

# Glossary - What is the Epicurean Definition of "Pleasure?"

Post by "Cassius" of January 19, 2020 at 6:38 AM

## [Quote from elli](#)

Socrates. Pleasure is the last and lowest of goods, and not first, even if asserted to be so by all the animals in the world. And, according to the judgment which has now been given, pleasure will rank fifth.

Protarchus. True.

Socrates But not first; no, not even if all the oxen and horses and animals in the world by their pursuit of enjoyment proclaim her to be so;—although the many trusting in them, as diviners trust in birds, determine that pleasures make up the good of life, and deem the lusts of animals to be better witnesses than the inspirations of divine philosophy.

People who are new to the study and haven't read [Philebus](#) may be tempted to skip over the Torquatus statement where Epicurus grounded his proof that pleasure is good by observation of the animals. But if you skip over the background you'll never understand why Epicurus says what he says in places like the letter to Menoecus, where he repeats the conclusion that pleasure is the goal, but omits this fundamental proof that allowed him to reach the conclusion. The letter to Menoecus is necessarily truncated so that it can be a summary, but if you take it out of context you can easily misunderstand key aspects of Epicurean philosophy.

## [Quote from elli](#)

, but why ? Because he was "anerastos" (keep in mind this tiny greek word) which means he was never capable to love anyone and to be loved by anyone in the reality of life.

Elli are you referring to Plato or to Protarchus? And is this statement your suspicion, or are you referring to facts in the record that attest to this being the case (that he was loveless)?