

Spinoza—Glossary

essence: “what” a thing is, the *nature* of a thing, or (when expressed in words) the definition of a thing

existence: the fact that a thing is without regard to what it is

***in:** to be logically dependent on (e.g., to be “in itself” means that a thing is independent, to be “in something else” means that it is dependent on that other thing)

***substance:** that which exists independent of anything else, that which is “in itself”

***attribute:** that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance

***God:** an absolutely infinite being; all being, all reality, in all its aspects and in all its infinite richness (not a person)

***mode:** that which is “in” something else, that which is dependent on something else for its existence

***affection:** the form taken on by some thing, a state of that thing (*not* love or liking)

nature: (1) the essence of thing, or (2) the whole of reality or God

cause: the logical ground from which a consequent follows

idea: an *act* of thought, a judgment or proposition

free: that which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature and is determined to action by itself alone

determined: that which is necessary, not free, conditioned or decided or caused by external forces or circumstances

virtue: power (as in “by virtue of . . .”)

***imagine:** to contemplate a thing as presented by sense-perception or as represented by memory or fantasy; (imagination is opposed to intellect as image is opposed to idea)

emotions: the affections of the body by which the body’s power of activity is increased or decreased

***pleasure:** the felt experience of an increase of power

***pain:** the felt experience of a decrease of power

self-caused: that whose essence involves existence, that which cannot *not* exist

finite: that which is limited by another thing of the same nature

***body:** a mode that expresses in a definite and determinate way an aspect of God’s essence as an extended thing

***adequate idea:** an idea whose entire essence is manifest

***inadequate idea:** a partial, incomplete or confused idea

active: when an effect follows from us in such a way that it can be accounted for entirely in terms of our own nature or essence

passive: when something takes place in us, or follows from our nature, of which we are only the partial cause

good: that which we know to be useful to us

bad: that which we know to be an obstacle to our attainment of some good

contingent: nothing necessarily posits the existence of something or necessarily excludes it (i.e., it may or may not be)

* If a term has a star next to it, pay *special* attention to memorizing its definition!