

A Field Guide to Bad Arguments

fallacy.is

Every entry has a short link

38 ways an argument goes wrong, and what to do about each one. Paste any short link into a discussion.

LOGICAL FALLACIES22

Ad Hominem

Attacking the person making an argument instead of the argument itself.
fallacy.is/ad-hominem or /ah

Anecdotal Evidence

Drawing a general conclusion from a single story or personal experience.
fallacy.is/anecdotal or /anec

Appeal to Authority

Using a person's status as proof of a claim, instead of the evidence behind the claim.
fallacy.is/appeal-to-authority or /aa

Appeal to Emotion

Substituting an emotional reaction for an argument about the facts.
fallacy.is/appeal-to-emotion or /ae

Appeal to Ignorance

Treating the absence of evidence against a claim as evidence for it, or vice versa.
fallacy.is/appeal-to-ignorance or /ai

Bandwagon

Treating how many people believe a claim as evidence that the claim is true.
fallacy.is/bandwagon or /bw

Cherry Picking

Presenting only the evidence that supports your case and ignoring the rest.
fallacy.is/cherry-picking or /cherrypicking

Circular Reasoning

Supporting a claim with the claim itself, dressed up in different words.
fallacy.is/circular-reasoning or /cr

Equivocation

Using a word in two different senses within the same argument, as if they were the same.
fallacy.is/equivocation or /equiv

False Cause

Concluding that one thing caused another based on correlation or sequence alone.
fallacy.is/false-cause or /fc

False Dichotomy

Framing a choice as two options when more exist.
fallacy.is/false-dichotomy or /fd

False Equivalence

Treating two things as equivalent when they differ in ways that matter to the argument.
fallacy.is/false-equivalence or /fe

Genetic Fallacy

Judging a claim by its source, origin, or history instead of its content.
fallacy.is/genetic-fallacy or /gf

Hasty Generalization

Drawing a broad conclusion from a sample too small or unrepresentative to support it.
fallacy.is/hasty-generalization or /hg

Loaded Question

Asking a question that smuggles in an unproven assumption the answerer can't address without conceding it.
fallacy.is/loaded-question or /lq

Middle Ground

Assuming the truth must lie halfway between two positions, simply because those are the two positions on offer.
fallacy.is/middle-ground or /mg

No True Scotsman

Redefining a category on the fly to exclude counterexamples, protecting a claim about the category.
fallacy.is/no-true-scotsman or /ntsm

Post Hoc

Assuming that because one thing followed another, the first caused the second.
fallacy.is/post-hoc or /ph

Red Herring

Introducing an irrelevant topic to distract from the actual argument.
fallacy.is/red-herring or /rh

Slippery Slope

Claiming a small step will inevitably cause a chain of extreme consequences, without showing why.
fallacy.is/slippery-slope or /ss

Straw Man

Replacing someone's argument with a weaker version, then knocking down the weaker version.
fallacy.is/straw-man or /strawman

Tu Quoque

Dismissing a critique by pointing out that the critic is guilty of the same thing.
fallacy.is/tu-quoque or /tq

COGNITIVE BIASES7

Anchoring

Letting an initial number or reference point pull later judgments toward it, even when that starting point is arbitrary.
fallacy.is/anchoring or /anchor

Availability Heuristic

Judging how likely something is by how easily examples come to mind.
fallacy.is/availability-heuristic or /availability

Confirmation Bias

The tendency to notice, remember, and trust evidence that supports what you already believe.
fallacy.is/confirmation-bias or /cb

Dunning-Kruger Effect

A pattern where people with limited competence in a domain tend to overestimate their ability in that domain.
fallacy.is/dunning-kruger or /dk

Gambler's Fallacy

Believing that past random outcomes change the odds of future independent ones.
fallacy.is/gamblers-fallacy or /gambler

Sunk Cost Fallacy

Continuing a course of action because of what has already been spent on it, rather than what it still offers.
fallacy.is/sunk-cost-fallacy or /sc

Survivorship Bias

Drawing conclusions from the things that made it through while ignoring the ones that didn't.
fallacy.is/survivorship-bias or /sb

RHETORICAL DEVICES2

Dog Whistle

Coded language that carries an extra meaning for a target subgroup while sounding innocuous to everyone else.
fallacy.is/dog-whistle or /dw

Whataboutism

Deflecting a criticism by raising a different criticism of the critic or their side.
fallacy.is/whataboutism or /wa

DEBATE TACTICS7

DARVO

Answering an accusation by denying it, attacking the accuser, and recasting yourself as the real victim.
fallacy.is/darvo or /dv

Gish Gallop

Burying an opponent in a flood of claims, too many and too fast to refute in real time.
fallacy.is/gish-gallop or /gg

Kafkatrap

An argument built so that denying the accusation counts as proof of the accusation.
fallacy.is/kafkatrap or /kt

Motte and Bailey

Defending a bold claim by retreating to a weaker, related claim when challenged, then returning to the bold claim later.
fallacy.is/motte-and-bailey or /mb

Moving the Goalposts

Dismissing evidence that meets your demand, then demanding new, harder evidence.
fallacy.is/moving-the-goalposts or /mtg

Sealioning

Hounding someone with relentless, polite requests for evidence to exhaust them rather than to understand.
fallacy.is/sealioning or /sealion

Shifting the Burden of Proof

Demanding your opponent disprove your claim instead of supporting it yourself.
fallacy.is/shifting-the-burden or /burden-of-proof