

Logical Fallacies or Mistakes in Reasoning

Some common fallacies are defined below:

1. **Hasty Generalization:** A generalization based on too little evidence, or on evidence that is biased. Example: All men are testosterone-driven idiots. Or: After being in New York for a week, I can tell you: all New Yorkers are rude.
2. **Either/Or Fallacy:** Only two possibilities are presented when in fact several exist. Example: America: love it or leave it. Or: Shut down all nuclear power plants, or watch your children and grandchildren die from radiation poisoning.
3. **Non Sequitur:** The conclusion does not follow logically from the premise. Example: My teacher is pretty; I'll learn a lot from her. Or: George Bush was a war hero; he'll be willing to stand tough for America.
4. **Ad Hominem:** Arguing against the man instead of against the issue. Example: We can't elect him mayor. He cheats on his wife! Or: He doesn't really believe in the First Amendment. He just wants to defend his right to see porno flicks.
5. **Red Herring:** Distracting the audience by drawing attention to an irrelevant issue. Example: How can he be expected to manage the company? Look at how he manages his wife! Or: Why worry about nuclear war when we're all going to die anyway?
6. **Circular Reasoning:** Asserting a point that has just been made. Sometimes called "begging the question." Example: She is ignorant because she was never educated. Or: We sin because we're sinners.
7. **False Analogy:** Wrongly assuming that because two things are alike in some ways, they must be alike in all ways. Example: An old grandmother's advice to her granddaughter, who is contemplating living with her boyfriend: "Why should he buy the cow when he can get the milk for free?"
8. **Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc:** The mistake of assuming that, because event *a* is followed by event *b*, event *a* caused event *b*. Example: It rained today because I washed my car. Or: The stock market fell because the Japanese are considering implementing an import tax. (Example: Direct TV Ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqN7GvLm2R0>.)
9. **Equivocation:** Equates two meanings of the same word falsely. Example: The end of a thing is its perfection; hence, death is the perfection of life. (The argument is fallacious because there are two different definitions of the word "end" involved in the argument.)