

Common Fallacies (faulty reasoning)¹

- Faulty analogy [a comparison that isn't valid] ("Depression is just like diabetes")
- False cause [a mistaken causal claim] ("Being gay is a choice some men make")
- Ad hominem [attacking the person instead of responding to what she said] ("You're evil because you think God doesn't exist")
- Slippery slope [a prediction of terrible consequences] ("If I tell her I'm angry, then she'll be upset with me, and then she'll leave, and I'll never be with anyone ever again")
- Hasty conclusion [belief based on too little evidence] ("If I don't do what others expect they'll hate me")
- Red herring [a reason that is not relevant to the issue] ("She can't be a good. After all, she's divorced")
- Bandwagon [the belief that what many others do must be good] ("I want to be like everyone else")
- Appeal to tradition [If it was done in the past it must be good] ("The man of the house is supposed to be the bread winner")
- Either/or [only two possibilities are mentioned when in fact there may be others] ("Either you take your medication or your mental illness will get worse")
- Begging the question [Is it true ... you will be quitters?] ("If we break our engagement we're quitters")
- Improper appeal to authority ("Dr. I. says you should eat lots of fish" when Dr. I. is a psychiatrist. Also, "They say...." The word "they" is often given as an authority.)
- Ambiguity [When a word can have two different meanings, and you don't know which is meant] ("After a visit with her sister, she was a different woman")
- Vagueness [Unclear foggy meaning—in this case the word "sad"] ("I feel sad when I see sad things ...")
- Two wrongs don't make a right [This often involves revenge] ("He fooled around on me so I'm going to fool around on him")
- Is-ought [Just because this is the way it's done doesn't make it right] (Schizophrenics should be medicated because they always are")
- Straw person [A statement is misrepresented] ("You say I made a mistake? You don't like me, do you?")
- Irrelevant reason [The reason given does not support the conclusion] ("Father never hugged us because we weren't good children")
- Questionable definition [Words like "friend", "love", "patriot", etc. are often given strange meanings] ("Friends use each other all the time")
- Hasty generalization [from one to many] ("My wife ran off with another guy. Women can't be trusted")
- Poisoning the well [biasing an opinion] ("You can talk to my parents, but you won't like them")
- Guilt by association [claiming that one person is the same as another] ("He can't be trusted. His brother is in jail for fraud")

¹ From Philosophical Counselling course, Peter Raabe.