



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.