I. Skeptical argument (SA)
Let \( o \) be some ordinary proposition about the external world, and let \( h \) be a proposition describing some skeptical hypothesis.

1. I know that \( o \) only if I know that \( \neg h \). \( \text{K}o \rightarrow \text{K}\neg h \)
2. I don’t know that \( \neg h \). \( \neg \text{K}\neg h \)
3. So I don’t know that \( o \). \( \therefore \neg \text{K}o \)

II. Sensitivity theories
A. Crucial idea: \( S \) knows that \( p \) only if, had \( p \) been false, \( S \) would not believe that \( p \).
   1. More fancifully: \( S \) knows that \( p \) only if: In the closest possible world where \( p \) is false, \( S \) does not believe that \( p \).
   2. Brief excursus on possible worlds.
B. Implications for SA: This allows sensitivity theorists to deny that the first premise of SA.
   1. If I know that I have hands, then my beliefs are sensitive to scenarios in which I would not have hands.
   2. However, I might not be sensitive to cases in which I’m a brain in a vat, dreaming, etc.
   3. So, I can know ordinary propositions even if I don’t know that skeptical hypotheses are false, i.e. It’s not the case that \( \text{K}o \rightarrow \text{K}\neg h \).
   4. So, if sensitivity theorists are correct, then the 1st premise of SA fails.
C. Problems for Sensitivity Theories
   1. Abominable conjunctions objection
      a. If the sensitivity theory is true, then I know that I have two hands, but I don’t know that I’m not a handless brain in a vat.
      b. However, it seems that absurd that I can know both that I have two hands while not knowing that I’m not a handless brain in a vat.
      c. So the sensitivity theory is not true.
   2. Inductive knowledge objection
      a. If \( S \) has inductive knowledge of \( p \), then \( S \)’s reasons for \( p \) make it highly probable (but not necessary) that \( p \).
         i. Most of our knowledge is inductive.
      b. However, if it is not necessary that \( p \), then there will be nearby possible worlds in which \( p \) is false, but \( S \) still believes that \( p \).
      c. So, if \( S \) has inductive knowledge of \( p \), then \( S \)’s belief need not be sensitive.

III. Contextualism
1. Crucial idea: knowledge-attribution varies by context.
   a. SA is correct in skeptical contexts, where standards of ‘knowledge’ are high.
   b. SA is incorrect in ordinary contexts, where standards are lower.
2. Attractions
   a. Explains why skeptical arguments are so convincing when we engage them, but ineffectual when we stop philosophizing.
   b. No need to deny closure.
3. Problem: concedes too much to the skeptic.

IV. Neo-Moorean Responses to Skepticism
A. Crucial Idea: \( S \) knows that \( p \) if and only if:
   1. Virtue Requirement: \( S \)’s belief is the result of \( S \)’s reliable cognitive abilities; and
   2. Safety Requirement: \( S \) would believe that \( p \) only if \( p \) were true, i.e. \( S \)’s belief that \( p \) could not easily have been false.
      a. In other words: In close possible worlds, usually if \( S \) believes that \( p \) then \( p \) is true. (In close possible worlds, almost never does \( S \) believe that \( p \) and \( p \) is false.)
B. Implications for SA
1. Suppose that we're in a normal environment ("normal" = no skeptical hypotheses are true.)
2. Then, if I believe that I'm not a brain in a vat via my reliable cognitive abilities, there are no nearby worlds in which that belief is false.
3. So, according to IV.A, I know that I’m not a BIV.
4. So, if we're in a normal environment, the 2nd Premise of SA is false.

C. Benefit: solves the skeptical problem, and explains why its seems so plausible:
1. Sosa: people often confuse safety with sensitivity, and that's what leads to skepticism.
2. Pritchard: we know that skeptical scenarios are false, but it violates certain rules of conversation to say that we know.
   i. Maxim of evidence: don’t assert that p unless you have adequate evidence.
      1. Implies that there are certain things you know, even if you can’t cite evidence for them.

V. Objections to Neo-Mooreanism

A. Circularity objection
1. Look at safety theorists’ critique of Premise 2 of SA: it assumes that we’re in a non-skeptical world.
2. That seems to beg the question against the skeptic.
3. Reply: the goal is not to convince the skeptic, but to provide a theory of knowledge that diagnoses where the skeptical argument goes wrong.

B. Internalist objection
1. Skepticism presupposes that justification is internal; safety is an externalist condition; so safety theorists don’t play the skeptical game properly.
2. Reply: there are independent motivations for thinking that safety is a proper condition on knowledge

C. Easy knowledge objection
1. “…safety theories make it possible to know the world through safe perception. There is typically no requirement that the perceiver herself can explain how she knows, or that she can otherwise reconstruct the knowledge-producing process or circumstances.” (637)
2. Reply: Either knowledge is easy or it’s impossible.

VI. Doubts about SA

A. Motivation
1. Premise 2 of SA is not plausible from a pre-theoretic standpoint.
2. However, it becomes plausible upon philosophical reflection.
3. This suggests that SA depends on other skeptical arguments. What are these deeper arguments?

B. Hume’s arguments
H1:
1. All my beliefs about the external world depend for their evidence on both a) the way things appear to me, and b) an assumption that the way things appear to me is a reliable indication of the way things really are.
2. But the assumption in question can’t be justified.
3. All my beliefs about the external world depend for their evidence on an unjustifiable assumption. (1, 2)
4. Beliefs that depend for their evidence on an unjustifiable assumption do not count as knowledge.
5. None of my beliefs about the external world count as knowledge. I don’t know anything about the external world. (3, 4)
H2:
1. All my beliefs about the external world depend for their evidence on both a) the way things appear to me, and b) an assumption that the way things appear to me is a reliable indication of the way things really are.
2. The assumption in question is itself a belief about the external world.
3. The assumption depends on itself for its evidence. (1, 2)
4. Beliefs that depend on themselves for their evidence can’t be justified.
5. The assumption in question can’t be justified. (3, 4)

C. Descartes’ Argument
1. A person knows that p on the basis of evidence E, only if E rules out alternative possibilities to p.
2. It is a possibility that I am not sitting at my desk awake, but merely dreaming that I am.
3. ∴ I know that I am sitting at my desk only if my evidence discriminate my sitting at my desk from my merely dreaming that I’m sitting at my desk. (1, 2)
4. But my evidence does not discriminate my sitting at my desk from my merely dreaming that I’m sitting at my desk.
5. ∴ I do not know that I am sitting at my desk. (3, 4)
6. The same line of reasoning can be brought to bear against any belief about the external world.
7. ∴ No one knows anything about the external world. (5, 6)

D. Neo-Moorean responses vs. Humean and Cartesian Arguments
1. Safety theories don’t require us to assume that our appearances are reliable; it only requires that our appearances actually are reliable. (this undercuts Premise 1 of Hume)
2. Virtue-requirements are specific to certain conditions—thus, so long as I’m in a perceptually friendly environment, my evidence does rule out relevant possibilities (this undercuts Premise 4 of Descartes)

VII. The Pyrrhonian Problematic

A. Background
1. For externalist theories, such as the safety & sensitivity approaches, it’s enough that one’s beliefs are formed in a reliable way.
2. For internalist theories, there is a further requirement that one justifiably believe that one’s beliefs are formed in a reliable way.

B. Agrippa’s Trilemma
1. If S knows that p, then S is justified in believing that p was formed reliably.
2. However, if this is true, then:
   (a) S’s reasons to believe that p will go on in an infinite regress;
   (b) S’s reasons to believe that p will be circular; or
   (c) S’s reasons to believe that p will end arbitrarily.
3. But (a), (b), and (c) are each bad reasons to believe that p.
4. So for all p, S does not know that p.

C. Externalist Solution to Agrippa’s Trilemma
1. Premise 1 is false: for some p, S knows that p, and S’s belief that p is reliably formed, but S does not have a justified belief that p was formed reliably.
2. This is a kind of foundationalism: some reliably formed beliefs require no further justification.