

Book Abstracts

Werkmeister, W.H. (1948). *An Introduction to Critical Thinking: A Beginner's Text in Logic*. Johnsen Pub. Co.

The book is indeed a beginner's text essentially in the Aristotelian tradition. But it also deals extensively with the uses and abuses of language as encountered in fallacious reasoning and propaganda. It also presents at length the more recently developed formal presentation of arguments and of statistical methods. The book culminates in a discussion of the nature and use of hypotheses. But what characterizes the book throughout are the numerous examples following each chapter for the student's analysis. It is indeed an introduction to critical thinking. The guiding theme throughout is that error in belief and mistakes in reasoning can be devastating in all of our endeavors, and that therefore rational criteria in the evaluation of all opinions and prospective beliefs are as essential in everyday life as they are in our sciences.

Ennis, Robert H. *Ordinary Logic*. Originally published by Prentice-Hall in 1969, but now available from Illinois Critical Thinking Project, 1310 S. 6th St., Champaign, IL 61820; phone: (217) 333-2446.

This short deductive logic book presents elementary propositional logic, class logic, and the use and interpretation of logic in everyday situations. A simple minimally-symbolic system is presented for propositional logic, and a modified intuitive Euler-circle system is used for class logic.

Technical terminology and technical apparatus are kept to a minimum. Furthermore, the book avoids counter-intuitive interpretations of the logical operators, such as the material-implication, interpretation of the "if-then" relationship, and extensional interpretations of class relationships.

There are frequent exercises to which answers are provided, facilitating self-teaching.

Meiland, Jack W. (1981). *College Thinking: How to Get the Best Out of College*. Nal-Dutton. ISBN 0-451-62655-9 paper .

College Thinking introduces students to argumentation within the context of inquiry rather than persuasion. It focuses on the construction of arguments by students rather than on the criticism

of others' arguments. Students need to be taught explicitly what arguments are for and how to create them. So, as a preparation, the book explains the rationale of intellectual inquiry. It maintains that argumentation is much more than simply stating some reasons and must include the examination of reasons through objections and replies and through discussion of alternative positions. Two chapters treat the writing of argumentative papers and give principles and concrete examples. Later chapters explore the aims and methods of the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.

Walton, Doug (1989). *Informal Logic: A Handbook for Critical Argumentation*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-37032-9 cloth, ISBN 0-521-37925-3 paper.

Informal Logic is an elementary guidebook to the basic principles of constructing good arguments and criticizing bad arguments. The reader is guided along through the use of a case study approach based on one hundred and fifty key examples, each discussed and evaluated in clear, illustrative detail.

The practical methods applied to these cases are based on a pragmatic theory of argument as a reasoned interactive dialogue, outlined in the first chapter. According to this theory, every argument has two sides, and the rules of dialogue prescribe how each side should respond to the moves of the other side, in order to take part in a critically reasoned discussion.

Both correct and faulty uses of arguments are explained, including many important kinds of errors, lapses, blunders, sophisticated tactics, fallacies, and other key failures of argument. Correct uses of arguments are based on argumentation schemes, including sound argument strategies for reasoned persuasion, and critical questions for responding.

Among the subjects covered are: techniques of questioning, replying to questions, criticising questions, valid argument forms, relevance, appeals to emotion in argument, personal attack, uses and abuses of expert opinion in argument, errors and problems in using statistics, linguistic difficulties posed by the use of loaded terms in argument, equivocation, slippery slope arguments, and arguments from analogy.