



# A Companion to John Dewey's "Democracy and Education"

*D. C. Phillips*

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This year marks the centenary publication of John Dewey's magnum opus, *Democracy and Education*. Despite its profound importance as a foundational text in education, it is notoriously difficult and—dare we say it—a little dry. In this charming and often funny companion, noted philosopher of education D. C. Phillips goes chapter by chapter to bring Dewey to a twenty-first-century audience. Drawing on over fifty years of thinking about this book—and on his own experiences as an educator—he lends it renewed clarity and a personal touch that proves its lasting importance.

Phillips bridges several critical pitfalls of *Democracy and Education* that often prevent contemporary readers from fully understanding it. Where Dewey sorely needs a detailed example to illustrate a point—and the times are many—Phillips steps in, presenting cases from his own classroom experiences. Where Dewey casually refers to the works of people like Hegel, Herbart, and Locke—common knowledge, apparently, in 1916—Phillips fills in the necessary background. And where Dewey gets convoluted or is even flat-out wrong, Phillips does what few other scholars would do: he takes Dewey to task. The result is a lively accompaniment that helps us celebrate and be enriched by some of the most important ideas ever offered in education.

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