Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are arguments based on flawed logic. While logical fallacies can sometimes persuade an audience, they risk long-term damage to your credibility.

Examples of Logical Fallacies

**Ad hominem**: the writer attacks the opponent’s character instead of the opponent’s argument.

*Don’t listen to Dr. Brown—she’s just a loudmouthed egomaniac with an axe to grind.*

**Appeal to false authority**: the writer supports the argument with testimony from an unqualified or irrelevant authority figure.

*According to this famous soccer player, we should negotiate with the Middle East.*

**Bandwagon appeal**: the writer attempts to persuade the audience by arguing that most other people accept the argument.

*Ninety percent of Americans agree with my tax plan. Why don’t you?*

**False dichotomy**: the writer argues that there are only two possible stances toward an issue.

*Either you stand with us, or you stand with the enemy.*

**False equivalence**: the writer treats two incomparable things as if they were of equal magnitude.

*Sure, I plagiarized my paper. But he forgot to cite a quotation! Why aren’t you failing him?*

**Hasty generalization**: the writer makes an assumption about a group based on a few examples.

*I avoid classes taught by young professors. Every young professor I’ve had has been horrible.*

**Slippery slope**: the writer argues that one thing will lead to another, which will lead to another, and so on.

*If we cancel class on Friday, then soon students will want us to cancel on Thursday, then Wednesday. Eventually, there won’t even be a school day!*

**Straw man**: the writer misrepresents the opponent’s argument.

*If you oppose for-profit colleges, then you must want to see businesses fail.*