

Book Abstracts

Feldman, Richard (1993). *Reason & Argument*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 0-13-767229-2.

Reason & Argument is a textbook for reasoning, critical thinking, and informal logic courses. It contains three main sections. The first introduces the conceptual background necessary for understanding and analyzing arguments. It includes discussions of epistemological concepts used in describing and evaluating arguments. This section addresses the naively relativistic ideas of many students which interfere with their ability to reason well. The second main section presents a general method for identifying, reconstructing, and evaluating arguments. The final section applies the method to realistic arguments about testimonial, statistical, causal, and moral issues. The method of argument analysis developed in the book discourages simplistic labeling and categorizing of arguments and encourages careful and constructive analysis.

Freeman, James (1992). *Thinking Logically: Basic Concepts for Reasoning, 2nd ed.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 0-13-905118-X.

This informal logic text begins by distinguishing three functions of language — informative/expressive/directive — and discussing problems of meaning, including vagueness and ambiguity. Recognizing arguments and their premises and conclusions follows. Distinguishing the persuasive force from the logically convincing character of arguments leads to discussing various emotional appeal fallacies

including grandstanding, bandwagon, authority, *ad hominem*, ignorance, and slippery slope. A full step-by-step discussion of argument diagramming via a circle and arrow technique follows over the next two chapters. We then turn to three central issues in argument evaluation — premise acceptability, relevance, and adequate weight. The last includes both inductive and deductive considerations. For each issue we present general evaluative considerations and consider particular fallacies. We conclude with an overall argument evaluation procedure.

Salmon, Merrilee H. (1995). *Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking, 3rd ed.* Fort Worth, TX & New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

This text examines critical thinking and the logical skills that contribute to it in the context of everyday life. The book opens with three chapters that discuss logic and critical thinking in a general way. Following these, the text focuses on the structure of inductive reasoning before moving to deduction. The many exercises and examples are drawn from literature, popular science, history, and contemporary public policy debates. The book introduces in a nonthreatening way enough technical material to allow students to use modern systems of logic for analyzing real-life arguments. Fallacies are treated in connection with the correct arguments that they resemble; they are also gathered alphabetically and defined in a special appendix. A bibliography and index contribute to the book's usefulness.