

Circumstantial (Indirect) and Direct Evidence / Dogmatism vs Skepticism

Post by "Cassius" of March 6, 2026 at 8:07 AM

In the podcast we will eventually address this issue of "when is it appropriate to say that we know something" by covering Philodemus' "On Signs / On Methods of Inference." We've also already covered these issues in past discussions of Lucretius Book 4 as to the possibility of knowledge and in discussions of [Principal Doctrines](#) 23 and 24.

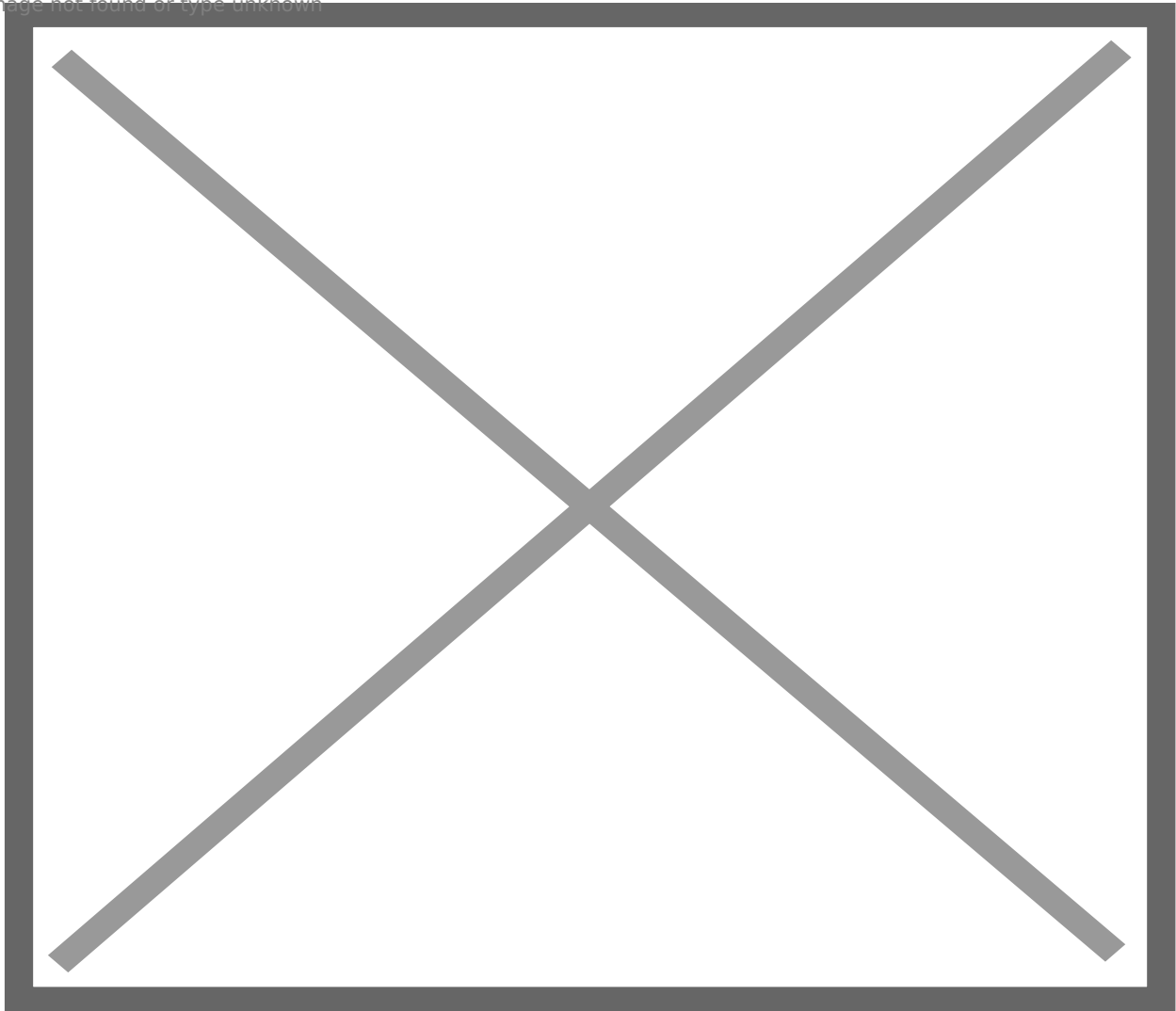
The Lucretius material is most focused starting around Book 4 line 462 -

Again, if any one thinks that nothing is known, he knows not whether that can be known either, since he admits that he knows nothing. Against him then I will refrain from joining issue, who plants himself with his head in the place of his feet. And yet were I to grant that he knows this too, yet I would ask this one question; since he has never before seen any truth in things, whence does he know what is knowing, and not knowing each in turn, what thing has begotten the concept of the true and the false, what thing has proved that the doubtful differs from the certain?

but for many lines before and after that the topic is the same -- we understand that illusions can occur but nevertheless we learn to use the senses properly and we still reach firm conclusions after we process multiple observations.

The words 'conclusive' and "conclusion" are key. Socrates alleged that he did not conclude anything except that he could not conclude anything. This conclusion is self-contradictory BS and Epicurus concludes firmly that it must be rejected. In doing so, Epicurus is illustrating that conclusions are possible even though we are not omniscient.

Image not found or type unknown



[EpicureanFriends Side-By-Side Lucretius](#)

Multi-column side-by-side Lucretius text comparison tool featuring Munro, Bailey, Dunster, and Condensed editions.

handbook.epicureanfriends.com