

Common Argument Fallacies

When arguing a case or examining the arguments of another, look for these common fallacies. Avoiding these problems makes a case stronger. Further, finding these fallacies in other's statements can make your rebuttal easier.

1. The *Straw Man* fallacy is committed when an arguer distorts an opponent's argument for the purpose of more easily attacking it.
2. *Circular Reasoning* occurs when stating in one's proof that which one is supposed to be proving.
3. The *Missing the Point* fallacy occurs when the premises of an argument appear to lead up to one particular conclusion but then a completely different conclusion is drawn.
4. The *Red Herring* fallacy is committed when the arguer diverts the attention of the reader or listener by changing the subject to some totally different issue. Sticking to the topic of each individual folder will minimize the impact of this fallacy.
5. The *Hasty Generalization* fallacy occurs when there is a likelihood that the sample is not representative of the group.
6. The *Ad Hominem* fallacy occurs when an arguer's post appeals to feelings or prejudices as opposed to logic. It also occurs when an arguer moves a discussion to a personal level through character assassination or personal attacks.
7. The *False Cause* fallacy occurs whenever the link between premises and conclusion depends on some imagined causal connection that probably does not exist.
8. The *Amphiboly* fallacy occurs when the arguer misinterprets a statement that is ambiguous, owing to some structural defect and proceeds to draw a conclusion on this faulty interpretation. Again, this can happen when someone is quoted out of context. If a statement seems unclear, ask the person about it.
9. The *Composition* fallacy is committed when the conclusion of an argument depends on the erroneous transference of characteristic from the parts of something into the whole. In other words, the fallacy occurs when it is argued that because the parts have a certain characteristic, it follows that the whole has that characteristic, too. However, the situation is such that the characteristic in question cannot be legitimately transferred from parts to whole.
10. The *Suppressed Evidence* fallacy is committed when an arguer ignores evidence that would tend to undermine the premises of an otherwise good argument, causing it to be unsound or uncogent.