

Fallacious Reasoning

In order to be a "critical thinker", one must have an understanding of basic logic and of fallacious reasoning. The following is a list of examples of fallacious reasoning:

AMPHIBOLY

This fallacy is used when the speaker purposely uses awkward construction to confuse the listener

ARGUING FROM AUTHORITY

This argument suggests the validity of a statement based simply on the prestige of the supporter rather than on evidence

ARGUMENTUM AD HOMINEM

Also called "Poisoning the Well". If an argument attacks the man, rather than what he says, the speaker has used Argumentum ad Hominem



ARGUMENTUM AD IGNORATUM

The "Argument from Ignorance" professes that something must be true because there is no evidence to disprove it

ARGUMENTUM AD MISERICORDIAM

This fallacy appeals to the emotion of pity rather than the facts

BEGGING THE QUESTION

One "begs the question" when he employs the same statement as a premise and the conclusion or when he assumes the conclusion to be true and bases a premise on that conclusion. Also called "circular reasoning"

BLACK AND WHITE

The argument which employs the fallacy of black and white sees only extremes and no middle ground

COMPOSITION

The fallacy of composition occurs when a person asserts that what is true of a part is true of the whole

DIVISION

Also called "Dicto Simpliciter", this fallacy occurs when someone assumes that what is true of the whole is necessarily true of every part

EQUIVOCATION

A person equivocates when he uses the same word in two different senses or when a single word can be interpreted more than one way

FALSE ANALOGY

A person uses a false analogy when he compares two things which are not necessarily the same

HASTY GENERALIZATION

This fallacy calls for a conclusion before sufficient evidence is collected

IGNORANTO ELENCHI

This fallacy, also known as "irrelevant conclusion", occurs when an argument proposes to prove one thing, but instead concludes with something else

NON SEQUITUR

Literally, Non Sequitur means "does not follow" and, therefore, most fallacious arguments contain a Non Sequitur. In particular, it occurs when the premises are true, but the conclusion does not logically follow

POST HOC

An argument which uses Post Hoc establishes a cause-effect relationship simply because one event precedes another in time

SLIPPERY SLOPE

This fallacy takes its name from a sad situation where one loses footing, begins to slide, and cannot regain control – as on a muddy slope. It applies when one foresees consequences well beyond what is logical

STATISTICS

Statistics can easily be manipulated to make any point or sell an product

STRAW MAN

This fallacy is used when one attacks a position similar to, but different from his opponent