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Paul Elbourne

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MEANING

*A slim guide to
semantics*



PAUL ELBOURNE

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Paul Elbourne : Meaning: A Slim Guide to Semantics (Oxford Linguistics) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Meaning: A Slim Guide to Semantics (Oxford Linguistics):

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Lively introduction to Semantics By wbman Meaning by Paul Elbourne was a book that was optional for my course in Semantics, but it was much more than dry academic textbook speak. It combines an introduction to very esoteric, complicated linguistic jargon with lively and stimulating anecdotes

and semantic problems. The only problem I found was that it is a little expensive for a simple semantics primer, but I doubt you'd find a better option on the market. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. **THE BEST SEMANTIC ENTERTAINER** By Customer This was the most delightful book I read on semantics. Of course, it is not for specialists. It is for a curious reader as myself with some philosophical interest in the matter. If you look this book from this humble perspective you will have in your hands the best example of the kind. 2 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Purchased this book for a linguistics course. This book is a little ridiculous. By Diana This book is kind of silly. There is a bit of a trend with semantics books to be very verbose and flowery. I definitely laughed out loud from some of the ways the author introduces concepts. It is wordy, unnecessarily introspective, and over-the-top philosophical. He really enjoys tying in religion to discussions that have nothing to do with religion. This book still covers very important topics in semantics, so it was still worthwhile.

Our outstanding ability to communicate is a distinguishing feature of our species. To communicate is to convey meaning, but what is meaning? How do words combine to give us the meanings of sentences? And what makes a statement ambiguous or nonsensical? These questions and many others are addressed in Paul Elbourne's fascinating guide. He opens by asking what kinds of things the meanings of words and sentences could be: are they, for example, abstract objects or psychological entities? He then looks at how we understand a sequence of words we have never heard before; he considers to what extent the meaning of a sentence can be derived from the words it contains and how to account for the meanings that can't be; and he examines the roles played by time, place, and the shared and unshared assumptions of speakers and hearers. He looks at how language interacts with thought and the intriguing question of whether what language we speak affects the way we see the world. Meaning, as might be expected, is far from simple. Paul Elbourne explores its complex issues in crystal clear language. He draws on approaches developed in linguistics, philosophy, and psychology -- assuming a knowledge of none of them -- in a manner that will appeal to everyone interested in this essential element of human psychology and culture.

"This is a perfect guide to what semantics is all about. The book is informative, scholarly, witty, entertaining, and funny. It doesn't shy away from hard puzzles and unsolved problems, and places semantics where it belongs: at the intersection of linguistics, logic, metaphysics, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience." --Angelika Kratzer, University of Massachusetts at Amherst "The book is a well-written guide for anyone who wants to get a complete picture of what semantics is about...Elbourne inspires the reader to think about problems in semantics. Additionally, he shows that semantics is not a subject only for scientists, but rather a daily matter with consequences concerning life and death. Surprisingly, Elbourne does all of this without boring the reader." --Linguist List "An unintimidating and admirable entry-point into both the technical and the philosophical dimensions of semantics." --Daniel Harris, Mind "Elbourne writes lively prose and he conveys the sense that the contemporary study of meaning is rich, exciting and developing rapidly." --Philosophy in About the Author Paul Elbourne is Reader in Semantics at Queen Mary, University of London. He is the author of *Situations and Individuals* (MIT Press, 2005) and numerous articles in linguistics and philosophy journals.