

Chapter 1 Intro and 1.4: Logical Fallacies - SOLUTIONS

Group Activity

Choose your roles and have the reader read out loud to your group.

1. Every day we are bombarded with information, opinions, advertisements and arguments on websites, social media, TV, movies, books, magazines and billboards. How can we tell if the information is factual, reliable, relevant, biased, or outdated? In chapter 1, we are going to study the structure of logical arguments.



Overview of Chapter 1: The Concept of a Logical Argument

2. Discuss the first term below and what you think it means. Then find the definitions in our free online book (or printed copy). Write down a summary or definition in your own words. Repeat for each term.

Your definitions may vary:

Logic (1.1): *The study of the methods and principles of reasoning.*

Premise (1.1): *Facts or assumptions used in a logical argument.*

Conclusion (1.1): *The statement that one is trying to prove or convince one of.*

Logical Argument (1.3): *Uses premises to support a conclusion.*

Logical Fallacy (1.4): *A misleading argument, not well-supported by the premises.*



Section 1.4: Logical Fallacies

3. We are going to study six common fallacies (but there are many more that you can find on the internet). The fallacies are listed on the yellow and red cards (like fútbol or soccer penalty cards) with their descriptions on the back. Match one example card to each fallacy and write the name in the space provided. You can use the textbook to help you.

6 Common Logical Fallacies

Fallacy	Description	Examples
Personal Attack or Ad Hominem	There is something wrong with the person or group making the claim, so the claim is not true.	"Vote against the healthcare bill because 'Lying Laura' supports it."
Appeal to Ignorance	There is no proof that the claim is true; therefore, it is false	"No one has proven it isn't Bigfoot in the photo, so it must be Bigfoot."
Appeal to Authority	An expert says the claim is true; therefore, it is true.	"Oprah Winfrey says Weight Watchers works so it must be very effective."
False Dilemma	A and B are the only options. A is false; therefore, only B can be true.	"Either those lights in the sky were an airplane or aliens. There are no airplanes scheduled for tonight, so it must be aliens."
Straw Person	Presenting an oversimplified or distorted view of an argument and attacking the misrepresentation.	"Senator Khouri has proposed reducing military funding by 10%. Apparently, she wants to leave us defenseless against attacks by terrorists."
Post Hoc or False Cause	A came before B; therefore, A caused B.	"Today I wore a red shirt, and my team won! I will wear a red shirt every time they play to make sure they keep winning."

Identifying the Premise(s) and the Conclusion

4. The conclusion is typically written after the premise(s), but that is not always the case. In each problem, highlight or circle each premise(s) and label them. Underline the conclusion and label it. Then write the type of fallacy.

Example:

The Association for Family Values has endorsed Ms. Burke, so you should vote for her.

Fallacy: Appeal to Authority. Groups will endorse candidates and it is important to research and understand who is behind each group and what they stand for.

a. Coyotes must be extinct, since I haven't seen any for five years.

Fallacy: Appeal to Ignorance. Just because I haven't seen any doesn't mean they don't exist.

b. "You don't drink Coke, so you must not consume caffeinated drinks."

Fallacy: False Dilemma. The argument assumes that someone only drinks Coke or decaffeinated beverages. There are obviously many other possibilities.

c. "People should avoid seeing the movie *Star Wars* because Jan was diagnosed with strep throat the next day after she saw it, and I got the flu a few days after seeing that same movie."

Fallacy: Post Hoc. This argument is implying that watching the movie caused them to get sick.

d. "The failing New York Times endorsed "Mr. Cheng, but he is a moron who doesn't know what he is doing. Don't vote for him."

Fallacy: Personal Attack. The arguer is attacking the character of the newspaper and the candidate rather than the issues.

5. a. What are some good practices that you use to evaluate information in the media? As a group, list as many as you can.

Consider the source
Check the date of the information
Check other sources to validate accuracy
Watch for hidden agendas or motives
Look for the big picture

b. Each group will write their good practices on the board. For items already listed, add a checkmark next to it.

c. Add additional items here that you didn't have listed before.

d. Here are some fact-checking resources on the Internet. Do you have any additional sites that you use?

Snopes.com, FactCheck.org, Politifact.com, washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker