

## BACK DOOR LOGICAL FALLACIES ORGANIZER

FALLACY	SIMPLE EXAMPLE	MY DEFINITION/NOTES
1. ad hominem	My opponent should not be elected mayor because he had an affair five years ago.	
2. appeal to doubtful authority	Michael Jordan wears Hanes underwear, so you should too.	
3. false analogy	Choosing not to do homework is like choosing not to brush your teeth: The long-term consequences outweigh the short-term benefits.	
4. circular reasoning/begging the question	<p>Bigfoot isn't real because there is no proof of his existence.</p> <p>Married people should stay together no matter what. Even though we fight every day and I have hit you twice, we are indeed married and should therefore stay together.</p>	
5. false dilemma	We either have to cut Medicare or leave a huge debt for our children.	

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FALLACY	SIMPLE EXAMPLE	MY DEFINITION/NOTES
6. equivocation	For lunch, soup is better than nothing. Nothing is better than pizza. Therefore, soup is better than pizza.	
7. hasty or sweeping generalization	I have several white friends, and every one of them loves country music. All white people love country music.	
8. stereotyping	All white people love country music. Since you are white, you must love country music.	
9. misleading statistic	The principal should hire this teacher. His test scores improved 100% in just one year.	
10. non sequitur	I love tomatoes, so I'm going to learn to speak Mandarin Chinese.	

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FALLACY	SIMPLE EXAMPLE	MY DEFINITION/NOTES
11. post hoc, ergo propter hoc	When I study for tests, I fail them. When I don't study for tests, I pass.	
12. red herring	Our teacher should not give homework over the weekend because we have a religious holiday. It is a teacher's responsibility to respect my religion.	
13. straw-man argument	Parent: You need to clean out your backpack. Child: You know I'm ADD! Why can't you just accept me as I am?	
14. tu quoque	My PE teacher is overweight, so I will not follow his advice to eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.	
15. slippery slope	If you don't expose your child to germs, he will never get sick and therefore never build up his immune system to fight illness. He will grow up to be a sickly adult.	

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FALLACY	SIMPLE EXAMPLE	TEACHER NOTES
1. ad hominem	My opponent should not be elected mayor because he had an affair five years ago.	Literally, ad hominem means "to the man" in Latin. In this fallacy, someone attacks the person, not the person's argument.
2. appeal to doubtful authority	Michael Jordan wears Hanes underwear, so you should too.	Appeal to doubtful authority is the treatment of a non-expert as an expert. Celebrity endorsements use this fallacy. Pose this question to your students: Would using a <i>man's</i> argument against abortion constitute an appeal to doubtful authority?
3. false analogy	Choosing not to do homework is like choosing not to brush your teeth: The long-term consequences outweigh the short-term benefits.	False analogies are tough to catch because they seem so logical. The name says it all—comparing two ideas or situations that really are not fully comparable. In the example, the consequences of these two choices are so drastically different that the analogy falls apart.
4. circular reasoning/begging the question	<p>Bigfoot isn't real because there is no proof of his existence.</p> <p>Married people should stay together no matter what. Even though we fight every day and I have hit you twice, we are indeed married and should therefore stay together.</p>	A syllogism (or deductive reasoning) must have a Major Premise, Minor Premise, and Conclusion. Circular reasoning happens when the major premise in a syllogism is replaced by conclusion. Some scholars distinguish between circular reasoning and begging the question, but for a student being introduced to fallacies, the distinction is not important. Circular reasoning makes the Conclusion the Major Premise and therefore tries to pass it off as undisputed fact. It is not undisputed fact that married people should stay together no matter what. Begging the question could be considered simple circular reasoning.
5. false dilemma	We either have to cut Medicare or leave a huge debt for our children.	Politicians love this one. False dilemma presents only two options as consequences for any particular choice. Cutting Medicare is ONE way to tackle our national debt, but there are countless others. This fallacy often appeals to fear.

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6. equivocation	For lunch, soup is better than nothing. Nothing is better than pizza. Therefore, soup is better than pizza.	Equivocation is difficult to catch, thus making it the perfect logical fallacy. Equivocation is the changing of a word's meaning in the course of an argument. In the example, the first "nothing" implies hunger. The second "Nothing" implies a lack of competition.
7. hasty or sweeping generalization	I have several white friends, and every one of them loves country music. All white people love country music.	In hasty generalization, the sample size is too small. In the example, "several" does not constitute an entire racial group. Hasty generalization boils down to looking at one person and deciding that the entire group to which that person belongs must be like that person (e.g., One elderly man goes the wrong way on a one-way street, so you generalize that all elderly people are bad drivers.)
8. stereotyping	All white people love country music. Since you are white, you must love country music.	Stereotyping is the <i>result</i> of hasty generalization. Trying to distinguish between the two may be a frustrating exercise in splitting a fine hair, and a teacher could combine these fallacies and treat them as one. A stereotype involves imposing on one person the generalization made about the group based on a small sample.
9. misleading statistic	The principal should hire this teacher. His test scores improved 100% in just one year.	Misleading statistic uses a fact in isolation. In the example given, there is missing information, specifically the fact that the teacher may have had a 10% passing rate on a state test one year and 20% the next, thus improving 100%. The fact remains that the scores are still low.
10. non sequitur	I love tomatoes, so I'm going to learn to speak Mandarin Chinese.	Non sequitur means "It does not follow" in Latin. This fallacy is one of the easier to catch because the conclusion has no connection to the premise whatsoever.

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11. post hoc, ergo propter hoc	When I study for tests, I fail them. When I don't study for tests, I pass.	The Latin translation of this phrase is "After this, therefore because of this." This fallacy places credit or blame on an event or situation simply because it happened prior to another event or situation. For example, if a teenager blames her breakouts on chocolate because she always has acne after eating chocolate, she is using post hoc. The case may be that her hormones cause her to crave chocolate. Her hormones cause her to have acne, not the incidental consumption of chocolate.
12. red herring	Our teacher should not give homework over the weekend because we have a religious holiday. It is a teacher's responsibility to respect my religion.	A red herring switches the focus from the original argument presented. In the example, a student turns an argument against homework into an argument for freedom of religion.
13. straw-man argument	Parent: You need to clean out your backpack. Child: You know I'm ADD! Why can't you just accept me as I am?	Straw man changes the opponent's position and then attacks it. In the example, the child implies that the parent is critical of the child's condition, thus taking the focus off of having to clean his room. Red herring and straw man are very similar, and students often have trouble distinguishing between them. Red herring is a diversion, but straw man is a distortion.
14. tu quoque	My PE teacher is overweight, so I will not follow his advice to eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.	Latin for "you, too," tu quoque attempts to break down an opponent's argument based on hypocrisy. If the opponent cannot follow his own advice, his advice must be invalid.
15. slippery slope	If you don't expose your child to germs, he will never get sick and therefore never build up his immune system to fight illness. He will grow up to be a sickly adult.	Slippery slope is a snowball fallacy; it exaggerates the potential consequences of an event or choice. Pharmaceutical commercials and political ads use slippery slope extensively.