

# LOGICAL FALLACIES

English 11AP

# WHAT IS FALLACY?

- Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments.
- Fallacious arguments are very common and can be quite persuasive, at least to the casual reader or listener. You can find examples in newspapers, advertisements, and political speeches.



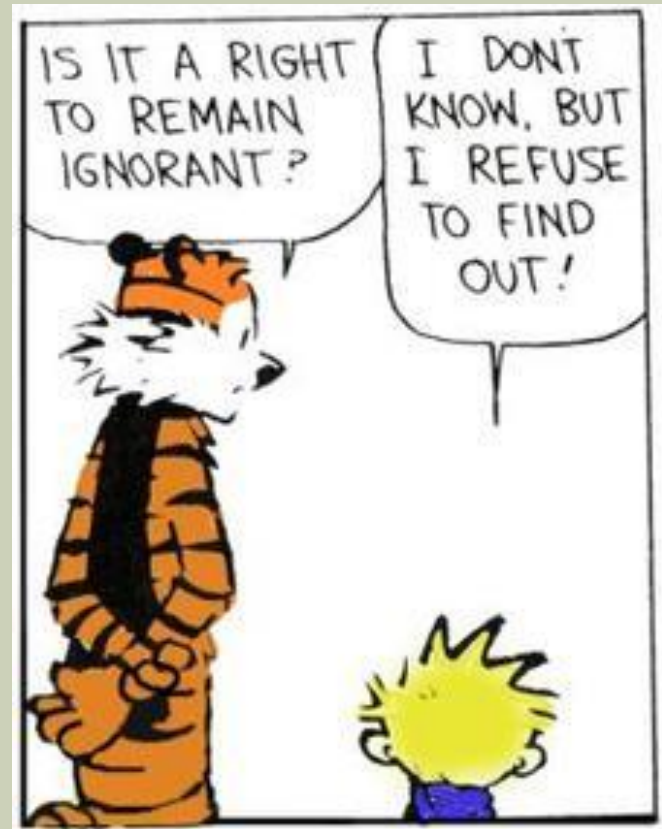
# WHAT IS FALLACY?

- It is sometimes hard to evaluate whether an argument is fallacious.
- An argument might be very weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong, or very strong. An argument that has several stages or parts might have some strong sections and some weak ones.



# WHAT IS FALLACY?

- Most logical fallacies sound reasonable, but they are either attempts to manipulate readers by reaching their emotions instead of their intellects, or illogical statements presented confidently.



# AD HOMINEM

- Latin for “to the man.”
- Directly attacks someone’s appearance, personal habits, or character rather than focusing on the merit of the issue at hand. The implication is that if something is wrong with this person, whatever he/she says must be wrong.
- Examples?



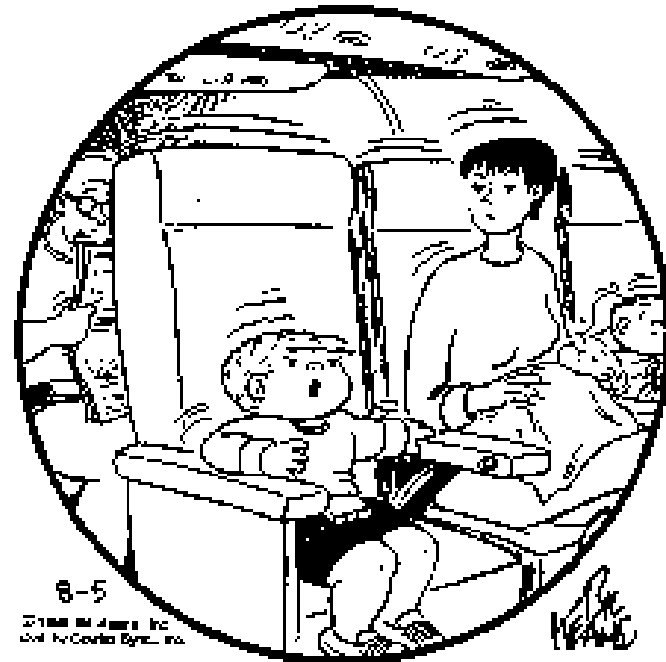
# AD HOMINEM

- *How can you say he's a good musician when he's been in and out of rehab for three years?*
- *Sara is divorced, so whatever relationship advice she gives you can't be good.*
- *How can you argue your case for vegetarianism while you are enjoying your steak?*
- *After Sally presents an eloquent and compelling case for a more equitable taxation system, Sam asks the audience whether we should believe anything from a woman who was once arrested.*

# POST HOC

- Short for “*post hoc, ergo propter hoc,*” which means: “*after this, therefore caused by this.*”
- This fallacy assumes that just because *B* happened after *A*, it must have been caused by *A*.
- *Examples?*

## THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I wish they didn't turn on that seatbelt sign so much! Every time they do, it gets bumpy."

# POST HOC

- *Roosters crow just before the sun rises. Therefore, roosters cause the sun to rise.*
- *Since Governor Bush took office, unemployment has decreased by seven percent. Governor Bush should be applauded for reducing unemployment.*
- *“The President raised taxes, and then the rate of violent crime went up. The President is responsible for the rise in crime.”*
- *Citywide, students’ test scores began to drop five months after fluoridation began. Water fluoridation affects the brain.*
- *“We never had any problem with the furnace until you moved into the apartment.”*



# FALSE ANALOGY

- An analogy points out similarities in things that are otherwise different. A false analogy claims comparison when differences outweigh similarities.
- Examples?



# FALSE ANALOGY

- *If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we find a cure for the common cold?*
- *"Guns are like hammers: they're both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers, so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous."*
- *Employees are like nails. Just as nails must be hit in the head in order to make them work, so must employees.*
- *If one were to listen to only one kind of music or eat only one kind of food, it would soon become tasteless or boring. So it seems to me that marriage does not hold out much hope for excitement.*

# SLIPPERY SLOPE

- The arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but there's really not enough evidence for that assumption.
- Examples?



# SLIPPERY SLOPE

- *You can never give anyone a break. If you do, they'll walk all over you.*
- *"The US shouldn't get involved militarily in other countries. Once the government sends in a few troops, it will then send in thousands to die."*
- *"We've got to stop them from banning pornography. Once they start banning one form of literature, they will never stop. Next thing you know, they will be burning all the books!"*
- *"Animal experimentation reduces our respect for life. If we don't respect life, we are likely to be more and more tolerant of violent acts like war and murder. Soon our society will become a battlefield . . . It will be the end of civilization!"*

# STRAW MAN

- This move oversimplifies an opponent's viewpoint and then attacks that hollow argument.
- Examples?





# STRAW MAN

- When campaigning for vice president in 1952, Nixon was accused of having illegally appropriated \$18,000 in campaign funds for his personal use. In a televised response, instead of addressing the funds, he spoke about another gift, a dog he had been given by a supporter:

It was a little cocker spaniel dog, in a crate he had sent all the way from Texas, black and white, spotted, and our little girl Tricia, six years old, named it Checkers. And, you know, the kids, like all kids, loved the dog, and I just want to say this right now, that, regardless of what they say about it, we are going to keep it.

- Whereas, the writings of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, promoted the justification of racism, and his books *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* postulate a hierarchy of superior and inferior races. . . .

Therefore, be it resolved that the legislature of Louisiana does hereby deplore all instances and all ideologies of racism, does hereby reject the core concepts of Darwinist ideology that certain races and classes of humans are inherently superior to others, and does hereby condemn the extent to which these philosophies have been used to justify and approve racist practices.

# RED HERRING

- The introduction of a topic not related to the subject at hand.
- Partway through an argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from what's really at stake.
- Examples?



# RED HERRING

- *There is a lot of commotion regarding saving the environment. We cannot make this world an Eden. What will happen if it does become Eden? That didn't turn out so well for Adam and Eve!*
- *"Grading this exam on a curve would be the most fair thing to do. After all, classes go more smoothly when the students and teacher are getting along well."*
- *"There may not be evidence that torture elicits usable intelligence, but lives are on the line so we can't use other proven measures. If you could prevent an attack you wouldn't you? So, torture is an unpleasant necessity."*



# BEGGING THE QUESTION

- Assuming the thing to be true that you are trying to prove (also called circular reasoning).
- The support only restates the claim.
- Examples?



# BEGGING THE QUESTION

- *“I am a good worker because Frank says so. How can we trust Frank? Simple. I will vouch for him.”*
- *“Wrestling is dangerous because it is unsafe.”*
- *“Of course I had a reason, or I wouldn't have done it.”*
- *“Active euthanasia is morally acceptable. It is a decent, ethical thing to help another human being escape suffering through death.”*
- *“Why should we put people on trial when we know they are guilty?”*

# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY

Before Aging

After Aging

Evan Williams  
AGED 7 YEARS  
Kentucky  
Bourbon  
WHISKEY

The longer you wait,  
the better it gets.

Evan Williams.  
Aged longer to taste smoother.

This advertisement features a side-by-side comparison of a woman's appearance. On the left, labeled 'Before Aging', she is depicted with a grainy, halftone texture, wearing glasses and a dark sweater over a white collared shirt. On the right, labeled 'After Aging', she is shown with smooth skin, long wavy hair, and a white halter-neck top, appearing significantly younger. A bottle of Evan Williams Aged 7 Years Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey is positioned between the two images. The background is a solid teal color.

We make Virginia Slims  
especially for women  
because they are biologically  
superior to men.

Virginia Slims.

You've come a long way, baby.

Doc

This advertisement features a woman dressed as a superheroine, wearing a blue and red suit with a red cape and a yellow and red emblem on her chest. She is standing in a confident pose. The background is a light green color with faint, illegible text. The Virginia Slims logo is visible in the bottom right corner, along with the signature 'Doc'.

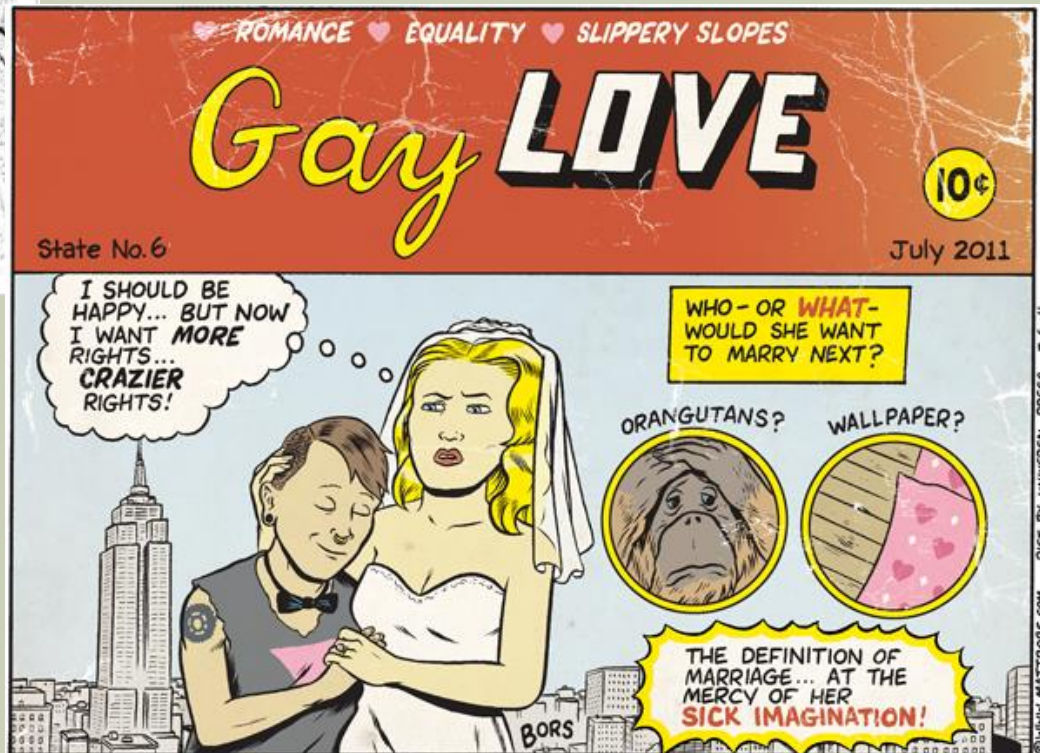
# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY

"Feminazi"

Because wanting your gender to be treated like humans beings is just like invading Poland.



your  cards  
someecards.com





# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY



323 deaths attributed to modern sporting rifles, 195,000 due to medical malpractice. That makes Obamacare 603% more deadly than an assault rifle.



someecards  
user card

# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY

1 PERSON DIES  
AND 100 MILLION CRY



1 MILLION DIE  
AND NO ONE CRIES

THE SOCIETY WE LIVE IN IS REALLY MESSED UP -  
@DJWILLIE

A large advertisement for Tipalet cigarettes. It features a woman with long dark hair blowing a plume of smoke from a cigarette into the face of a man. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color. The text 'Blow in her face and she'll follow you anywhere.' is overlaid on the image. Below the image is a yellow box containing product information and a pack of cigarettes.

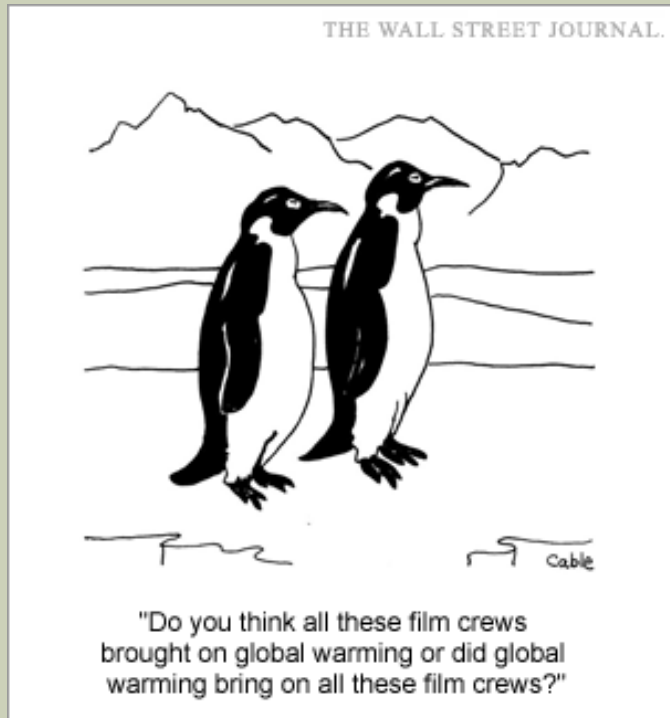
Blow in her face and she'll follow you anywhere.

Hit her with tangy Tipalet Cherry. Or rich, grape-y Tipalet Burgundy. Or luscious Tipalet Blueberry. It's Wild! Tipalet. It's new. Different. Delicious in taste and in aroma. A puff in her direction and she'll follow you, anywhere. Oh yes... you get smoking satisfaction without inhaling smoke.

Smokers of America, do yourself a flavor. Make your next cigarette a **Tipalet.**

New from Muriel. About 5 for 25¢.

# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY





# IDENTIFY THE FALLACY





# MORE EXAMPLES

- Logical Fallacy Examples
- Logical Fallacies in *Mean Girls*
- Logical Fallacies Poster

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [List of Fallacies – Wikipedia](#)
- [The Nizkor Project – Fallacies](#)
- [Purdue OWL – Fallacies](#)
- [University of Texas at El Paso – List of Fallacies](#)
- [UNC Writing Center – List of Fallacies](#)