II. The argument regarding an object being the sum of its properties.
 1. Present and explain the argument.
 2. Evaluate the argument: It is circular. (Explain this.)
- III. The argument regarding the impossibility of imagining an unperceived object.
 1. Present and explain the argument.
 2. Evaluate the argument: False assumption about possibility. (Explain this.)
- IV. Conclusion: Berkeley has not established his claim that it is impossible for objects to exist unperceived.