

ACTIVITY 6.1: Common Logical Fallacies

A logical fallacy is a faulty argument. There are many different kinds — below are some common ones. This type of argument may sound convincing in the moment, but if you stop and examine it, it does not stand up to the test of logic. This is a tricky form of argument that is very helpful to be able to recognize (and not be persuaded by).

1 AUTHORITATIVE ARGUMENT
Claiming something to be true because an expert said so.

The scientist on TV last night said that chocolate is good for you, so that means we can all eat all the chocolate we want now.

YOUR EXAMPLE:

2 SLIPPERY SLOPE
Believing a small change will lead to a disaster.

If we let students have phones in the classroom, they will never pay attention to the teacher, and won't learn anything at school.

YOUR EXAMPLE:

3 APPEAL TO TRADITION
Claiming something is true since it has always been so.

Fishing is prohibited in my village. This is silly. I fished there all the time growing up. It should still be allowed.

YOUR EXAMPLE:

4 PERSONAL ATTACK
To ignore the arguments of an individual by attacking them personally and not their arguments.

Politician 1: "I will fight for the poor people of Canada."

Politician 2: "Have you seen this guy's mansion? What does he know about poor people?"

YOUR EXAMPLE:

5 FALSE DILEMMA
Presenting only two solutions to one problem when other options are also available.

We can either go to an amusement park or waste our day off. You don't want to waste a day off, do you?

YOUR EXAMPLE:

6 STRAWMAN ARGUMENT
Deliberately misrepresenting someone else's argument to make it easier to attack.

Politician 1: "I think we should spend less on the military."

Politician 2: "My opponent wants to leave the country defenceless. We deserve better."

YOUR EXAMPLE: