

1A: Living in the Media Age - SOLUTIONS

Group Activities

Choose one person to read out loud to your group. You can trade off readers as often as you like.

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 How can we tell if the information is factual, reliable, relevant, biased, or outdated?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.



The Concept of a Logical Argument

2. Discuss the first term below and what you think it means. Then have one or more people search online to find definitions. Write down a summary or definition in your own words. Repeat for each term.

Your definitions may vary:

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

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

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

Logical Argument: *Uses premises to support a conclusion.*

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



3. We are going to study ten common fallacies (but there are many more that you can find on the internet). The ten fallacies are listed on the yellow and red cards (like fútbol or soccer penalty cards) with their descriptions on the back. The same information is listed below.

Match one example card to each fallacy. After you get your matching checked, write the examples in the spaces provided. (You can print your own flashcards from my website).

10 Common Logical Fallacies

Fallacy	Description	Example
Appeal to Popularity	Many people believe p is true; therefore, p is true.	"Everyone is buying these jeans, so they are the best."
False Cause or Post Hoc	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."
Appeal to Ignorance	There is no proof that p is true; therefore, p is false.	"No one has proven it isn't Bigfoot in the photo, so it must be Bigfoot."
Hasty Generalization or Correlation Implies Causation	A and B are linked one or a few times; therefore, A causes B or B causes A.	"Months with high ice cream sales also have a high rate of deaths by drowning. Therefore, ice cream must be causing people to drown."
Limited Choice or False Dilemma	p is false; Therefore, only q 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."
Appeal to Emotion	p is associated with a positive emotional response; therefore, p is true.	"If you care enough to send the very best you will buy this brand of card."
Circular Reasoning	p is true; therefore, p restated in a different way is true.	"Only an untrustworthy person would run for office. The fact that politicians are untrustworthy is proof of this."
Diversion or Red Herring	p is related to q and I have an argument regarding q; therefore, p is true.	"We can't worry about the environment, we're in the middle of a war."
Straw Man	I have an argument regarding an oversimplified or distorted version of p; therefore, I hope you will believe it is true about the real version of p.	"Senator Jones has proposed reducing military funding by 10%. Apparently, he wants to leave us defenseless against attacks by terrorists."
Personal Attack or Ad Hominem	I have a problem with the person or group claiming p; therefore, p is not true.	"Vote against the healthcare bill because 'Lying Laura' supports it."

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:

premise

conclusion

_____, so you should vote for Mr. Burke.

Fallacy: *Appeal to Popularity. Just because a candidate is leading in the polls that doesn't mean I should vote for them or that they will win.*

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: *Limited Choice. The argument assumes that the only choice for a caffeinated drink is Coke. 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: *False Cause. This argument is implying that watching the movie caused them to get sick.*

d. "Ms. Cheng is the most successful mayor of Bay City because she is the best mayor in the history of Bay City."

Fallacy: *Circular Reasoning (stating the same thing different ways). The statement basically says that Ms. Cheng is the best mayor because she is the best mayor.*

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