

Natural Class

1902 | Minute Logic: Chapter II. Prelogical Notions. Section I. Classification of the Sciences (Logic II) | EP 2:117; CP 1.204

A *class* [...] is the total of whatever objects there may be in the universe which are of a certain description. What if we try taking the term “natural,” or “real, class” to mean a class of which all the members owe their existence as members of the class to a common final cause? This is somewhat vague; but it is better to allow a term like this to remain vague, until we see our way to rational precision.

1902 | Minute Logic: Chapter II. Prelogical Notions. Section I. Classification of the Sciences (Logic II) | EP 2:121; CP 1.214

Every class has its definition, which is an idea; but it is not every class where the *existence*, that is, the occurrence in the universe of its members is due to the active causality of the defining idea of the class. That circumstance makes the epithet *natural* particularly appropriate to the class. The word *natura* evidently must originally have meant *birth*; although even in the oldest Latin it very seldom bears that meaning.

1902 | Minute Logic: Chapter II. Prelogical Notions. Section I. Classification of the Sciences (Logic II) | EP 2:125; CP 1.222

...a natural class [is] a family whose members are the sole offspring and vehicles of one idea, from which they derive their peculiar faculty...