



Logic: A Very Short Introduction

Graham Priest

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Logic is often perceived as having little to do with the rest of philosophy, and even less to do with real life. In this lively and accessible introduction, Graham Priest shows how wrong this conception is. He explores the philosophical roots of the subject, explaining how modern formal logic deals with issues ranging from the existence of God and the reality of time to paradoxes of probability and decision theory. Along the way, the basics of formal logic are explained in simple, non-technical terms, showing that logic is a powerful and exciting part of modern philosophy.

In this new edition Graham Priest expands his discussion to cover the subjects of algorithms and axioms, and proofs in mathematics.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Logic: A Very Short Introduction Details

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Author : Graham Priest

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From Reader Review Logic: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

Amir The Fat Bookworm says

Not bad at all. It's not an easy read though. You should read it carefully.

second read: I tried everything possible so that I have a better reading experience. However, the author skips on explaining many of the basic steps that an unfamiliar reader needs to know in in order to understand them. That makes it a very hard read because you have to infer more things about what author means than what their content requires.

???? ???? says

It is more a book on history and philosophy of logic than an introduction to logical ways of reasoning. I listened to its audio format.

Foad says

Alfaniel Aldavan says

This is Paul Bryant's deleted review. According to the email from GR, it was off-topic.

I have flagged this one myself, when it was in Paul's review space. With some over-pretentious ironic or stupid message, I don't remember which.

GR Headquarters might have missed the ironic part. Unless they didn't, but never found it other than serious in the first place. I can't figure out which is more unfortunate.

I guess it's only fair from my part to salvage the content. Here it goes.

PS: There's a funnier side. Its removal, in the same time with non-removal of thousands of other no-actual-reviews, proves it's **on-topic**.

Take that, logic!

[image of a guy in front of a full tray of reports, lost in deletion]

Another hapless Goodreads employee contemplates his in-tray. It contains reviews which have been flagged for focussing on author behaviour, which is not allowed ("we will now delete these entirely from the site"). Our poor Goodreads employee now has to read through all these flagged reviews to figure out if they do indeed contravene the policy. It's a terrible job, but somebody has to do it.

The flagged reviews are pouring in to the Goodreads office. The ones shown in his in-tray above arrived while he was having a ten minute coffee break. (He'll need something stronger than coffee soon.)

The thing is, what does he do with this beautifully argued review here by the brilliant Manny, which is all about the terrible Holocaust denier David Irving [link lost in deletion] or my own huffy denunciation of the homophobic Orson Scott Card's opinions [link lost in deletion]

These clearly should be zapped. We say loudly that we're not going to read these books and the authors are awful. The New GR Policy was thought up to try to cool things out over there in the YA section, where reviewers and authors have at times, I regret to say, indulged in unseemly name-calling. But there is such a thing as logic and fairness. So if any reviews have been deleted entirely from GR, the above two should by the same rule.

I will be posting a copy of this short introduction to Logic to the GR head office in San Francisco. It might help.

Landon says

This is a decent book, but the audience is really limited. I would recommend it to an undergraduate studying philosophy, but not to someone just interested in getting some basic familiarity with logic. Some of the chapters would help to that end, but others are largely designed to tackle certain philosophical problems or arguments using the tools that logicians have given us over the centuries. And I suspect that a much clearer (i.e. more understandable) explanation of most of that stuff can be found elsewhere.

Mike W says

This is a pretty good introduction to logic. It explains the subject clearly and concisely. And it uses some interesting examples. The explanation of the fallacy in St. Anselm's subtle, but ultimately sophistical, "proof" of God's existence, is a model of careful reasoning and explanation. But the book has some flaws.

First, it focuses on modern symbolic logic, which would be valuable for technical specialists, but not for the intelligent laymen the "Very Short Introduction" series is aimed at. The reader who just wants to think more clearly would typically prefer a verbal and intuitive approach, as in Aristotle's original works on the subject or "Logic Made Easy" by Deborah Bennett.

Second, the book is simply wrong or misleading in certain particulars. Its attack on the cosmological argument for God's existence misses the point entirely. Unlike the ontological proofs offered by Anselm, Descartes and Gödel, cosmological arguments are essentially inductive and probable, and thus are not examples of purely logical reasoning. Moreover, in order to defeat this argument, the author has to put it in the most unflattering form.*

As another example, the book attributes to Aristotle the view that everything is predetermined, that all things proceed from necessity and cannot be changed. But this was not Aristotle's view. He wrote that things happen in nature "always or for the most part", so that when quantum theorists like Heisenberg were trying to understand the inherently indeterminate world they were exploring, a world that violated the strict determinism of Newtonian mechanics, they turned to Aristotle, as someone who recognized intuitively that nature could be indeterminate.

And, on a related note, when the author gives as an example of what is strictly impossible the sentence "I will jump out of bed and hover 2m above the ground," due to the violation of gravity implied, he seems unaware of the inherent indeterminacy in modern quantum mechanics which describes such things technically possible (though extremely improbable).

Regardless, this book is worth reading. Because it is a short and lucid account, the reader can get through it quickly. And logic is, sadly, a kind of forgotten subject. If more people were trained in logical thought, more of them would see through the sophistical arguments offered by politicians and pundits who, unlike Anselm, make fairly obvious logical errors and ground their arguments more on emotions than reason.

*Note that when the author deals with a variant on the cosmological argument (which he calls the argument from design) in the context of probability, he does so sophistically. He applies Bayes' Theorem to the argument, in an effort to debunk it. But his application is highly suspect. And, at any rate, an introductory account on logic seems like a strange place to espouse a dogmatic atheism.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Logic: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions #29), Graham Priest
Logic is often perceived as having little to do with the rest of philosophy, and even less to do with real life. In this lively and accessible introduction, Graham Priest shows how wrong this conception is.
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Heather Pagano says

Read with my husband who has a strong background in math, physics, computer science. I can't count the number of times he paused in the reading to say: "okay, he didn't explain that very well," only to follow with a brief explanation or example that made all clear. Although I was familiar with basic logic (truth tables, modus ponens, etc.) things like modal logic and fuzzy logic were completely new concepts to me. I did get a basic overview and very rudimentary understanding of those fields, but to be honest my understanding is due more to hubby's explanations than the text in the book.

Amin Dorosti says

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Hesam says

Mardin Uzeri says

Logic, along with ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics, is commonly considered to be among the main branches of philosophy. Any systematic approach to learn philosophy should encompass a solid foundation building in logic. Philosophy is a fundamental component to all areas of human inquiry while logic is the fundamental basis on which philosophy itself operates.

This book is dense, Priest hasn't wasted any words. Lose the thread and you suddenly find yourself in need of rehearsing the entire chapter. The chapters cannot be read independently like many other books on this topic, they rather build upon the concepts that were introduced in the previous chapter. Yes, "Very Short" indeed, but impenetrable at times.

For some reason, Priest is especially fond of tinkering with the logic behind the arguments concerned with God's existence.

C is for **censored** says

The star rating given reflects my opinion within 'the official goodreads rating system'.

- 1 star: Didn't Like it
- 2 stars: It's Okay
- 3 stars: Liked it
- 4 stars: Really Liked it
- 5 stars: It Was Amazing

I don't really give a rat-fuck that there are some who think I 'owe' an explanation for my opinion. Nope, nada, and not sorry about it.

Sometimes I may add notes to explain what my opinions are based on, and sometimes I don't. I do this for me, on my books, in my library and I don't 'owe' any special snowflakes a thing. Fuck off if you don't like it and stop reading my shit.

Particularly given the ‘modifications’ to reader’s personal content going on (and outright censorship), unless particularly motivated I will not comment in detail.

It would help if GR was forthcoming in the new ‘appropriate’ and would make a site-wide announcement delineating the new focus from a reader-centric site to one that is now for authors and selling.

Filipe Dias says

Actually I did not understand most of it.

I'm a complete beginner, so I thought an "introduction" would be the entering point to this topic, not so much with this book.

I guess the book is well written and concise, but as an introduction it jumps way too fast to understand or find relevance in the material being discussed, like starting in English and then jump to Chinese.

Maybe I'll get a different one on the subject and then read this again to understand how and why it's presented as it is.

Melika Khoshnezhad says

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Clouds says

[the interesting words are in the comments]

I liked this book very much. It has good qualities.

I wholeheartedly recommend that you immediately spend your dollarpounds on this product.

Why not buy two and give one to a friend?

This review was about a book, not an author.