



The Making of Americans: Democracy and Our Schools

E. D. Hirsch Jr.

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From the bestselling author of *Cultural Literacy*, a passionate and cogent argument for reforming the way we teach our children

Why, after decades of commissions, reforms, and efforts at innovation, do our schools continue to disappoint us? In this comprehensive and thought-provoking book, educational theorist E. D. Hirsch, Jr. offers a masterful analysis of how American ideas about education have veered off course, what we must do to right them, and most importantly *why*. He argues that the core problem with American education is that educational theorists, especially in the early grades, have for the past sixty years rejected academic content in favor of “child-centered” and “how-to” learning theories that are at odds with how children really learn. The result is failing schools and widening inequality, as only children from content-rich (usually better-off) homes can take advantage of the schools’ educational methods.

Hirsch unabashedly confronts the education establishment, arguing that a content-based curriculum is essential to addressing social and economic inequality. A nationwide, specific, grade-by-grade curriculum established in the early school grades can help fulfill one of America’s oldest and most compelling dreams: to give all children, regardless of language, religion, or origins, the opportunity to participate as equals and become competent citizens. Hirsch not only reminds us of these inspiring ideals, he offers an ambitious and specific plan for achieving them.

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