

## **Philosophy Paper 101: History of Philosophy from Descartes to Kant**

### *4. Locke and Berkeley on Ideas and Abstraction*

What does Locke mean by an “idea”, and what is his view about the origin of ideas, and their main categories (e.g. depending on their source and their complexity)? Outline his theory of “abstract ideas”, and the problem(s) it is intended to solve. How successful is Berkeley’s attack on Locke’s theory of abstraction, and why is this important to Berkeley’s philosophy?

### **READING**

John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (any reasonable edition will do, but best is the Clarendon edition by P. H. Nidditch, Oxford University Press, 1975), I i, I ii 1, II i 1-5, II ii, II xi (especially 9-11), II xiii 11-13 (on “partial consideration”), III i-iii.

George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* (any reasonable edition will do, but best is the Oxford Philosophical Texts edition by Jonathan Dancy, Oxford University Press, 1998), Introduction (especially §§6-25).

E. J. Lowe, *Locke on Human Understanding* (Routledge, 1995), chapters 2 and 7

Jonathan Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 1987), chapters 1-3

Michael Ayers, *Locke, Volume 1: Epistemology* (Routledge, 1991), chapters 27 and 28

J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (Oxford University Press, 1976), chapter 4

Jonathan Bennett, *Learning from Six Philosophers*, volume 2 (Oxford University Press, 2001), chapters 21-2

Jonathan Dancy, Introduction to his edition of Berkeley’s *Principles* (above), §7 and §8.

Robert J. Fogelin, *Berkeley and the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Routledge, 2001), chapter 8

G. Pitcher, *Berkeley* (Routledge, 1977), chapter 5