

A. Reading for 2/2

1. The Kant reading comes from pp. 15-26 of the abridged edition. If you are using a full edition of *CPR*, here are the marginal page references:

Introduction to the 2nd Edition, *CPR*: B1 and the top of B2. And one paragraph on B3 (“In what follows, therefore, we shall mean by a priori...”)

On the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, A6/B10 and following.

All theoretical sciences of reason contain synthetic a priori judgments as principles, B14-B18.

The general problem of pure reason B19-B24

The idea and division of a special science under the name, critique of pure reason, B24-25 and the ending paragraph on B29-30.

Section 1 of the Transcendental Aesthetic, B33 - 36.

2. From Wood, read 24-32.

B. Some comments to go with the reading

How can Kant say that all “cognition” (thinking that produces knowledge or understanding) begins with experience and then later claim that we have lots of a priori cognitions? Hint: he’s not contradicting himself.

Kant makes the analytic/synthetic distinction as though all judgments are expressed in affirmative subject/predicate sentences. He’s wrong. He forgot that even in his limited view of logic, not all sentences are affirmative and not all are of subject/predicate form. So, get the main idea he’s after, and then we’ll try to figure out how to extend it to other types of sentences. (For example, should a sentence of the form “If A then A” be analytic or synthetic? How do you tell?)

On B17-18 Kant identifies some key claims from the natural sciences which he describes as being both synthetic and a priori. Why are these synthetic? (If you can answer that, you probably are understanding his idea of what is synthetic.) Why are they a priori? (This is controversial.)

We probably think of pure mathematics as being entirely analytic. Kant claims it's almost all synthetic. The only thing that makes this important is that it might show that he had a different idea of what kinds of things are synthetic than we might have guessed he had. Or, maybe it shows something else. Probably it doesn't matter much. This is something to keep an eye out for later on. I think it probably will turn out that we will forget about this problem.

Wood explains to some extent what he thinks Kant means by "intuition". This may help with some of the later parts of the reading.