

## Fallacy Short Descriptions

**Appeal to Authority:** Advocate makes an unwarranted appeal to an authoritative person or organization in support of a proposition.

**Argument by Artifice:** Advocate puts forward convoluted and weak assertions which any disinterested observer would perceive as artificially constructed in order to make a case.

**Argument by Slogan:** Advocate uses a simplistic statement or slogan rather than logical argument in a debate or discussion.

**Argument to Consequences:** Advocate claims that a proposition cannot be true because it ought not to be true (or vice versa).

**Begging the Question:** Advocate makes a circular argument where the conclusion is in essence a restatement or paraphrase of the premise.

**Browbeating:** Advocate is threatening and overbearing in argument and doesn't allow the opponent the opportunity to state his or her case.

**Burden of Proof:** Advocate fails to take responsibility for arguing a case by claiming that the opponent must first prove that the opposite case is true.

**Burden of Solution:** Advocate denigrates a suggested solution to a problem but fails to propose a viable alternative.

**Cultural Origins:** Advocate makes an unwarranted claim that a particular way of doing things is best because of its cultural origins.

**Exaggerated Conflict:** Advocate claims that because there is some degree of uncertainty in a domain of knowledge, nothing at all is certain.

**Factoid Propagation:** Advocate asserts the truth of a proposition that is commonly assumed to be true, when it is not in fact established as true.

**False Analogy:** Advocate puts forward an analogy in support of a case, but the analogy only has superficial similarities to the case in question.

**False Attribution:** Advocate appeals to an irrelevant, unqualified, unidentified, biased or fabricated source in support of an argument.

**False Cause; Correlation Error:** Advocate asserts that there is a causal link between phenomena, when the link is only apparent rather than real.

**False Compromise:** Advocate seeks to reconcile two differing views by "splitting the difference" and falsely claiming that the result reflects reality.

**False Dichotomy:** Advocate represents an issue as "black or white" when in fact the reality is "shades of grey".

**False Dilemma:** Advocate portrays one option as necessarily excluding another option, when in fact there is no necessary connection.

**False Positioning:** Advocate attacks a weakened, exaggerated, or over-simplified form of the opponent's position rather than the real position.

**Gibberish:** Advocate presents an argument or assertion that is so garbled in its presentation that it is essentially meaningless.

**Impugning Motives:** Advocate makes an unwarranted claim that the opponent has devious motives.

**Misuse of Information:** Advocate misunderstands or deliberately misuses a statistic, fact or theory to support an argument.

**Moral Equivalence:** Advocate seeks to draw false moral comparisons between two phenomena which are not morally equivalent.

**Moving the Goalposts:** Advocate changes the discussion focus by seeking to force the opponent to tackle a more difficult or different version of the topic.

**Observational Selection:** Advocate pays close attention to confirming evidence, but ignores evidence which is contrary to his or her position.

**Personal Abuse:** Advocate mounts a personal attack on the opponent rather than the argument put forward by the opponent.

**Poisoning the Well:** Advocate seeks to undermine an opponent's position by linking the position to an original source which is unjustly denigrated.

**Popular Opinion:** Advocate makes an unwarranted appeal to popular opinion (e.g. "most people agree that...") in support of a proposition.

**Sanctimony:** Advocate makes an unwarranted claim that his or her position is morally superior to the opponent's position.

**Simple-Minded Certitude:** Advocate has an unshakeable belief which remains unchanged even in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence.

**Single Cause:** Advocate asserts that there is only one cause of a phenomenon or problem, when the evidence suggests multiple factors.

**Slippery Slope:** Advocate asserts without evidence that if we take "one step in the wrong direction", it will inexorably lead to catastrophe.

**Special Pleading:** Advocate claims special insights into an issue, and that the opponent is incapable of achieving the same level of understanding.

**Stacking the Deck:** Advocate is aware of counter-arguments to his or her position, but conceals them in order to defeat the opponent.

**Unfounded Generalization:** Advocate draws a general conclusion about a phenomenon based on unrepresentative examples of the phenomenon.

**Weasel Words:** Advocate uses emotionally loaded labels to boost his or her position or to denigrate the opponent's position.

by Theo, Fallacy, Fallacy List

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