

## Common Logical Fallacies and Their Definitions

Fallacy	Definition	Example
<b>A “Straw Man” argument</b>	Incorrectly characterizing an opponent’s viewpoint and then attacking or refuting that version of the argument.	“Those who want to legalize drugs are fine with children taking ecstasy and LSD.”
<b>Moral Equivalence</b>	Making an unfair moral comparison between two things that are not really comparable.	“Pro-choice activists are just as bad as terrorists.”
<b>Begging the Claim</b>	When a conclusion is validated within the claim itself.	“Harmful, destructive mining practices should be banned.”
<b>Circular Argument</b>	When the evidence used to support a claim is really just a repetition of the claim itself.	“My father is a great communicator, because he speaks effectively.”
<b>Equivocation</b>	When the writer subtly shifts the meaning of a word during the argument, so as to shift the argument.	“The sign said ‘ <b>fine</b> for parking here,’ and, since it was <b>fine</b> , I parked there.”  “All child murderers are <b>inhuman</b> , and, thus, no child murder is <b>human</b> .”
<b>Tu Quoque (“You’re Another”)</b>	The logical fallacy equivalent of “No, YOU are!” This is when someone avoids an argument by making similar charges against the other person.	“How can cops ticket me for speeding? I see cops speeding all the time!”
<b>Ad Hominem</b>	Attacking the person instead of the argument. The goal is to discredit the argument by discrediting the person advocating the argument. Ad hominem attacks are popular in online discussions, especially when tempers flare.	“Well, I don’t believe what Politician X has to say about the tax plan because he has said some absolutely crazy things in the past.”

<b>Slippery Slope</b>	Slippery slopes occur when a person asserts that a relatively small step will lead to a chain of events that result in a drastic change.	“If we legalize same sex marriage, what will stop us from legalizing marriage between humans and robots? Or humans and animals?”
<b>Bandwagon</b>	The bandwagon fallacy is committed by arguments that appeal to the growing popularity of an idea as a reason for accepting it as true.	Increasingly, people are coming to believe that Eastern religions help us to get in touch with our true inner being. Therefore, Eastern religions help us to get in touch with our true inner being.
<b>Post hoc ergo propter hoc</b>	Latin for “after this, therefore because of this.” A fallacy that occurs when someone reaches a conclusion of causation because an event followed another event.	“It started to rain after my ice cream cone fell on the ground. Therefore, my ice cream falling on the ground caused it to rain.”
<b>Hasty Generalization</b>	Drawing a conclusion based on a small sample size, rather than looking at statistics that are much more in line with the typical or average situation.	My father smoked four packs of cigarettes a day since age fourteen and lived until age sixty-nine. Therefore, smoking really can’t be that bad for you.
<b>Reductio ad absurdum</b>	In argumentation and informal logic, a method of refuting an opponent's claim by extending the logic of the opponent's argument to a point of absurdity.	One might say, for instance that the more sleep one gets the healthier one is, and then, by the logical <i>reductio ad absurdum</i> process, someone would be sure to point out that, on such a premise, one who has sleeping sickness and sleeps for months on end is really in the best of health.
<b>Genetic Fallacy</b>	A conclusion about something based on the origin or history of that thing.	“The Nazis pioneered eugenics. Therefore eugenics is unacceptable.”

<p><b>Red Herring</b></p>	<p>An attempt to change the subject to divert attention from the original issue. You can see countless examples of this when you watch presidential candidates debate.</p>	<p>“Yes, I would absolutely make the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq a priority. But with the unemployment rate as high as it is, we really need to concentrate on domestic issues and creating jobs, and under my plan....”</p>
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