



A Guide to Good Reasoning

David C. Wilson

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Combining philosophical respectability with accessibility and wit, this brief text concerns the evaluation of reasoning as found in written and spoken language and in our thinking. The book spells out a single, simple, coherent system - what amounts to a checklist of steps - for clarifying / outlining arguments and for evaluating arguments. It covers the most common sorts of arguments and uses numerous examples culled from periodicals and books. The book treats reasoning as a philosophical sub-discipline, applied epistemology, in which all of the techniques and topics about reasoning fit together sensibly and not as a grab-bag of tips and tricks. The text seeks to improve the student's instinctive, intuitive approach to everyday reasoning by cultivating the intellectual virtues of critical reflection, empirical inquiry, open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, and intellectual honesty as habits of thinking conducive to knowledge and as aids to good reasoning. There is an emphasis on judgmental heuristics, the many quick and seductive shortcuts and inferential errors that psychologists have shown people constantly use in their reasoning. In the discussion of argument clarification, conversational implicature and "conversational relevance" are treated on a par with soundness and clarity. The text features Guidelines summarizing each section, chapter summaries, and end-of-chapter glossaries as well as a comprehensive end-of-book glossary. Throughout each chapter are abundant exercise sets with a sample exercise and sample answer at the start of each exercise set to ensure the student knows what sorts of answers are expected. The Student Solutions Manual (packaged FREE with every copy of the main text) offers answers to odd-numbered exercises, a comprehensive glossary, easy-reference charts, and a valuable guide to evaluating Internet sources, entitled "Good Reasoning and the Web." The Instructor's Manual by Amy Kind of Claremont McKenna College offers teaching suggestions for each chapter of the text, sample answers to even-numbered questions, handouts, additional exercises, and sample quizzes.

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