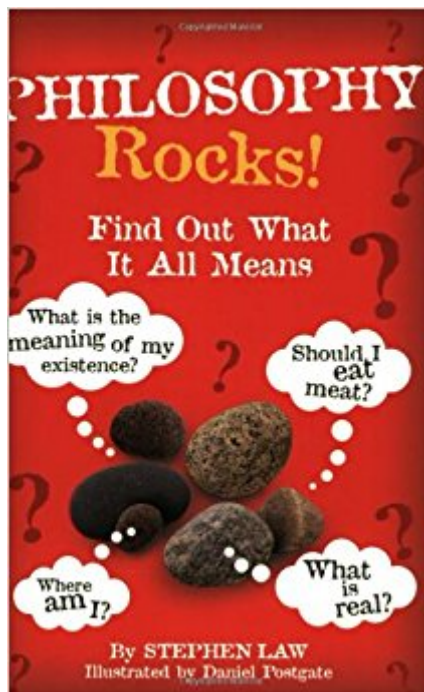


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# Philosophy Rocks!



## Synopsis

Philosophy Rocks!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-In a friendly and accessible way, the author introduces eight of philosophy's big questions, from "What Is Real?" to "Does God Exist?" The first chapter seems a bit heavy-going as it explains Plato's forms with examples and a couple of criticisms, but Law incorporates C. S. Lewis's "Shadowlands," nicely grounding this rather obtuse idea back to the "Narnia" books. When things get too confusing, he uses repetition, questions and answers, and sci-fi/medical-ethics examples (using two Martians, Blip and Blop, and other characters) to bring the ideas home. Whimsical illustrations break up the text and provide some think time. The chapter entitled "How Do I Know the World Isn't Virtual?" may bring to mind the popular Ender's Game or the movie, The Matrix. The question, "What do you think?" is posed frequently, often at the end of the chapter. The author is successful in presenting these ideas objectively, balancing every argument with counterarguments and problems that they may raise. The topic "Should I Eat Meat" is a matter of interest to many teens, and the serious questions here, as elsewhere, are lightened with humor. Law stresses from the beginning that a discussion of philosophy is not the same as a book about religion, but, throughout, there are discussions that some will regard as being of a religious nature. Some religious believers may take offense, but others will be delighted by this cogent presentation of these thought-provoking issues. Joel Shoemaker, Southeast Junior High School, Iowa City, IA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book was a great intro to philosophy for my 7-year-old. We read it together each night before bed. It would take 2-4 days to get through a chapter/question that way, which was a good pace for our purposes. I encouraged him to ask questions and make comments, and we sometimes went down tangents and had to Google things, which is great because that teaches him to do his research. He loves philosophy now and is always talking about himself and other kids in school making 'arguments' (in the philosophical sense, of course) about things. He likes to debate -- there are sometimes little mock debates in school or his after-school program. He is still easily swayed by even bad arguments and he doesn't have enough knowledge of the world yet to have the necessary answers, but this is expected as he is only 7. For his age, he's quite skeptical. After I let him in on the fact that Santa is just pretend, for fun, he started putting things together and accused me of being the Tooth Fairy. He applies the same skepticism to God. It is worth noting that I didn't bring God up at first. Kids at schools talked to him about it, and that's partly why I wanted to get him into philosophy this early. By the time we got to the "Does God exist?" chapter he had made up his mind that God was like Santa Claus. I really tried not to influence his actual beliefs, but just asked him questions. It was great actually seeing him come up with counter-arguments to the arguments presented in the book. When we read the argument that the Big Bang came from God, his first question, right away, was "Then where did God come from?" Obviously, I am an atheist and skeptic, but I want to emphasize that this book doesn't actually push you one way or the other with these arguments. It presents multiple opposing arguments and lets the reader decide what to accept and reject. It's all about presenting opposing points of view and figuring out through reason who is right and who is wrong. At many points a chapter or section will end with "What do you think?" It is good for stimulating conversation and provoking a deeper level of thinking. If you are reading this with a child, be aware of attention span. Usually after 20-40 minutes I would lose my son's attention and he would start getting distracted by other things. That's when it's time to put the book down and pick it back up the next day. But he sometimes thought this was unfair (he didn't feel distracted, he said) and would grab the book after I turned off the lights to read in bed. I was surprised when we turned back to Chapter 1 (after reading most of the others first) and he already knew about Plato and the shadow lands. He got up the night before and read it by himself! That being said, it would be very difficult for a 7-year-old to get much out of this book if they only read it themselves. I had to frequently define words or clarify points the book was making if he wasn't understanding. I still found that he could not capture the concept that there are (or might be) immaterial things, such as thoughts, consciousness, or Plato's forms. I think this might be a developmental barrier at the moment. So don't expect your kid to understand everything, and allow them to read whatever

interests them in the book. A lot should be said for the dialogue format found at certain points, where a narrative is given of friends who get together and end up arguing about some philosophical question. It was really easy to keep my son interested during these parts of the book. For any skeptic out there, if you have kids that are about 7+ years old, this book is a great dive into critical thinking and will get them familiar with some of the oldest philosophical conundrums out there. Also, if you don't know any philosophy yourself, that's okay. I never studied philosophy at school, but only got interested in it a few years ago. If you are an adult and don't know philosophy, this book can help educate you too. Make sure not to push your child one way or the other on any given topic, but let them make up their own conclusions. After we finished Chapter 1 my son said he thought there must be infinite forms. I went back and talked to him about why that might be problematic, but he still liked the answer, so I stepped back at that point and did not force my opinion on him. If he wants to believe in Platonic Forms at 7 years old, that's fine with me. The most important thing I am trying to get across is not WHAT to think, but HOW to think. As long as he learns the HOW then I'm not so concerned with the WHAT, as that will be addressed by the HOW eventually. I would recommend that if you don't have kids OR a basic education in philosophy, then this would not be a bad starting place for you, as an adult, either. It's easy to comprehend, provides lots of arguments for and against different ideas, and does not try to paint any one conclusion as the only conclusion. In my opinion, this book (or one much like it) should be mandatory material for elementary school children -- maybe for 4th or 5th graders. And the teachers should have to teach from it, and lead balanced philosophical discussions. Kids in the US public schools do not get an education in critical thinking. They are taught WHAT to think and not HOW to think. That needs to change.

I purchased this book for a friend whose 10-year-old son is obsessed with "deep questions" and the mysteries of life, the universe, and everything. He is especially fascinated with consciousness and this book has a whole chapter devoted to philosophy of mind, which he devoured. I highly recommend this for inquisitive kids!

This is a very very awesome book. I am a teacher and my 6th grade class just did a unit on philosophy. This book was able to communicate complicated ideas in a simple way that my students understood. Believe it or not; this book actually got my class excited about the Allegory of a Cave! I would recommend this to anyone who is trying to teach philosophy to anyone!

My 8 year old loves this book. It is great for thoughtful kids who want an accessible intro to philosophy. Could be for middle school or high school too.

This is a great starter book for children. They have the basics yet put them forth in a way that the child will understand. I have given more than one copy to different people. I highly recommend this for anyone.

Extraordinary tales which reveal the obvious philosophical conclusions about how it all came about...both the erroneous and the absolutely rock solid. Oh yeah!

I'd say it's one of the best books out there for beginners. It takes controversial topics that are abstruse to neophytes and explains it in a simple, unbiased manner - always allowing two sides to argue the subject to the best of their abilities, neither lacking. I felt the chapter about God really covered the logic and ideas behind both sides; atheists and theists. In fact, for anyone I have met that shows interest in philosophy I recommend this book and *The Story of Philosophy* by Bryan Magee. This is one of the best books I know for beginners, though Bryan Magee's book is more for the intermediate, seeing as how it takes a short look at the studies, teachings and history of key philosophers throughout history, such as Plato, Socrates, Machavelli, Newton, etc. in a chronological order. My favorite chapter is the vegetarian chapter. Seeing as how I'm an ethical vegetarian, I feel it points out the flaw(s) in eating meat very well.

Stephen Law's engaging book 'Philosophy Rocks' offers an excellent introduction to the world of philosophy. Although it is aimed at children, with great illustrations, the tone is never patronising, and the issues discussed are fundamental for child and adult alike. Children constantly question, as parents and teachers are all too aware, but often their questions are more profound than mundane; sometimes practically unanswerable. The great strength of this book is that it not only offers conclusions, without being prescriptive, but demonstrates how one question can lead to a more crucial one. Dr. Law seems particularly adept at marrying the child's modern landscape: robots, aliens, computers, et al, with the that which remains eternal. Feeding the enquiring mind is part of real nurturing, and therefore I recommend this book to parents and teachers alike.

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