

'Abduction' (pub. 03.01.13-18:48). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-vi>.

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**Term:** Abduction

**Quote:** Concerning the validity of Abductive inference, there is little to be said, although that little is pertinent to the problem we have in hand.

Abduction is the process of forming an explanatory hypothesis. It is the only logical operation which introduces any new idea; for induction does nothing but determine a value, and deduction merely evolves the necessary consequences of a pure hypothesis.

Deduction proves that something *must be*; Induction shows that something *actually is* operative; Abduction merely suggests that something *may be*.

Its only justification is that from its suggestion deduction can draw a prediction which can be tested by induction, and that, if we are ever to learn anything or to understand phenomena at all, it must be by abduction that this is to be brought about.

No reason whatsoever can be given for it, as far as I can discover; and it needs no reason, since it merely offers suggestions.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture VI*. MS [R] 314.

**References:** CP 5.171-172

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-vi>