

Fallacies

There are many types of fallacies. This list contains some of the more common fallacies that you'll find in all kinds of arguments. Fallacies don't tell you whether an argument's conclusion is true or false; they simply **don't** give you good reasons to believe that the conclusion is true. An argument based on only fallacies doesn't contain good evidence. Come up with your own example of each fallacy.

Fallacy	Explanation	Example
Personal Attack (also known as <i>Ad Hominem</i>)	Attacking an opponent instead of presenting an argument about an idea	The senator is a self-serving politician; therefore, her position on this issue is wrong.
Your Example		
Bad Motive	Stating that the opponent is based or has a personal motive to take one side; that doesn't address the logical argument	The senator has an investment in solar panels, so this legislation for regulating solar panels is bad.
Your Example		
Two Wrongs	Saying one wrong action is okay because of another wrong action	The senator may have taken money from large oil companies, but dozens of other senators have also.
Your Example		
Straw Man	Creating a fake argument for the other side that's easy to tear down	All home schooling laws give away free diplomas for no work and with no regulation; they should be eliminated.
Your Example		

Emotional Appeal	Using emotion instead of reasons and evidence to make an argument	We must fund this school district bond if we care about our children.
Your Example		
Appeal to Fear	Using the audience's fear to try to make them agree with the claim	We must pass this law to make prison sentences longer; otherwise your family might be attacked by criminals.
Your Example		
Appeal to Consequences	Arguing that something is not true because, if it were true, that would have bad results	If our schools aren't teaching well, then our children are unprepared for college. That can't be true.
Your Example		
Appeal to Tradition	Arguing that something is good or best because it is traditional or has been done for a long time	In its entire history, our city has never needed a community center, so we don't need one now.
Your Example		
Appeal to Ignorance	Using a lack of evidence, knowledge, or the ability to know something as evidence	It's impossible to know in advance the results of this law, so we shouldn't pass it.
Your Example		

Argument from Authority	Claiming that something is right or correct because the person or organization responsible is a (true or false) authority	The school board knows what it's doing. If they say we need to pass this school bond measure, then we do.
Your Example		
Argument from Omniscience	Claiming something you can't know—that "everybody knows" something or that something is always or never true	Everybody agrees that the Electoral Colleges is harmful. It should be abolished.
Your Example		
Equivocation (Ambiguity)	Using a word that has two meanings in a misleading way	The judge is supposed to be neutral, but she has concluded that my case is invalid. That's not neutral!
Your Example		
Slippery Slope	Claiming that something will lead to an unlikely or unrealistic consequence	If you let your child help choose foods for dinner, then your child will end up eating only junk food all the time.
Your Example		
Circular Argument (Begging the Question)	Claiming that something is true because it is true	It is important to save money; that's why you should put a few dollars a month in a savings account.
Your Example		

Red Herring	Focusing on an irrelevant idea instead of making an argument	We don't need to pay teachers more money. Our city trash collectors are the ones that need higher pay.
Your Example		
False Dilemma	Stating that there are only two sides or options when there are actually other options	If you don't buy this magazine subscription for the fund raiser, then you don't care about my future education.
Your Example		
False Cause	Incorrectly identifying the cause or reason for something	There are too many feral cats in our community because too many people own cats as pets.
Your Example		
Faulty Analogy	Making a comparison between two things that are not similar enough for the speaker's purpose	Private schools teach better than public ones, since they have higher graduation rates. (Private schools don't accept all students.)
Your Example		
Bandwagon	Claiming that something is best, right, or good because it's common	A recent poll says that 82% of people agree with this statement; therefore, it is true.
Your Example		

Hasty Generalization	Making a general statement without enough evidence to support it	People who drive Priuses are poor drivers. I almost got run over by a Prius last week.
Your Example		
Biased Sample/ Cherrypicking	Presenting evidence based on a sample of information that doesn't represent a whole group or the whole picture	A survey of high school students shows that high school tests are too difficult.
Your Example		
Fallacy Fallacy	Stating that a conclusion is wrong just because an argument includes a fallacy	Since my opponent uses circular logic, the conclusion must be untrue.
Your Example		