Thinking Toolbox (D)

Why do you believe what you believe? How do you evaluate a claim, consider the evidence, and explain your reasons clearly? Following our study of The Fallacy Detective, this course will develop students' reasoning skills through The Thinking Toolbox. Whereas our previous study helped students recognise common errors in reasoning, this course introduces practical tools for thinking carefully, evaluating explanations, and reaching well-supported conclusions. It also provides a valuable foundation for further study through Jason Lisle's Introduction to Logic, including its treatment of informal fallacies, and eventually Introductory Logic: The Fundamentals of Thinking Well, by James B. Nance and Douglas Wilson.

We seek to honour God through thinking logically and rightly. Right reasoning reflects God's truthful and consistent character, and students will be encouraged to bring their thinking into submission to the truth of Scripture. This course offers an accessible and enjoyable way to develop these habits.

The book's 35 lessons progress through four main areas:
1. Foundations of reasoning
Students learn to distinguish discussion from conflict, separate facts from opinions and inferences, identify supporting reasons and conclusions, examine their own arguments, and pause before responding.

2. Evaluating different viewpoints
Students compare competing explanations, assess evidence and sources, consider credibility, and distinguish what is possible from what is probable. Mystery exercises help them practise drawing justified conclusions.

3. Reasoning in scientific investigation
Students develop skills in observation, brainstorming, forming and testing hypotheses, evaluating experiments, and interpreting data. They also consider how to distinguish sound scientific investigation from misleading claims.

4. Applying the thinking tools
Projects bring these skills together through problem-solving, setting goals, and organising ideas.

Learning, preparation and discussion

Class approach
Classes will involve discussing the assigned chapter's content, working through students' answers, and addressing their questions. The facilitator will introduce one or two additional examples or situations beyond those in the book to test students' understanding and help them apply what they have learned.

Students will be encouraged to explain how they reached their answers. When answers differ, we will discuss the reasoning behind them and consider whether the conclusions are justified. Through these conversations, we will connect the book's thinking tools with careful reasoning in everyday life.

Preparation and homework
Students should come to each class having read the assigned chapter and completed its exercises.
The exercises are generally brief and may involve a single word, a true-or-false response, or a short answer. Their purpose is to check understanding and practise applying the thinking tools in different situations. Students should give thoughtful answers and be ready to explain their reasoning during class.

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What we will encourage throughout the year:

- Think carefully rather than guess.
- Examine their thinking in the light of Scripture.
- Ask questions when something is unclear.
- Explain how they reached a conclusion, even when their answer differs from someone else's.
- Listen carefully and discuss differences respectfully.
- Receive correction and reconsider an answer when necessary.
- Express their convictions clearly, patiently and gently.

A biblical approach to discussion

Thinking rightly must be accompanied by speaking rightly. In 2 Timothy 2:23–25, Paul instructs the Lord's servant to avoid foolish controversies, show kindness, teach patiently, and correct opponents gently. Our confidence rests in God, who can grant repentance and bring people to a knowledge of the truth.

"correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" 2 Timothy 2:25, ESV

Our aim is therefore to develop both clear reasoning and gracious communication: students who pursue truth, explain their convictions responsibly, and engage others with patience and humility.

Required Textbook:	Thinking Toolbox by Nathaniel Bluedorn and Hans Bluedorn
Resources:	Internet for online class
Credit:	None