



**school of thought • org**

THE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT INTERNATIONAL

A registered 501c3 non-profit organization

“We need to teach kids how to think  
not what to think”



We live in the most rapidly changing time in all of human history.

From the spectre of technological and climate change, through to profound economic and geopolitical shifts, the rate of change we're currently experiencing is unprecedented.

That's why now, more than ever, the need to teach creative and critical thinking skills to the next generation is so very critical.







While every teacher agrees that we need to help kids develop effective thinking skills beyond mere knowledge to rise to these challenges, the problem is that no one knows how to shift the course of the massive machine that is our education system.

But what if instead of trying to change the system from within like so many before us, we took a smarter and more innovative approach?





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The School of Thought provides free effective thinking resources to teachers and students, using world's best practices from the advertising and design industries.

The hypothesis is that if we use the same creative engagement employed to sell people things they probably don't need, but for education instead, then it might just make learning how to think something that's genuinely interesting and effective. The thing about hypotheses, though, is that they need to be tested...





# PROOF OF CONCEPT :

The resources available to the education sector usually preclude the creation of highly engaging materials that resonate with students. So, what if we simply created them and gave them to schools for free?

Using world-class design, copywriting and code we created a microsite that took the heady critical thinking subject of 'logical fallacies' (which are flaws in reasoning often used by politicians and the media to fool people) and condensed each fallacy into a single, simple sentence that anyone could understand.

The results? yourlogicalfallacyis.com has received over 7.8 million unique visitors and is being used in thousands of schools all around the world including Harvard.

It has hit the front page of reddit.com several times, been tweeted by prominent public intellectuals such as Stephen Fry, and the free poster has been downloaded millions of times and hangs in kids' bedrooms all over the world in over a dozen languages. All with zero marketing budget, and only organic viral spread.

And we just proved the value of this model again with the launch of a sister site on cognitive biases that is also being used is schools the world over, was featured in lifehacker.com, buzzfeed.com and hit the front page of reddit.com two days after launching. Check it out at:

www.yourbias.is

# www.yourlogicalfallacyis.com

7,927,522  
UNIQUE VISITORS

49,169,922  
TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

5,453,129  
POSTER DOWNLOADS



by @bengoldacre @stephenfry @jimmywales @pzmyers @doctorkarl +000s more

**strawman**

**Misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack.**

By exaggerating, misrepresenting, or just completely fabricating someone's argument, it's much easier to present your own position as being reasonable, but this kind of dishonesty serves to undermine rational debate.

After Will said that we should put more money into health and education, Warren responded by saying that he was surprised that Will takes our country so much that he wants to leave it defenceless by cutting military spending.

**false cause**

**Presuming that a real or perceived relationship between things means that one is the cause of the other.**

Many people confuse correlation (things happening together) or in sequence for causation (that one thing actually causes the other to happen). Sometimes correlation is coincidental, or it may be attributable to a common cause.

Pointing to a fancy chart, Roger shows how temperatures have been rising over the past few centuries, whilst at the same time the numbers of plagues have been decreasing. This proves cool the world and global warming is a hoax.

**slippery slope**

**Asserting that if we allow A to happen, then B will consequently happen too, therefore A should not happen.**

The problem with this reasoning is that it avoids engaging with the issue at hand, and instead draws attention to baseless extreme hypotheticals. The merits of the original argument are then masked by unsubstantiated conjecture.

Cider Cider asserts that if we allow warms we could be to marry, then the next thing we know we'll be allowing people to marry their parents, their cars and even monkeys.

**ad hominem**

**Attacking your opponent's character or personal traits in an attempt to undermine their argument.**

Ad hominem attacks can take the form of overtly attacking somebody, or casting doubt on their character. The result of an ad hominem attack can be to undermine someone without actually engaging with the substance of their argument.

After Sally presents an eloquent and compelling case for a more equitable taxation system, Sam tells the audience whatever we should believe anything from a woman who isn't married, was once arrested, and smells a bit weird.

**special pleading**

**Moving the goalposts or making up exceptions when a claim is shown to be false.**

It's harder to get things made and present your own position as being reasonable, but this kind of dishonesty serves to undermine rational debate.

Edward Jones claimed to be psychic, but when he 'skilled', viewers were tested under proper scientific conditions. They magically disappeared. Edward explained this saying that one had to have faith in his abilities for them to work.

**loaded question**

**Asking a question that has an assumption built into it so that it can't be answered without appearing guilty.**

Loaded questions are often used to put someone in a difficult position because of the inflammatory nature of the question. The loaded question is to persuade a debate and to appear innocent on the back foot.

Grace and Helen were both romantically interested in Brad. One day with Brad sitting with another, Grace asked in an inquisitive tone whether Helen was having any problems with a long-distance relationship.

**the gambler's fallacy**

**Believing that 'runs' occur to statistically independent phenomena such as roulette wheel spins.**

The commonly believed fallacy can be used to have helped create a city in the desert of Nevada, USA. Though the overall odds of a spin not happening may be low, each spin of the wheel is statistically independent from the last.

Paul had come up to interview a man at the casino wheel, but only then that it was close to confirm that Paul would be next to suffer an economic form of natural selection with this thing, he soon lost all of his savings.

**bandwagon**

**Appealing to popularity or the fact that many people do something as an attempted form of validation.**

The flaw in this argument is that the popularity of an idea has absolutely no bearing on its validity. If it did, then the Earth would have made itself flat for most of history to accommodate this popular belief.

Shirley pointed a statistic finger at Sam and asked him to explain how so many people could believe in vampires if they're only a silly old superstition. Sam, however, had had a few too many Guinness himself and let off his chest.

**appeal to authority**

**Saying that because an authority thinks something, it must therefore be true.**

It's important to note that the popularity of an idea has absolutely no bearing on its validity. If it did, then the Earth would have made itself flat for most of history to accommodate this popular belief.

Not able to defend his position that evolution isn't true, Bob says that he knows a scientist who also believes evolution isn't true, presumably just himself a pretence.

**composition /division**

**Assuming that what's true about one part of something has to be applied to all, or other, parts of it.**

Often when something is true for the part it does also apply to the whole, but because this isn't always the case it can be assumed to be true. We must show evidence for why a consistency will exist.

Daniel was a successful child and had a long list of things he needed that adults are invisible, and that he was made of atoms and therefore invisible too. Unfortunately, despite his tricky skills, he lost the game of hide and go seek.

**black-or-white**

**When two alternative states are presented as the only possibilities, when in fact more possibilities exist.**

Also known as the false dilemma, this fallacious tactic has the appearance of forcing a logical argument, but under closer scrutiny it becomes evident that there are more possibilities than the either/or choice that is presented.

While asking support for his plan to fundamentally undermine citizens' rights, the Supreme Leader told the people they were either on his side or on the side of the enemy.

**begging the question**

**A circular argument in which the conclusion is included in the premise.**

The logically incoherent argument often arises in situations where people have an assumption that is very ingrained, and therefore taken in their minds as a given. Circular reasoning is best avoided because it's not very good.

The word of John the Great is flawless and perfect. We know this because it appears in The Great and Fabulous Book of John the Great and Most True and Things that are Definitely True and Should Be Given the Questioned.

**appeal to nature**

**Making the argument that because something is 'natural' it is therefore valid, justified, inevitable, good, or ideal.**

Many 'natural' things are also considered good, and this can bias our thinking but reassures that doesn't make something good or bad. For instance, murder could be seen as very natural, but that doesn't mean it's justifiable.

The medicine man asked to test on his bandwagon offering various natural remedies, such as very special deer water. He said that it was only natural that people should be very of 'natural' medicines like antibiotics.

**anecdotal**

**Using personal experience or an isolated example instead of a valid argument, especially to dismiss statistics.**

It's often much easier for people to believe someone's testimony as opposed to understanding varying data across a continuum. Scientific and statistical measures are almost always more accurate than individual perceptions and experience.

The makers of Suggesto Candy Drinks point to research showing that of the five countries where Suggesto drinks and the most adults, three of them are in the top ten wealthiest countries on Earth, therefore Suggesto drinks are healthy.

**no true scotsman**

**Making what could be called an appeal to purity as a way to dismiss relevant criticisms or flaws of an argument.**

This fallacy is often employed as a measure of last resort when a point has been lost. Saying that a criticism is valid, yet not wanting to admit it, new criteria are invoked to disassociate oneself or one's arguments.

Angus declares that Scotland is not just a game in their portfolio. Scotland, Leuchan points out that he is a Scotsman and puts sugar on his portfolio. Furious, he is a true Scot. Angus yells that no true Scotsman suggests his portfolio.

**the texas sharpshooter**

**Cherry-picking data clusters to suit an argument, or finding a pattern to fit a presumption.**

The 'false cause' fallacy is covered after a mathematician shooting at barns and then pointing a bulseye target around the spot where the most bullet holes appear. Chatter naturally suggest by chance, and don't necessarily indicate causation.

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**the fallacy fallacy**

**Presuming a claim to be necessarily wrong because a fallacy has been committed.**

It is entirely possible to make a claim that is false yet argue with logical coherence for that claim, just as it is possible to make a claim that is true and justify it with various fallacies and poor arguments.

Recognising that Amanda had committed a fallacy, it's wrong that we should eat healthy food because a nutritional said it was popular. After said we should therefore eat bacon double cheeseburgers every day.

**personal incredulity**

**Saying that because one finds something difficult to understand, it's therefore not true.**

Subjects such as biological evolution via the process of natural selection require a good amount of understanding before one is able to properly grasp them. This fallacy is usually used in place of that understanding.

We drew a picture of a fish and a human with white fluid-filled vessels. Richard the welly thought we were stupid enough to believe that a fish somehow turned into a human through just, like, random things happening over time.

**ambiguity**

**Using double meanings or ambiguities of language to mislead or misrepresent the truth.**

Language is very complex and can be used in many ways to mislead and to make people to how they were technically not wrong, giving if they come under scrutiny to a particularly tricky and potentially difficult to follow.

When the judge asked the defendant why he hadn't paid his parking fees, he said that he shouldn't have to pay them because the sign said 'Free for parking here, and so he reasonably presumed that it would be free to park there.

**burden of proof**

**Saying that the burden of proof lies not with the person making the claim, but with someone else to disprove.**

Logical fallacies are often used to put someone in a difficult position because of the inflammatory nature of the question. The loaded question is to persuade a debate and to appear innocent on the back foot.

Forward declares that a target is at this moment, in orbit around the Sun between the Earth and Mars, and that because no one can prove him wrong he claims it therefore is a valid one.

**appeal to emotion**

**Manipulating an emotional response in place of a valid or compelling argument.**

Appeals to emotion include appeals to fear, envy, hatred, pity, guilt, and more. Though a valid and respected argument may sometimes have an emotional aspect, one must be careful that emotion doesn't obscure or replace reason.

Lulu didn't have to be too deeply think with chocolate and chocolate spreads, but his father told him to think about the poor starving children in a third world country who weren't fortunate enough to have any food at all.

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We drew a picture of a fish and a human with white fluid-filled vessels. Richard the welly thought we were stupid enough to believe that a fish somehow turned into a human through just, like, random things happening over time.

**ambiguity**

**Using double meanings or ambiguities of language to mislead or misrepresent the truth.**

Language is very complex and can be used in many ways to mislead and to make people to how they were technically not wrong, giving if they come under scrutiny to a particularly tricky and potentially difficult to follow.

When the judge asked the defendant why he hadn't paid his parking fees, he said that he shouldn't have to pay them because the sign said 'Free for parking here, and so he reasonably presumed that it would be free to park there.

**burden of proof**

**Saying that the burden of proof lies not with the person making the claim, but with someone else to disprove.**

Logical fallacies are often used to put someone in a difficult position because of the inflammatory nature of the question. The loaded question is to persuade a debate and to appear innocent on the back foot.

Forward declares that a target is at this moment, in orbit around the Sun between the Earth and Mars, and that because no one can prove him wrong he claims it therefore is a valid one.

**appeal to emotion**

**Manipulating an emotional response in place of a valid or compelling argument.**

Appeals to emotion include appeals to fear, envy, hatred, pity, guilt, and more. Though a valid and respected argument may sometimes have an emotional aspect, one must be careful that emotion doesn't obscure or replace reason.

Lulu didn't have to be too deeply think with chocolate and chocolate spreads, but his father told him to think about the poor starving children in a third world country who weren't fortunate enough to have any food at all.

**the fallacy fallacy**

**Presuming a claim to be necessarily wrong because a fallacy has been committed.**

It is entirely possible to make a claim that is false yet argue with logical coherence for that claim, just as it is possible to make a claim that is true and justify it with various fallacies and poor arguments.

Recognising that Amanda had committed a fallacy, it's wrong that we should eat healthy food because a nutritional said it was popular. After said we should therefore eat bacon double cheeseburgers every day.

**personal incredulity**

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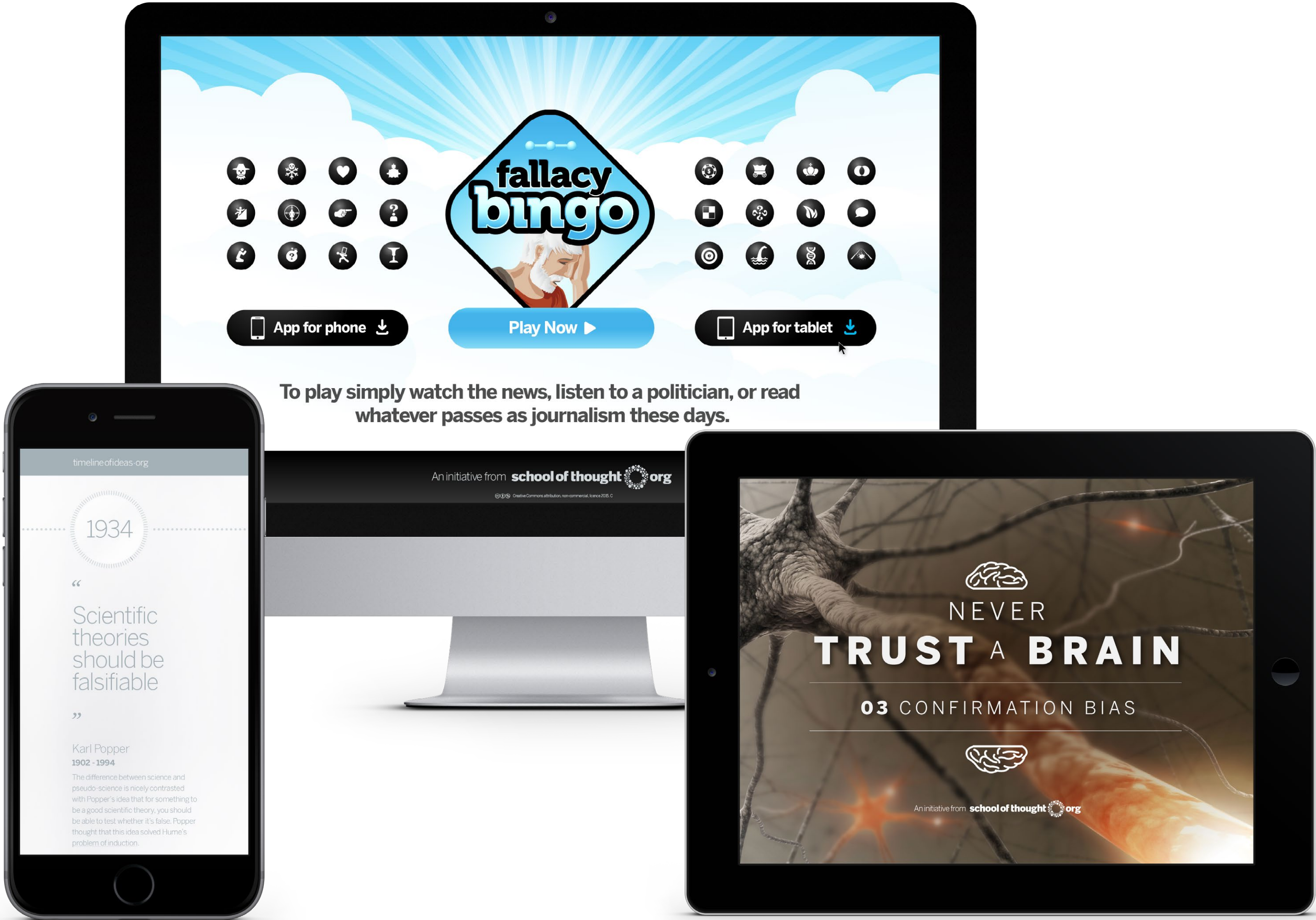


# WHAT NEXT?

The School of Thought is a registered 501c3 non profit and is now seeking funding to create a comprehensive suite of freely available online resources that empower teachers and students to learn creative and critical thinking skills anywhere, at any time.

From an interactive timeline of the most interesting philosophical ideas in history through to fully integrated and customisable modular curricula on critical thinking, the purpose of The School of Thought is to help us rise to the challenges of the 21st Century with clear eyes and creative minds.

This is perhaps the most pivotal point in all of human history, and we need your help to move toward a positive future based in reason.





# ADVISORY COUNCIL



**Gabriel Weinberg**

CEO & Founder [duckduckgo.com](https://duckduckgo.com)

Gabriel is a successful serial entrepreneur with a wealth of experience in business, digital product development, partnerships and tech operations.

[www.duckduckgo.com/about](https://www.duckduckgo.com/about)



**Julia Galef**

President Center for Applied Rationality

Julia is a prominent skeptic and public intellectual who hosts the popular Rationally Speaking podcast with guests such as Peter Singer, Ben Goldacre and Neil DeGrasse Tyson.

[www.rationality.org](https://www.rationality.org)



**David McRaney**

Author of international best-selling book 'You Are Not So Smart'

David is the author of two best-selling books and the popular blog and podcast at [youarenotsosmart.com](https://youarenotsosmart.com). He will be contributing feedback as well as providing collaborative input to The School of Thought's projects.

[www.youarenotsosmart.com](https://www.youarenotsosmart.com)



**Deborah Hyde**

Editor The Skeptic Magazine

Deborah is a British skeptic, folklorist, cultural anthropologist and Editor-in-Chief of The Skeptic Magazine. She writes extensively about skepticism, folklore, paranormal activities and critical thinking.

[www.skeptic.org.uk](https://www.skeptic.org.uk)



**Peter Ellerton**

Founder UQ Critical Thinking Project

Peter is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Queensland, and is leading the Critical Thinking Project, as well as several programs teaching critical thinking in schools.

[www.ctp.uq.edu.au](https://www.ctp.uq.edu.au)



**Dan Brown**

Partner DLA Piper Legal

Dan is a partner at the Brisbane office of the third largest legal firm in the world, DLA Piper. He will be advising The School of Thought with regard to all legal and structural matters.

[www.dlapiper.com](https://www.dlapiper.com)



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Jesse Richardson**  
President of The School of Thought

Jesse is the founder of The School of Thought and is the driving force behind the platform.

He is an internationally award-winning art director and copywriter, has 20 years experience in the design and advertising industries, and before founding the School of Thought was creative director of global digital design agency Josephmark.

He is responsible for creating three of Australia’s most successful viral campaigns, and is an industry expert in digital marketing, design, and user experience.

He is now balancing out his ethical karma by using his advertising and marketing skills for good instead of evil

He is an outspoken advocate of rationality, science, and teaching critical thinking in schools.



**Jim Strachan**  
Creative Director of The School of Thought

Jim is an advertising creative with more than 20 years of experience creating award-winning campaigns for some of the world’s biggest and best brands. Having worked in agencies including Y&R, Publicis and McCann, he brings a wealth of experience creating world-class concepts and executions.

As Creative Director and Director of School of Thought, Jim is passionate about using his skills to create simple, effective learning resources that will help change the world, for good.

Outside of work he’s guitar player, sports tragic, husband and father – but certainly not in that order.



**Barry Silverberg**  
Treasurer and Secretary of The School of Thought

Barry is the Director Center for Non Profit Studies, Austin Community College, as well as the Co-Principal of Silverberg Associates, and has over 40 years experience as a leader in the non profit sector.

He has consulted with hundreds of nonprofits and is known for his Strategic Thinking Leadership Gathering that focuses on Board engagement to create and sustain highly effective organizations.

Formerly Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations CEO and volunteer leader for 13 years, Barry served on two Texas Legislature task forces and helped develop recommendations that led to the Texas Nonprofit Council.

Barry is leading The School of Thought’s development in the USA and brings his extensive experience in the non profit sector to bear.



## COLLABORATORS



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND

### The University of Queensland Critical Thinking Project

The Critical Thinking Project has been set up to develop and disseminate research into critical thinking.

Leading academic scholars from UQ's School of Historical & Philosophical Inquiry have been engaged to create various resources to empower staff, teachers, and the general public to apply the benefits of critical thinking in both professional and personal contexts.

The Critical Thinking Project will be collaborating with The School of Thought to provide academic rigour and input with regard to pedagogical research and implementation.

[www.ctp.uq.edu.au](http://www.ctp.uq.edu.au)

# JOSEPHMARK

### Josephmark

Josephmark is a global design agency specialising in pushing the boundaries where technology and design meet.

Creators and co-founders of the We Are Hunted platform that was acquired by Twitter, they went on to be appointed to redesign the new Myspace (to great critical acclaim), and have recently launched the similarly acclaimed #hash twitter platform. Their motion design company Breeder also created the opening titles for the first season of True Detective for which they won an Emmy for Outstanding Main Title Design.

Josephmark are The School of Thought's official design partners and will be providing strategic, graphic, and user experience design support.

[www.josephmark.com.au](http://www.josephmark.com.au)



### Flip Creative

Flip are a full service digital agency who have a wealth of experience in digital design and programming.

Their great value lies in bridging the gap between design and code.

They will be providing The School of Thought with programming expertise from both a back-end and system operations infrastructure point of view, as well as front end code creation and implementation.

[www.weareflip.com](http://www.weareflip.com)



# INTRODUCTORY VIDEOS


Click to view the School of Thought introductory video (2.5 minutes)



Click to view the School of Thought TEDx talk (18 minutes)







*Give a man a fish,  
feed him for a day, teach a  
child to think and she'll grow up  
to enact legislation that saves  
our resources for future  
generations*



# Asset 1 : timelineofideas.org

## Sparking an interest in philosophy can have a profound effect on someone’s life.

timelineofideas.org will provide a fun introduction to the more interesting ideas of philosophy (without having to read a dusty old book full of dense, archaic language).

Following the same model that made the fallacies site successful, timelineofideas.org will take ideas such as those espoused by Plato, Kant or Sartre, and distill and simplify them so that anyone and everyone can understand them.

Using best practice design and communication principles to create a highly engaging asset, timelineofideas.org promises to help popularize philosophy by making it accessible and interesting.

The site will be fully responsive and published under a creative commons license so that students, teachers and the general public will be able to access the resource anywhere and everywhere.

Each idea has its own bespoke page with expanded explanations, recommended reading, and relevant links.

Every idea page also features a curated piece of crowd-sourced artwork inspired by that particular idea which can be downloaded or shared as a poster or desktop wallpaper for free under a creative commons license. This means that a viral sharing mechanism is built into the asset (example poster design on the following page).







“

I think therefore I am

”

René Descartes **1596 – 1650**

Cogito Ergo Sum translates as 'I think therefore I am' and is one of the most well-known philosophical ideas.

Essentially it's saying that if someone is able to be thinking about themselves, then this at least must be true - even if everything else might be an illusion.


timelineofideas.org

Download this artwork for free as a poster or desktop wallpaper at the website. You can also find out more about this and other interesting ideas throughout history.

 [timelineofideas.org/1625](https://www.timelineofideas.org/1625)

AN INITIATIVE FROM **school of thought**  **org**

Artwork created by @artistexample

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# Asset 2 : Fallacy Bingo App & Website

A website and app that builds on the success of yourlogicalfallacyis.com to provide students and the public with a fun, social and interactive way to explore logical fallacies.

One of the most fun and effective ways to learn fallacies is to spot them ‘in the wild’. This app means that students can watch the news, a presidential debate, or any other form of rhetorical media to spot logical fallacies and play by themselves or against their classmates or friends to be the first to get ‘Fallacy Bingo’ by getting three fallacies in a row.

In addition to the Fallacy Bingo game functionality, the app allows users to explore the fallacies’ descriptions and examples.

Fallacy Bingo provides a highly engaging way for students to learn about the fallacies in a native context.





# Asset 3 : Never Trust A Brain video series

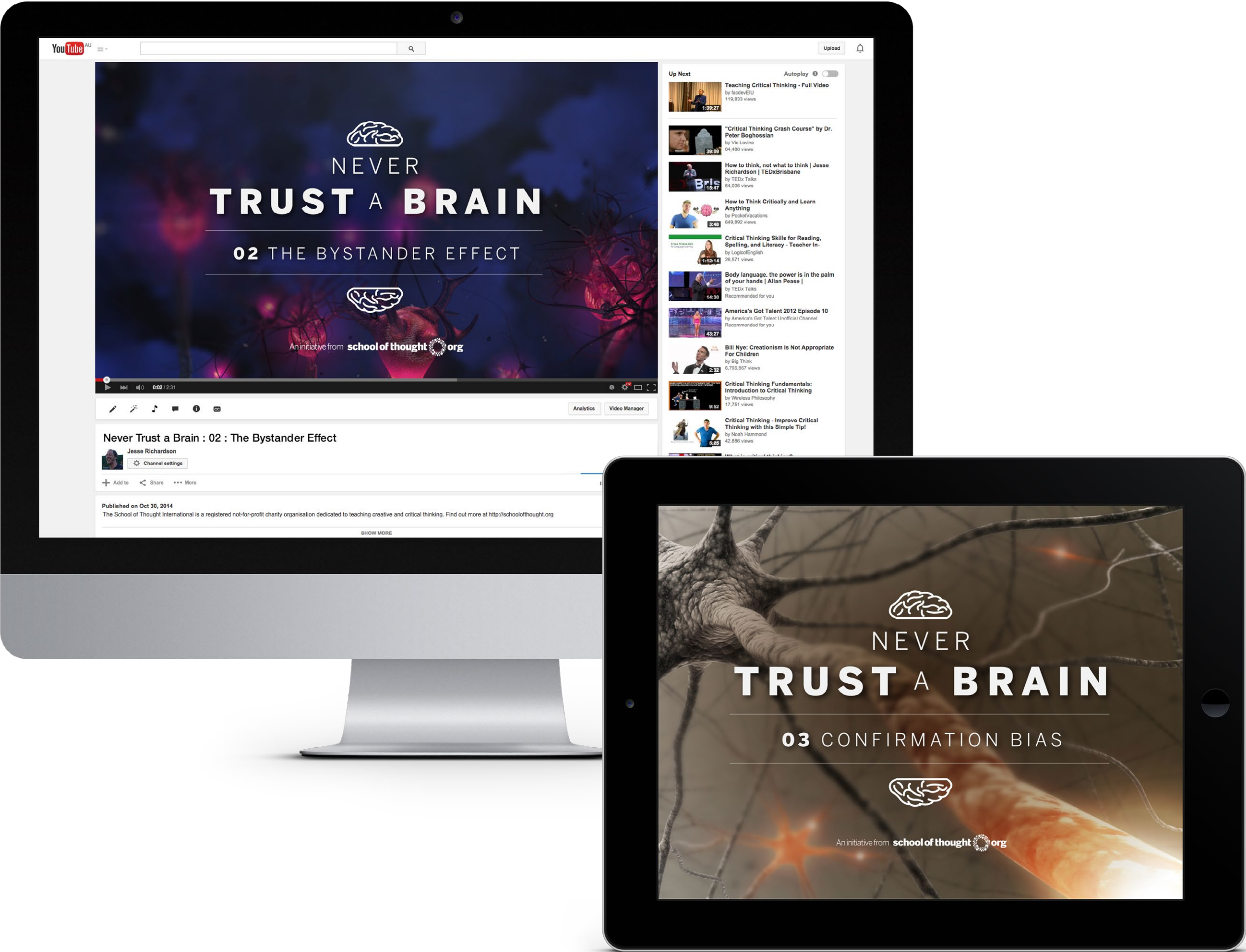
A monthly viral video web series exploring cognitive biases. Each episode explores a particular bias and runs for 5-10 minutes.

Using humour, high-end animation, and engaging content, each episode of Never Trust a Brain gives the viewer a quick yet comprehensive lesson on a particular cognitive bias.

Cognitive biases affect all of us, and becoming aware of the tricks our brains play on us, and the effects of our own predispositions and flaws in thinking, can profoundly change a person’s life.

Big decisions as well as small everyday judgements are affected by the many cognitive biases that humans are susceptible to.

By creating a virally shareable video resource, Never Trust a Brain will significantly improve the thinking of students, their teachers, and the world at large.





# Asset 4 : An Interesting Conversation Podcast

**We don’t learn very well by having someone dictate to us, we learn by following our curiosity; by listening to interesting things and having our minds set alight by new ideas.**

This new podcast format invites curated guests as well as the general public to have a passionate, curious, heated and/or interesting conversation on a particular subject every week.

Using a question from the A Curious Question app as a jumping off point, An Interesting Conversation will explore philosophy, politics, ethics, technology, and myriad other curious subjects.

With the power of editing, we’ll take dozens of interesting conversation on the same subject, and pick out the most controversial, inspiring and amazing bits to create a weekly hour-long podcast that is jam-packed with snippets of interesting conversations.

What makes this format truly unique is that the show notes will have direct links to the full expanded 10 - 12 conversations, so if you find a particular conversation particularly interesting, you’ll be able to dive into a much bigger discussion; and also join the conversation yourself on the website.





## Ultimate Goal : A comprehensive, free, gamified online school

**Each of these assets is helping us build towards an online platform that is free for students and teachers to access all around the world.**

A fully modular curriculum will allow students to increase their Acumen Score by engaging with various assets, taking online tests, and collaborating with other students around the world.

The beauty of digital products is that they can be perpetually enriched through iteration, evolution and application to new areas.

The School of Thought will seek to make integration with school curricula in countries all over the world as simple, effective and viable as possible.

A physical campus is also planned for the future offering intensive courses in creative and critical thinking practice for both





## THE ASK

**The School of Thought is looking for sponsors.**

**Will you back us?**

By sponsoring The School of Thought, you may be contributing to one of the most important projects of our time.

Can you help us to make a profound difference to millions of people's lives, and the future of our planet?

Your partnership will be recognised and accredited on all assets, communications, and press releases.

If you see the value of teaching the next generation to think independently, please contact us via **[jesse@schoolofthought.org](mailto:jesse@schoolofthought.org)**







THE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

A registered 501c3 non-profit. EIN: 81-3242323  
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