

'Hypothesis [as a form of reasoning]' (pub. 03.02.13-17:29). 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-some-consequences-four-incapacities-1>.

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**Term:** Hypothesis [as a form of reasoning]

**Quote:** Hypothesis may be defined as an argument which proceeds upon the assumption that a character which is known necessarily to involve a certain number of others, may be probably predicated of any object which has all the characters which this character is known to involve. Just as induction may be regarded as the inference of the major premiss of a syllogism, so hypothesis may be regarded as the inference of the minor premiss, from the other two propositions. [—]

The function of hypothesis is to substitute for a great series of predicates forming no unity in themselves, a single one (or small number) which involves them all, together (perhaps) with an indefinite number of others. It is, therefore, also a reduction of a manifold to unity. Every deductive syllogism may be put into the form

If A, then B;

But A:

∴ B.

And as the minor premiss in this form appears as antecedent or reason of a hypothetical proposition, hypothetical inference may be called reasoning from consequent to antecedent.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1868). Some Consequences of Four Incapacities. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 2, 140-157.

**References:** CP 5.276

**Date of** 1868

**Quote:**

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