

How to live like a Sceptic: Ten maxims

1. The goal of the sceptic is freedom from disturbance with respect to matters of belief, and also moderate states with respect to things that are matters of compulsion. (1.25)
2. People are disturbed [with respect to matters of belief] because of the inconsistency in things, and being doubtful which of the alternatives they should assent, they come to inquire into what is true and what is false in things. (1.12)
3. [However], for every argument another argument of equal weight is opposed. (1.12)
4. The sceptical ability is the ability to set in opposition appearances and ideas in any manner whatsoever, the result of which is that, because of the equal force of the opposed objects and arguments, final suspension of judgement is achieved. (1.8)
5. Being in this suspensive state, freedom from disturbance follows fortuitously, as a shadow follows a body. (1.29)
6. Suspension of judgement comes about through the opposition of things. We oppose appearances to appearances, or ideas to ideas, or [appearances to ideas or ideas to appearances] ... [or] things present to things past or future. (1.31, 1.33)
7. The sceptic is troubled [only] by things that are matters of compulsion. But even in these cases, whereas ordinary people are distressed by two circumstances – by the states themselves and by the belief that the circumstances [under which the states are experienced] are bad by nature – the sceptic, by rejecting the additional belief that each of these is not only bad but bad by nature, will escape with more moderate states. (1.29–30)
8. Appearance is the criterion [for action] of the sceptical approach. Attending to appearance we live undogmatically according to the rules of everyday conduct. (1.21–22)
9. The rules of everyday conduct are divided into four parts: (1.23–24)
 - the guidance given by nature, according to which we can naturally perceive and think;
 - compulsion exercised by our states, according to which hunger leads us to food and thirst to drink;
 - traditional laws and customs, according to which we accept pious living as good and improper living as bad;
 - the teaching of the crafts, according to which we are not inactive in the crafts we adopt
10. We say all these things undogmatically. (1.24)

*All references are to Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*