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Q4

The doubter is a true man of Science.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- **Stake:** doubt is method, not cynicism
- **One stand:** a true scientific mind tests the claim, including its own
- Move through lab, citizen, state, digital rumour. Keep one honest counter
- Close on organised scepticism, not insult

Revision summary

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with a PHC label. Stand:** doubt is method, not a sneer.
- **Headings:** self, lab, society, state, digital, then one counter.

Earn **Feynman** or **Popper** once. Peg a trial or CAG, not a dump.

Close on provisional action.

Note

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

Anecdote

A compounder in a PHC is told a syrup is "as good as the costly one". He keeps both bottles and reads the insert. The senior is annoyed. The patient lives. The doubter here is not an enemy of science. He is doing it with a torch and a label.

One stand

Science is not a priesthood of certainty. It is a habit of checking - including the file we wrote ourselves. Write to separate honest doubt from the sneer that nothing can be known.

Heading map**What the line is asking**

- **Doubter:** one who asks for evidence, replication, a second instrument.
- **True man of Science:** method, not a white coat. Women of science included - do not freeze the wording into a boys' club; note it once.
- **Cousin:** **Popper** - a claim that cannot be risked is not science.

Self

- We doubt the other side's numbers and bless our own. That is colour, not science.
- A student who only memorizes a key is not a doubter; she is a passenger.

Lab and public reason

- **Clinical trial, monsoon model, a failed rocket:** error as data.
- **Peg:** vaccine science in COVID - doubt the rumour, not the method; still audit adverse events.

Society

- **Superstition and miracle-cures:** doubt as public health.
- **Also:** doubt the advertisement in the lab coat.

State

- **CAG, EIA public hearing, an independent statistician:** doubt built into offices.
- A government that calls every question "anti-national" has left science.

Digital

- A forwarded "study" without a journal is not doubt; it is mud.
- Fact-check is slow science in a fast pond.

The counter

Endless doubt can be a tactic to delay a carbon rule or a vaccine. Industry manufactures uncertainty. The scientific doubter settles provisionally and acts. The cynic never leaves the armchair.

Last paragraph

- **Close:** keep the second bottle and the second instrument. Feynman's "first, do not fool yourself" is the ethic. Expand each heading - this is only the map.

Facts & figures

Feynman

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself - and you are the easiest person to fool.

Popper

A scientific claim must risk being wrong. Use once; do not lecture the paper.

Clinical trial / CDSCO

Doubt as protocol: control, consent, adverse-event reporting.

CAG / statistics

Independent numbers - doubt built into the republic's offices.

Art. 19 / 21

Speech to question a project; life to demand a safe drug - rights that protect the doubter.