I. Experimental Method & Mitigated Skepticism:

A. Cultivate True Metaphysics by Means of Experimental Method:

1. Inquiry must be based on experimental method. His method was to deploy “experience and observation.”
2. One of the conclusions of his inquiry into human cognitive psychology was that all genuine substantive reasoning is either experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact & science, or abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number. 3. Thus, he rejected works of divinity and “school” metaphysics whose arguments were neither 4. Because of the limitations of our representational & inferential faculties, he recommended “mitigated skepticism.”

Mitigated skepticism involves both a degree of modesty (hesitation) about all of one’s conclusions & a restriction of philosophy to topics of “common life.” This mitigated skepticism is which the natural outcome of the conflict between Pyrrhonian skeptical arguments & our natural irresistible mechanisms of belief was intended to forestall positive theorizing both about the ultimate nature of the universe beyond our experience of it, & about matters of speculative theology.
5. In the broad sense of metaphysics, there is no contradiction in stating that his own philosophy was metaphysical as well as experimental.

II. Representation & Imagination:

Is Imagination Distinct from Intellel:

A. Rationalists Emphasized a distinction between Intellel & Imagination. 1. Rationalists like Descartes, Berkeley, & Leibniz emphasized a distinction between 2 radically different representational faculties of the mind: imagination & intellect. 2. Imagination is a faculty of image-like ideas & intellect is a faculty of non-imagistic ideas, far richer in content than that of imagination.

B. Hume rejected the distinction between intellect & imagination:

1. He argues that what is called “imagination” is nothing but the “recall of sensations & memory for the hows of all human cognition processes as operations with image-like ideas.”
2. The rejections of above distinction had 3 metaphysical consequences:
   a. It allowed Hume to try to explicate (make clear the meaning) the content of main concepts employed in metaphysics-such concepts as “cause”, “real existence”, & “self”, for example, that would consistent with ideas as the imagination. How? Since he held on empirical grounds that the simple elements of all ideas are always copied from the images of the past experiences of “cause”, “real existence,” & “self” are derived. These metaphysical concepts were facilitated by his theory of abstract ideas: Abstract ideas: determine image-like ideas that acquire a more concrete association with a general term of a language, a term that in turn serves to excite a disposition to call up other related determinate ideas in the mind as needed.

   2. He encouraged Hume to deny the validity of many a priori arguments for specific metaphysical theses such as ontological arguments for God’s existence, alleged demonstrations of a need for an underlying substratum to support qualities of objects, & alleged prior proofs of the existence of God in every beginning of existence.

3. It radically expanded the realm of the metaphysically possible. By accepting the use of conceivability as a criterion of possibility in the imagination, i.e., imaginability, he regarded a wide range of things metaphysically possible, such as causal laws of nature other than actual laws. Since laws of nature can only be discovered by experience & can’t be explained as it is possible we might call them "facts."