

Fallacies of Presumption

Jumping to conclusions without enough evidence can lead to flawed reasoning.

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Hasty Generalization



Definition:

Drawing a conclusion based on a very small or unrepresentative sample.

Example:

"My two friends from Delhi are very loud. Therefore, everyone from Delhi is loud."



Two friends from Delhi
(small sample)



Key Takeaway:

A few examples do not represent the whole.
Avoid making broad conclusions from limited evidence.

MASTER THE NOTES? TAKE THE QUIZ

Slippery Slope

— A small step today, a huge problem tomorrow? —
Not always!

2 Slippery Slope



Definition:

Claiming that a small first step will lead to a chain of related (usually negative) events without providing evidence for that chain.

Example:

“If we let students use calculators in 1st grade, eventually they won’t be able to do basic math at all, and our entire economy will collapse.”



Students use calculators in 1st grade.



They won’t be able to do basic math.



This will affect their future opportunities.



And our entire economy will collapse.



Key Takeaway:

Just because something might lead to a negative outcome doesn’t mean it will. Be wary of unproven chain reactions!

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Petitio Principii

(Begging the Question / Circular Reasoning)

≧ The conclusion is already assumed ≦
≧ in the premises. ≦

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Definition



The conclusion is already assumed in the premises.

Example

“God exists because the Bible says so,
and the Bible is true because God wrote it.”



God exists because
the Bible says so.

And the Bible is true
because God wrote it.



Key Takeaway:

The argument is circular – it doesn't provide independent evidence, it just repeats the claim in different words.

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False Dilemma

(Either/Or Fallacy)

It's not always a choice between two.
More options often exist!

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Definition



Presenting only two options
when more exist.

Example:

A leader tries to silence different viewpoints by forcing people to choose between two extreme sides, without acknowledging any other possibilities.



Key Takeaway:

Look for the bigger picture. There are often more than two options, and the real issue may be more complex than it seems.

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Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

Assuming that because B followed A,
A must have caused B.

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Definition



Assuming that because B followed A,
A must have caused B.

Example:

"I wore my lucky socks and
we won. Therefore, the socks
caused the victory."



Wore lucky socks



Won the match



Therefore,
the socks caused it!



Key Takeaway:

Just because one event happened after
another doesn't mean the first event caused it.
Correlation is not the same as causation.

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Complex Question

A question that sneaks in an unproven claim, so you're forced to accept it just by answering.

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Definition



Phrasing a question in such a way that it presupposes the truth of an unproven assertion embedded within it.

Example:



Key Takeaway:

It's not really a question — it's a hidden claim dressed up as one.

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Accident

Applying a general rule to a specific situation where special circumstances make the rule not applicable.

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Definition



Inappropriately applying a legitimate general rule to a specific, atypical case where special circumstances make the rule invalid.

Example:

A rule might say, "Harming another person is a criminal offense." But in certain professions, like surgery, the same action is legal and necessary, due to special circumstances and context.



General rule:
Harming someone is a crime.



Special case:
Surgeons use the same action for a valid, life-saving purpose.



Key Takeaway:

A rule may be true in general, but it doesn't always apply in every situation. Context matters!

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