

**Table 1:** Sample of Statements  
from the Four Atheist Belief Categories\* (N = 219)

<b>GNOSTIC ATHEISM</b> (n = 117)	<b>AGNOSTIC ATHEISM</b> (n = 89/79)**	<b>AMBIVALENT UNSURE</b> (n = 4)	<b>OTHER</b> (n = 9/19)**
<p><b>Any explicit or implied characterization of the participant's position as certain or definite.</b></p>	<p><b>Any effort made to distinguish between a "belief" and "knowledge" position; or participants who indicate that they are open to evidence: they describe their belief as malleable and open to changing based on new information, evidence, or "proof".</b></p>	<p><b>Any use of the phrase "I don't know" or "I am not sure", or similar characterizations of belief, without further explanation.</b></p>	<p><b>Any statement that does not fit the criteria of the other categories.</b></p>
<p>(1) "Agnostic means that you don't know, or aren't sure. Atheist means that you are certain there is no such thing as god."</p> <p>(2) "Because I'm certain there are no gods. Agnostics are ambivalent on the topic."</p> <p>(3) "I firmly believe that all god or gods are products of the human mind."</p> <p>(4) "An agnostic questions whether there is a God, whereas an atheist is a person who decidedly does not believe in the existence of God."</p> <p>(5) "I'm thoroughly convinced there is no god and that all religions are lies."</p> <p>(6) "There is no God or other deity and I don't entertain the notion that there might be."</p> <p>(7) "Atheist = sure there's no deity, Agnostic = I don't know and you don't either."</p>	<p>(1) "Agnostic indicates 'without knowledge' and while I am without definitive knowledge regarding the existence of a god, I believe that the evidence clearly points to no such being. 'Atheist' also has a stronger connotation in modern parlance, and I wish to be known as holding the strongest disbelief in God."</p> <p>(2) "I have seen zero evidence that he exists. If it was 50/50, I would lean toward agnostic. But in my opinion he doesn't exist."</p> <p>(3) "Agnostic points to knowledge of a deity, which I feel is unknowable. Atheism points to a belief, which I find no evidence for the existence of any god. That makes me an Agnostic Atheist, but the question was about my religion belief, not my knowledge."</p>	<p>(1) "I don't know (as in I can't disprove the possibility) that there is no god, but I don't believe in any gods."</p> <p>(2) "I use atheist because I am reasonably sure there are no gods and agnosticism tends to imply a level of uncertainty that I do not possess. This is not to say that I'm sure, but I think gods are pretty damn unlikely."</p> <p>3) "I switch between them frequently. I have faith in a higher power when I need one in my life." (Coder A)</p> <p>4) "I would say that I was probably agnostic primarily because I don't know more than anyone else does for certain what happens when you die. Or what lies beyond that threshold. But I don't believe in the gods we've created for ourselves. So in that way, I'm an atheist." (Coder B)</p>	<p>(1) "I think people believe in gods because they need hope for life after death. I think agnostics are more open minded and allow for many different ideas."</p> <p>(2) "I believe in evolution."</p> <p>(3) "Same meaning in my mind and according to Silverman."</p> <p>(4) "Cause I'm not stupid, religious people are."</p> <p>(5) "Atheists are more zealous."</p> <p>(6) "Honestly I feel we are a virus on this planet, we are the only creatures ever to destroy their habitat and no god would own up to that. Religion is just designed to keep the poor in line and only man can claim that one."</p>
<p>* All statements used as examples were assigned by both coders to the same category. ** First number is the number of respondents assigned by Coder A; second number is the number assigned by Coder B.</p>			

religious affiliation (95% confidence interval: 79% to 87%) but a substantial percentage of nonbelievers (at least 13%) do not reject it. It would seem that one could affiliate with a religion for a variety

of social and psychological reasons other than belief in a deity, for example, secular Jews who attend religious services for social or emotional reasons, a family that practices the religion,