

## Logical Fallacy Quick Sheet

A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning that undermines the argument being made. They are either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points. They lack evidence to support a claim. The use of logical fallacies can undermine a writer's ethos (authority).

- **Ad hominem:** an argument that attacks someone's character rather than address the issues. This is especially common in political discourse. Remember: insulting a person isn't an argument against any position they may be posing.
  - Example: She supports killing babies because she's a lazy, murderous liberal.
- **Bandwagon appeal:** an argument that suggests that, because others think a certain way or behave a certain way, we should, too. Just because an opinion is popular does not make it correct.
  - Example: If you were a true American, you would fly the flag all year round from your front porch.
- **Begging the question:** a circular argument that assumes something is a given with no logical argument to support it.
  - Example: The President is a good communicator because he speaks effectively.
- **Either-or argument:** an oversimplification that assumes there are only two possibilities when a position is taken in an argument.
  - Example: We can either start recycling more or destroy the earth.
- **False analogy:** an argument that compares two things that resemble each other, but are not alike in the most important aspects of the argument.
  - Example: Trees pollute the air as much as cars and trucks do by releasing pollen every spring.
- **Faulty causality:** an argument that assumes that, because one event followed another, the first event caused the second event.
  - Example: I wore my striped socks during the game today, and we won. Now I have to wear my striped socks for every game so we win.

- **Straw man:** an argument that misrepresents an opposing position to make it seem ridiculous or extreme and thus easy to refute, rather than dealing with the actual position.
  - Example: People who do not support the raise in minimum wage to \$15 an hour hate the poor.
  
- **Hasty generalization:** conclusions in an argument that are based on insufficient or inappropriate qualifying evidence.
  - Example: Based on how boring the first day of class was, this class is clearly going to be boring throughout the remainder of the semester.
  
- **Slippery slope:** an argument that asserts that one event will eventually lead to another, often catastrophic event without presenting any logical evidence that proves the point.
  - Example: If we allow the government to ban AR-15s now, they will end up banning all firearms.
  
- **Red herring:** an argument that uses a diversionary tactic to avoid key issues.
  - Example: If we ban the use of coal, how will coal miners feed their families?