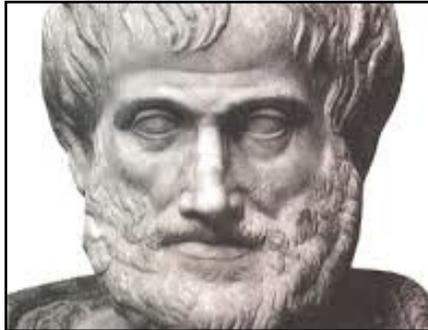


What Are Logical Fallacies?

According to the Purdue Writing Lab, “fallacies are common errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of your argument. Fallacies can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points and are often identified because they lack evidence that supports their claim. Avoid these common fallacies in your own arguments and watch for them in the arguments of others.”

Fallacies of Relevance



- **Appeal to Ignorance** is an argument that relies on the audience’s lack of knowledge about a subject.
- **Appeal to Fear** is an argument that relies on frightening the audience into an emotional response.
- **Appeal to Authority** can be a fallacy in three ways: a) the authority is not an expert in the field being discussed, b) the authority is being misrepresented, or c) analysis of the authority’s claim is misleading.
- **Appeal to Pity** is a logical fallacy that relies on the speaker appealing to the sympathy of his/her audience.
- **Ad Populum** is an appeal to popular sentiment of the crowd.
- **Gambler’s Fallacy** is the mistaken belief that if something happens more frequently than normal during some period, then it will happen less frequently in the future.

Fallacies of Inadequate Evidence

- **Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc** is a logical fallacy (of the questionable cause variety) which states, "Since that event followed this one, that event must have been caused by this one. Post hoc is a particularly tempting error because temporal sequence appears to be integral to causality.
- **Hasty Generalization** is an argument in which someone makes a broad claim based on too small of a sample size.

- **Unrepresentative Sample** is a variant of the hasty generalization, in which the speaker makes a conclusion from a sample that is not only too small, but not representative of the whole.
- **Fallacy of Exclusion** is a final error of hasty generalization, in which the speaker excludes (deliberately or not) a specific group or person to make her conclusion.
- **Distorting the Facts** is fallacy that depends on misleading interpretation of data, statistics or other factual information.

Fallacies of Illegitimate Assumption

- **False Dichotomy** is when a speaker presents a false choice of two options to the audience, hoping to manipulate it into choosing his preferred option.
- **Loaded Question** is a question which contains a controversial or unjustified assumption. It is sometimes used to refer to loaded language that is phrased as a question. This type of question does not necessarily contain a fallacious presupposition, but rather this usage refers to the question having an unspoken and often emotive implication.
- **Begging the Question** demonstrates a conclusion by means of premises that assume that conclusion.
- **Slippery Slope** is an argument that posits the inevitability of the worst possible outcome from an initial action.

Fallacies of Criticism

- **Ad Hominem** refers to attacking the person rather than his/her argument.
- **Tu Quoque** fallacy occurs when one tries to rebut a claim by pointing out a similar error or shortcoming present in the person who made the initial claim.
- **Straw Person** is a fallacy in which the speaker distorts an opposing point of view before attacking that distorted position.
- **Genetic Fallacy** is claiming that an argument is invalid because it originated from a tainted or suspect source rather than attacking the quality of the argument.
- **Poisoning the Well:** is a logical fallacy where adverse information about a target is preemptively presented to an audience, with the intention of discrediting or ridiculing everything that the target person is about to say.

Fallacies of Defense

- **Definitional Dodge** Consists of redefining a crucial term in a claim to avoid acknowledging a counterexample that would falsify the claim.
- **Division** is a logical fallacy in which one argues that an individual member of a group **must** possess the characteristics of the whole group.
- **Composition** is the reverse of division. In this fallacy, one argues that a group **must** possess the characteristics of the disparate individuals.