

Logical Fallacy Cheat Sheet

FALLACY

NOTES

Ad Populum

Support is given for some conclusion because it is popular. Also called 'bandwagon.'

"Everybody agrees that poison Ivy is contagious, so it must be true."

Appeal to Emotion

An argument is made due to the manipulation of emotions, rather than the use of valid reasoning.

"Illegal immigration makes you angry, vote on that!"

Hasty Generalization (Proof by Example)

Moving from an existential claim to a universal:
I know that something has the property P. Therefore, everything has the property P.

"I went against my party once, therefore I am always independent."

Post hoc ergo propter hoc (After this therefore because of this)

This fallacy is often used to give a coincidental circumstance the appearance of causation.

"Crime went up after marijuana was legalized, therefore crime went up because marijuana was legalized."

Straw Man

Arguing against a position which you create specifically to be easy to argue against, rather than the position actually held by those who oppose your point of view.

"She wants to teach sex ed to children in the womb!"

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Ad hominem

An argument that attacks the person, rather than addressing the argument itself. Poisoning the well, so to speak.

“He’s rich, so his position on how to deal with poverty must be wrong.”

Argument from (bad) authority

Stating that a claim is true because a person or group of perceived authority says it is true, when that person or groups is not really a reliable authority on the topic.

“Einstein believes in God. Why don’t you?”

False Dichotomy

Arbitrarily reducing a set of many possibilities to only two.

“He didn’t support this bill, therefore he’s in favor of AIDS.”

Slippery Slope

Arguing a position is not tenable because it is on a continuum with an extreme position and there is no justification for stopping at any particular point within the continuum.

“If we allow taxes to be raised, they will continue to raise them more and more until nobody can keep any of their money.”

Ambiguity

Two or more meanings of a word or combination of words are used in an argument such that the conclusion trades on a meaning not found in the premises.

“God is love, love is blind, so God is blind.”

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