

WHICH LOGIC PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOUR STUDENT?

When and where is the best place to start learning logic? What does a complete logic course of studies look like?

SUGGESTED LOGIC TIMELINE

There are a lot of logic and "critical thinking" programs on the market. So what makes Memoria Press' program different? When and where is the best place to start learning logic? What does a complete logic course of studies look like?

How to study Logic:

1. Logic study can begin in 7th grade.
2. Begin with formal logic.
3. Think of it as language study, not math.

Traditional logic was the kind of logic taught in schools before anyone started talking about "critical thinking skills." The only reason people talk about critical thinking skills today is because schools long ago abandoned traditional logic. Once they realized their mistake, instead of re-implementing traditional logic, they tried to reinvent the wheel, coming up with newer topic-hopping programs that cover some of the old classical discipline of traditional logic, but leaving much out.

In addition, high schools that still taught logic used only the more limited modern symbolic logic and incorporated it in math classes. In classical education, however, logic is part of the trivium, which is language arts, not math.

The *Traditional Logic* program by Memoria Press is a comprehensive, language-based approach to critical thinking skills. It begins with a study of formal logic. Formal logic covers the process or mechanics of reasoning—how you get from premises to a valid conclusion. Material logic, the second leg of logic study, covers the content of reasoning—an understanding of words, statements, and types of argumentation actually used in discussion and debate.

Take the following argument as an example:

*All men are mortal
Socrates is a man
Therefore, Socrates is a mortal*

In formal logic, a student would study the relationship among the terms "men," "mortal," and "Socrates." He would also look at whether the statements in the argument are affirmative or negative, and universal or particular. Along with the study of the seven rules of validity, these considerations will determine whether the argument is valid.

In material logic, the student would ask important questions about the words and statements themselves:

*What kind of word is "man"?
What kind of statement is "All men are mortal"?
What kind of argument is this?*

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| 3rd-6th | Solid grounding in mathematics & Latin <small>Great preparatory skills for logical thought.</small> |
| 7th | Traditional Logic I <small>A study of the basic elements of simple arguments.</small> |
| 8th | Traditional Logic II <small>An advanced course that completes the study of the simple categorical syllogism, covers hypothetical syllogisms, and studies all complex argument forms.</small> |
| 9th | Material Logic <small>A study of the ten ways something can exist, the five ways of saying something about something else, definition, and classification.</small> |
| 10th | Informal Fallacies <small>A study of the ways in which argumentation can go wrong so the student can avoid it himself and point it out in the reasoning of others. <small>*Text not yet published, but online course available.</small></small> |
| 11th-12th | Classical Rhetoric <small>A study which incorporates logic into the broader context of persuasive communication.</small> |

*Students beginning logic in 9th grade can complete both *Traditional Logic* books in one year. *Material Logic* and informal fallacies can be covered in one year in 10th grade.

Once we have determined through formal logic whether the argument is valid, the questions of material logic will help us to determine the truth of the premises, which will in turn tell us whether the conclusion is true, or not.

The best preparation for logic is a sound understanding of math and grammar, preferably Latin grammar. Mathematics covers quantitative reasoning skills while grammar covers qualitative, linguistic skills.

In about the 7th grade, the student would start his or her more formal study of logic with *Traditional Logic I*. In 8th grade, the student would tackle *Traditional Logic II*. With this background, the student would be ready for *Material Logic* in the 9th or 10th grade.

If a student begins later, say, the 9th or 10th grade, both books *I* and *II* of *Traditional Logic* can be attempted in one year, and *Material Logic* may then be done in one semester. A year of logic study in whatever form would set a good foundation for the follow-on study of *Classical Rhetoric*.

The completion of *Traditional Logic I* and *II* will give the middle or high school student a college level understanding of traditional formal logic. *Material Logic*, although written to be understood by high school students, goes beyond what is studied in a typical college logic course.