

Is it Time We Got Serious about Teaching Logic?

After the first presidential debate of 2016, [CNN](#) decided to see what the kids thought of the spectacle. The answer? Not much:

“‘I would say it’s a circus,’ said seventh-grader Matthew Wei, who would vote for Trump if he weren’t #tooyoungtovote. ‘This is one of the most bizarre campaigns ever. It’s all about Hillary Clinton saying something bad about, and making commercials about, Trump. And Donald Trump saying something bad about Hillary.’”

But while young people like Matthew recognize that something was terribly wrong with the debate, they themselves may be drawn into making the same mistakes. That is, unless more schools begin to train students in the basics of logical reasoning.

At the time of the American Founding, Ben Franklin recommended students [learn logic](#) in grades we would now classify as middle or high school. But such a class is almost non-existent in today’s schools, despite the lip service continually paid toward “critical thinking.”

The good news is that parents can pick up the slack of the schools by teaching their children to recognize the logical fallacies which increasingly pervade presidential elections, social media debates, and every day conversations.

We’ve previously recommended [The Fallacy Detective](#) and [The Thinking Toolbox](#) as excellent, fun books with which adults and children alike can learn the basics of [rational thinking](#). [An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments](#) is another book written in the same vein.

“Aimed at newcomers to the field of logical reasoning,” *An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments* presents 19 common logical fallacies, describing each in a one-page summary. The crowning feature of the book is the detailed cartoon drawings which accompany each summary, enabling students to have a visual remembrance of the logical fallacies they should avoid.

After the 2016 election, would you agree that it’s high time American students and adults both learned how to avoid bad arguments?

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