

In the same way I thought that the sciences contained in books (some of them at least as are made up of probable reasonings, without demonstrations) composed as they are of the opinions of many different individuals massed together, are farther removed from truth than the simple inference which a man of good sense using his natural and unprejudiced judgment draws respecting the matters of his experience.

I believed that the four [precepts of Logic] following would prove perfectly sufficient for me, provided I took the firm and unwavering resolution never in a single instance to fail in observing them.

The *first* was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such ...

The *second*, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.

The *third*, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex ...

And the *last*, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted.

Source: Rene Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting the Reason and seeking Truth in the Sciences*, 1637