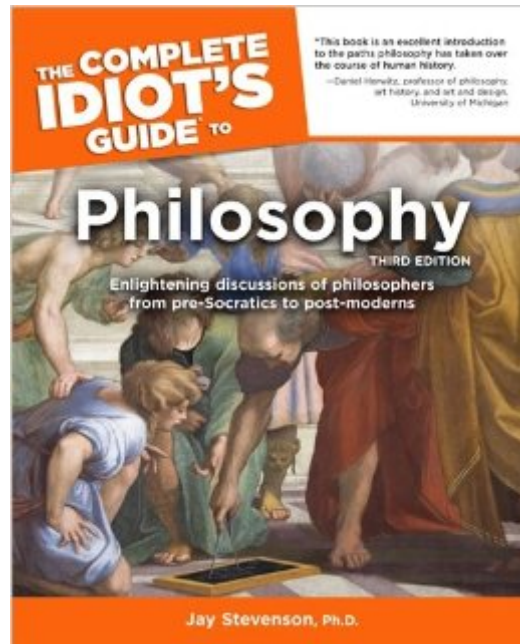


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The Complete Idiot's Guide To Philosophy, Third Edition



Synopsis

Socrates's admonition that "the unexamined life is not worth living" still resonates with many people, and this guide is a great introduction to that mental exercise. The author skillfully covers the subject both historically and topically and brings the reader all the way up to the present, with insights into 21st-century philosophical thought.

- Essential philosophers and philosophies, from ancient times right up to today
- New information on such topics as Eastern philosophy, women philosophers, postmodernism, and critical theory
- The relevance of philosophy to a variety of other subjects and to today's world

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some time ago I sat down and read through "Philosophy for Dummies" and "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Philosophy." My intentions were to find a book that I might recommend to friends who have a passing interest in the subject, so that I might encourage their understanding and gain more people to discuss ideas with. Not only was I disappointed with "Philosophy for Dummies" but I found the presentation to be both offensive and underhanded. While appearing at first to be an introduction to the greater subject, it turns out to be a packaging of the author's own beliefs... heavily skewed and full of personal bias. Whole movements are passed over with little or nothing said, other than a dismissive comment from the author, who apparently does not think them worth mention because he does not agree. This is HARDLY proper for what is supposed to be an introduction to the subject. The novice reader is left with a lopsided, limited presentation that while

written well enough, leaves him needing to go buy ANOTHER book so he can actually BE introduced to what this title led him to believe he would be -- the subject of philosophy in a wide ranging sense. In surfing tonight, I decided to look at the reviews for this book ("Philosophy for Dummies"). I was VERY glad to see that a number of people saw the same thing as I did in this. Pro-God or not, is not the point. The glory of philosophy is all the different views, and this is what an introduction should present. A book like this should be written with the intention of exposing the reader to the subject of philosophy itself, not just the author's step by step program of -- "This is what I think, so I am going to show you why you should think this way too."

I originally bought this book because I was supposed to supplement a creative writing class I was teaching with an occasional exploration of philosophy. I thought the book might present philosophy at a beginner's level that would make it interesting for my high school class. I never used it. This is a decent book though. I'm a little hesitant to applaud the author and recommend the book to just anyone. First, the author. Jay Stevenson does have a PhD, but not in philosophy. That worries me. Sure, he may know quite a bit about philosophy, I'm sure there are a lot of people without degrees in philosophy that know a lot about it, but why would The Complete Idiot's Guide people hire a non-PhD to write a book about philosophy when there are thousands of unemployed, professionally trained philosophers looking for work? Who knows. Maybe they thought Stevenson, whose credentials are in English, could do a better job getting his point across. Second, why I wouldn't recommend the book to just anyone. For two reasons. First, the writing is a little boring at times and for people that aren't interested in philosophy, this book probably won't suck you in and make you want to read it. Second, the philosophies are dumbed down almost to the point that it isn't really worth reading about them. The book turns into a nicely packaged dictionary with fun little explanations rather than a treatise on philosophy. But, what should we expect, right? This is, after all, The Complete Idiot's Guide. So, the book is boring and not a very detailed explanation of the philosophies that it attempts to discuss. However, for an introduction to someone that is interested but knows absolutely nothing, this book probably wouldn't be too bad a place to get ideas of where to look for more information.

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