

TWENTY COMMON

LOGICAL FALLACIES

BE A CRITICAL THINKER. DON'T DELEGATE THINKING.

Ad Hominem Fallacy This translates as “to the man” and refers to any attacks on the person advancing the argument, rather than on the validity of the evidence or logic.

Straw Man Fallacy When your opponent over-simplifies or misrepresents your argument (i.e., setting up a “straw man”) to make it easier to attack or refute. Instead of fully addressing your actual argument, speakers relying on this fallacy present a superficially similar—but ultimately not equal—version of your real stance, helping them create the illusion of easily defeating you.

Bandwagon Fallacy Just because a significant population of people believe a proposition is true, doesn't automatically make it true.

Genetic Fallacy Judging something as good or bad based on its origins alone.

Appeal to Ignorance Fallacy Thinking a claim is true (or false) because it can't be proven true (or false).

Appeal to Tradition Fallacy Believing something is right just because it's been around for a really long time.

Appeal to Emotion Fallacy Trying to persuade someone by manipulating their emotions (such as fear, anger, or ridicule) rather than making a rational case.

Appeal to Authority Fallacy Believing just because an authority or “expert” believes something then it must be true.

Anecdotal Evidence Fallacy In place of logical evidence, this fallacy substitutes examples from someone's personal experience. Arguments that rely heavily on anecdotal evidence tend to overlook the fact that one (possibly isolated) example can't stand alone as definitive proof of a greater premise.

Texas Sharp Shooter Fallacy Cherry picking. Only choosing a few examples that support your argument, rather than looking at the full picture.

Ambiguity Fallacy Using double meaning or ambiguity of language to mislead or misrepresent the truth.

False Dilemma Fallacy Black-and-white. This common fallacy misleads by presenting complex issues in terms of two inherently opposed sides.

Correlation/Causation Fallacy If two things appear to be correlated, this doesn't necessarily indicate that one of those things irrefutably caused the other thing.

Slippery Slope Fallacy Taking an argument to an exaggerated extreme. “If we let A happen, then Z will happen.”

Middle Ground Fallacy Assumes that a compromise between two extreme conflicting points is always true. Arguments of this style ignore the possibility that one or both of the extremes could be completely true or false—rendering any form of compromise between the two invalid as well.

Burden of Proof Fallacy If a person claims that X is true, it is their responsibility to provide evidence in support of that assertion. It is invalid to claim that X is true until someone else can prove that X is not true. Similarly, it is also invalid to claim that X is true because it's impossible to prove that X is false.

Personal Incredulity Fallacy If you have difficulty understanding how or why something is true, that doesn't automatically mean the thing in question is false. A personal or collective lack of understanding isn't enough to render a claim invalid.

Tu Quoque Fallacy The tu quoque fallacy (Latin for “you also”) is an invalid attempt to discredit an opponent by answering criticism with criticism—but never actually presenting a counter-argument to the original disputed claim.

Begging the Question Fallacy Assuming the conclusion you're trying to prove. Presented as a circular argument in which the conclusion was included in the premise.

Fallacy Fallacy Here's something vital to keep in mind when sniffing out fallacies: just because someone's argument relies on a fallacy doesn't necessarily mean that their claim is inherently untrue.

Sources:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/common-logical-fallacies>

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