

# Karl Popper Quotes

*Science, Men, Theory, Ideas, Thinking, Mistake, Knowledge, Criticism, Attitude,  
May, People, Ignorance, Mean, Believe, Tolerance, Dream, Simple, Philosophy,  
Problem, Freedom*

True ignorance is not the absence of knowledge, but the refusal to acquire it.

~Karl Popper

Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve.

~Karl Popper

The growth of knowledge depends entirely upon disagreement.

~Karl Popper

No rational argument will have a rational effect on a man who does not want to adopt a rational attitude.

~Karl Popper

In so far as a scientific statement speaks about reality, it must be falsifiable; and in so far as it is not falsifiable, it does not speak about reality.

~Karl Popper

The question is not how to get good people to rule; **THE QUESTION IS: HOW TO STOP THE POWERFUL** from doing as much damage as they can to us.

~Karl Popper

If you can't say it simply and clearly, keep quiet, and keep working on it till you can.

~Karl Popper

The best thing that can happen to a human being is to find a problem, to fall in love with that problem, and to live trying to solve that problem, unless another problem even more lovable appears.

~Karl Popper

Ignorance is not a simple lack of knowledge but an active aversion to knowledge, the refusal to know, issuing from cowardice, pride, or laziness of mind.

~Karl Popper

A theory which is not refutable by any conceivable event is non-scientific. Irrefutability is not a virtue of a theory (as people often think) but a vice.

~Karl Popper

I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth

~Karl Popper

The attempt to make heaven on earth invariably produces hell.

~Karl Popper

Evolution is not a fact. Evolution doesn't even qualify as a theory or as a hypothesis. It is a metaphysical research program, and it is not really testable science.

~Karl Popper

Those who promise us paradise on earth never produced anything but a hell.

~Karl Popper

It is the rule which says that the other rules of scientific procedure must be designed in such a way that they do not protect any statement in science against falsification.

~Karl Popper

The only way to test a hypothesis is to look for all the information that disagrees with it.

~Karl Popper

In my view, aiming at simplicity and lucidity is a moral duty of all intellectuals: lack of clarity is a sin, and pretentiousness is a crime.

~Karl Popper

We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant.

~Karl Popper

It is not his possession of knowledge, of irrefutable truth, that makes the man of science, but his persistent and recklessly critical quest for truth.

~Karl Popper

no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white.

~Karl Popper

It is not possible to write clearly enough to avoid being misrepresented by people who are sufficiently determined to do so.

~Karl Popper

The difference between the amoeba and Einstein is that, although both make use of the method of trial and error elimination, the amoeba dislikes erring while Einstein is intrigued by it.

~Karl Popper

It is impossible to speak in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood.

~Karl Popper

If you know that things are bound to happen whatever you do, then you may feel free to give up the fight against them.

~Karl Popper

Whenever we propose a solution to a problem, we ought to try as hard

as we can to overthrow our solution, rather than defend it.

~Karl Popper

We do not know. We can only guess.

~Karl Popper

. . . it seems to me certain that more people are killed out of righteous stupidity than out of wickedness.

~Karl Popper

Every solution of a problem raises new unsolved problems.

~Karl Popper

If we wish our civilization to survive we must break with the habit of deference to great men.

~Karl Popper

Science is perhaps the only human activity in which errors are systematically criticized and, in time, corrected.

~Karl Popper

It can't happen here is always wrong: a dictatorship can happen anywhere.

~Karl Popper

There is no pure, disinterested, theory-free observation.

~Karl Popper

We are social creatures to the inmost centre of our being. The notion that one can begin anything at all from scratch, free from the past, or unindebted to others, could not conceivably be more wrong.

~Karl Popper

The more we learn about the world, and the deeper our learning, the

more conscious, specific, and articulate will be our knowledge of what we do not know, our knowledge of our ignorance

~Karl Popper

Our aim must be to make our successive mistakes as quickly as possible. To speed up evolution.

~Karl Popper

I personally call the type of government which can be removed without violence 'democracy,' and the other, 'tyranny.'

~Karl Popper

The survival value of intelligence is that it allows us to extinct a bad idea, before the idea extincts us.

~Karl Popper

The open society is one in which men have learned to be to some extent critical of taboos, and to base decisions on the authority of their own intelligence.

~Karl Popper

I have come to the conclusion that Darwinism is not a testable scientific theory, but a metaphysical research programme.

~Karl Popper

While differing widely in the various little bits we know, in our infinite ignorance we are all equal.

~Karl Popper

It is wrong to ask who will rule. The ability to vote a bad government out of office is enough. That is democracy.

~Karl Popper

It is wrong to think that belief in freedom always leads to victory; we

must always be prepared for it to lead to defeat. If we choose freedom, then we must be prepared to perish along with it.

~Karl Popper

Science must begin with myths, and with the criticism of myths.

~Karl Popper

There is no history, only histories.

~Karl Popper

All life is problem solving

~Karl Popper

We have become makers of our fate when we have ceased to pose as its prophets.

~Karl Popper

Science may be described as the art of systematic over-simplification.

~Karl Popper

A theory that explains everything, explains nothing

~Karl Popper

Our knowledge can only be finite, while our ignorance must necessarily be infinite.

~Karl Popper

We never know what we are talking about.

~Karl Popper

A theory is just a mathematical model to describe the observations.

~Karl Popper

All we can do is search for the falsity content in our best theory.

~Karl Popper

We must plan for freedom, and not only for security, if for no other reason than only freedom can make security more secure.

~Karl Popper

It is complete nihilism to propose laying down arms in a world where atom bombs are around. It is very simple: there is no way of achieving peace other than with weapons.

~Karl Popper

The quest for precision is analogous to the quest for certainty and both - precision and certainty are impossible to attain.

~Karl Popper

You cannot have a rational discussion with a man who prefers shooting you to being convinced by you.

~Karl Popper

I have spoken to Einstein and he admitted to me that his theory was in fact no different from the one of Parmenides.

~Karl Popper

I have learned more from Hayek than from any other living thinker, except perhaps Alfred Tarski - but not even excepting Russell.

~Karl Popper

The conspiracy theory of society... comes from abandoning god and then asking: "Who is in his place"

~Karl Popper

I am opposed to looking upon logic as a kind of game. ... One might think that it is a matter of choice or convention which logic one adopts. I disagree with this view.



~Karl Popper

The moral decisions of others should be treated with respect, as long as such decisions do not conflict with the principle of tolerance.

~Karl Popper

Plato felt that a complete reconstruction of society's political program was needed.

~Karl Popper

All things living are in search of a better world .

~Karl Popper

Simple statements are to be prized more highly than less simple ones because they tell us more; because their empirical content is greater; and because they are better testable.

~Karl Popper

There is no history of mankind, there are only many histories of all kinds of aspects of human life. And one of these is the history of political power. This is elevated into the history of the world.

~Karl Popper

No number of sightings of white swans can prove the theory that all swans are white. The sighting of just one black one may disprove it.

~Karl Popper

Piecemeal social engineering resembles physical engineering in regarding the ends as beyond the province of technology.

~Karl Popper

Every genuine test of a theory is an attempt to falsify it, or to refute it.

~Karl Popper

We hate the very idea that our own ideas may be mistaken, so we cling dogmatically to our conjectures.

~Karl Popper

The future is always present, as a promise, a lure and a temptation.

~Karl Popper

Better our hypotheses die for our errors than ourselves.

~Karl Popper

It is part of my thesis that all our knowledge grows only through the correcting of our mistakes.

~Karl Popper

The defence of democracy must consist in making anti-democratic experiences too costly for those who try them; much more costly than a democratic compromise

~Karl Popper

If we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.

~Karl Popper

No book can ever be finished. While working on it we learn just enough to find it immature the moment we turn away from it

~Karl Popper

The history of science, like the history of all human ideas, is a history of irresponsible dreams, of obstinacy, and of error.

~Karl Popper

Definitions.... are never really needed, and rarely of any use

~Karl Popper

It must be possible for an empirical system to be refuted by experience.

~Karl Popper

Now this principle of induction cannot be a purely logical truth like a tautology or an analytic statement. . . .

~Karl Popper

Good tests kill flawed theories; we remain alive to guess again.

~Karl Popper

The initial stage, the act of conceiving or inventing a theory, seems to me neither to call for logical analysis nor to be susceptible of it.

~Karl Popper

Contrary to the outstanding work of art, outstanding theory is susceptible to improvements.

~Karl Popper

There is no history of mankind, there is only an indefinite number of histories of all kinds of aspects of human life.

~Karl Popper

Every discovery contains an irrational element or a creative intuition.

~Karl Popper

What really makes science grow is new ideas, including false ideas.

~Karl Popper

Historically speaking all - or very nearly all - scientific theories originate from myths.

~Karl Popper

The scientific tradition is distinguished from the pre-scientific tradition

by having two layers. Like the latter, it passes on its theories; but it also passes on a critical attitude towards them.

~Karl Popper

Reason like science, grows by way of mutual criticism; the only possible way of planning its growth is to develop those institutions that safeguard the freedom of thought

~Karl Popper

Our belief in any particular natural law cannot have a safer basis than our unsuccessful critical attempts to refute it.

~Karl Popper

Genuine philosophical problems are always rooted outside philosophy and they die if these roots decay.

~Karl Popper

Criticism of my alleged views was widespread and highly successful. I have yet to meet a criticism of my views.

~Karl Popper

The history of science is everywhere speculative. It is a marvelous history. It makes you proud to be a human being.

~Karl Popper

No particular theory may ever be regarded as absolutely certain.... No scientific theory is sacrosanct.

~Karl Popper

[To] interpret Parmenides as a Kant before Kant ... this is exactly what we must do.

~Karl Popper

Serious rational criticism is so rare that it should be encouraged. Being

too ready to defend oneself is more dangerous than being too ready to admit a mistake.

~Karl Popper

The influence (for good or ill) of Plato's work is immeasurable. Western thought, one might say, has been Platonic or anti-Platonic, but hardly ever non-Platonic.

~Karl Popper

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