

Logical Fallacies:

Ad Hominem

Attacking the person making the argument instead of the argument itself.

Example: *You can't believe anything Rush Limbaugh says because he is addicted to pain medication.*

Slippery Slope

Claiming that a small step will lead to bigger and bigger consequences.

Example: *If you legalize gay marriage, next thing you know people will be marrying animals.*

Bandwagon

Claiming something is valuable or true because everyone likes/believes it.

Example: *The novel Twilight is a best seller; therefore, it must be a good novel.*

Straw Man

Misrepresenting your opponent's view, then attacking the misrepresentation instead of the real argument.

Example: *Geoff: Having children is fulfilling.*

Geoff's childless friend: Hey, just because I don't have kids doesn't mean I'm a worthless person.

False Dichotomy

Reducing a complicated issue to only two choices.

Example: *America: Love it or leave it*

False Analogy

Comparing two things that are not necessarily related.

Example: *I can't believe this new non-smoking policy at DU. It's like Nazi Germany all over again!*

Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

Assuming a cause-and-effect relationship for two events just because they are temporally related (the latin translates to "after this, therefore because of this").

Example: *Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, and the economy has been terrible since 2008; the President is responsible for the country's economic turmoil.*

Evasion Tactics:

Reframing the Question

Skewing or rewording the original question in order to address a different matter.

Example: *What I think you mean by that... or The real question here is...*

"Not My (or government's) Decision to Make"

Pointing out that a matter is someone else's responsibility to avoid giving your opinion on that matter.

Example: *Regardless of what I believe, this is an issue for each state/voter to decide.*

"No Hypothetical Questions"

Refusing to answer hypothetical questions that may reveal your positions or opinions.

Example: *I can't say how I would vote on a bill like that because one doesn't exist yet.*

"They Have a Right to Their Opinion"

Using freedom of speech or freedom of belief to avoid having to reveal your own position on a matter.

Example: *Question: "A member of your party has made a controversial statement. Do you agree with what he said, or are you going to denounce what he said?"*

Answer: "Well, he has a right to his opinion and to expressing that opinion."