

Faulty Logic

or...What is wrong with this statement?

Red Herring

- *I've always earned A's on my papers.*
- **Problem--The statement introduces an irrelevant issue. The fact that the student may have earned an A on past papers has nothing to do with the current grade or the current paper.**

Argumentum AD Hominem

- *Mrs. Slinger doesn't like me, so she didn't give me a good grade on that project.*
- **Problem--The student, instead of addressing the issue, attacks the person.**

Faulty Cause and Effect

- *I argued with Mr. Prior before I turned in my homework so I got a bad grade on my paper.*
- **Problem--**The student suggests that because he/she argued with his beloved teacher prior (no pun intended) to turning in a paper, the result/effect was a bad grade. The student fails to address the criteria for the assignment.

Bandwagon

- *None of my other math teachers give as many assignments.*
- **Problem--By suggesting that others are not doing as many assignments, the student avoids the real question. Is the work important and necessary to prepare students for the next level of mathematics?**

Oversimplification

- *I know why you don't do well in school. It's a simple question of studying.*
- **Problem—There could be many reasons why a student experiences difficulty in school. Reducing the problem to one solution is oversimplifying.**

Broad Generalization

- *All football players are poor students.*
- **Problem**—This statement takes in an entire group of people at once. It may be that some football players are poor students, but it is unfair to suggest that is true of all football players
- *Teenagers are irresponsible.*
- **Problem**—This is an unfair conclusion based on limited observations.

Either/Or—The False Dilemma

- *Either you attend the football games at UMHS or you don't have school spirit.*
- **The problem—This statement suggests that a student's school spirit is defined in limited terms. Are there other reasons, besides school spirit, that students might not attend football games?**

Glory or Guilt by Association

- *Liking heavy metal music is the same as condoning drug use.*
- **Problem—This statement implies that all heavy metal enthusiasts use drugs. (Guilt)**
- Owning a motorcycle is as American as apple pie.
- **Problem—The arguer tries to connect getting a motorcycle with an *All American* association. (Glory)**

Circular Thinking

- *I hated the movie because it was boring.*
- **Problem—Why is the movie boring?**
- *Mr. Chaney's class is awesome because I like it in there.*
- **Problem—Why is the class awesome?**

So now what?

- Use reason and logic to support your assertions.
- Faulty logic weakens your arguments.
- By being aware of faulty logic, you will be able to poke holes in the claims made by others.

Additional Resources

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_fallacies.html
- <http://www.datanation.com/fallacies/index.htm>
- <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/media/handouts/fallacies.pdf>