

LOGICAL FALLACIES

HOW *NOT* TO ARGUE...



CREDITS

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Source of Information:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/fallacies/>

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO ON FALLACIES:

Go to the link below to watch an introduction video.

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-are-logical-fallacies-define-identify-and-avoid-them.html#lesson>

THE
"SHORT LIST"
OF
FALLACIES

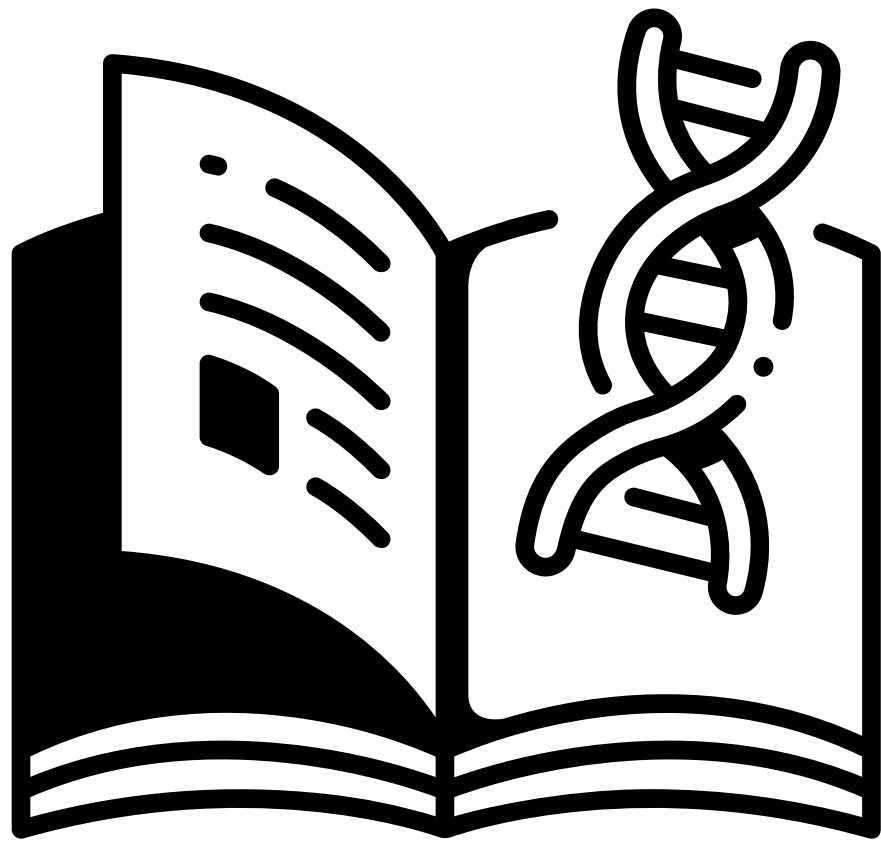
Before we begin, please note that there are many ways to label and categorize the endless list of fallacies... The purpose of this slide show is to attempt to tackle the basics.

For a more exhaustive list, simply search *Fallacies* in your favorite browser!

(1) SAY WHAT?!

"One of my friends said her Biology class was hard, and the one I'm enrolled in is hard, too. All Biology classes must be hard!"

HASTY GENERALIZATION



Relying on the opinions/experiences of a few people as a means for making a judgement about a whole group. (*i.e. stereotypes*)

Adjustment Tip...

Use qualifiers such as "some," "most," "many," etc. to ease the error-prone tendencies of these statements.

(2) SAY WHAT?!

"Mayor Jones raised taxes, then the rate of violent crime went up. Jones is responsible for the rise in crime."

**POST
HOC
(AKA FALSE CAUSE)**



Latin for "after this, therefore because of this"

This fallacy assumes that because B comes after A, A must have caused B.

Sometimes two events can be related in time but not in cause.

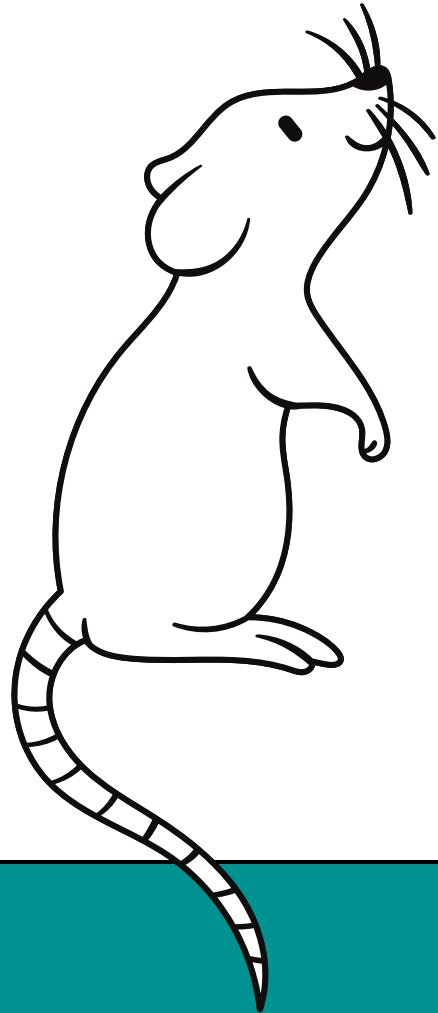
Adjustment Tip...

If you say that A caused B, you should have something more to say about how A caused B than just that A came first and B thereafter.

(3) SAY WHAT?!

"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 in which everyone constantly fears for their lives. It will be the end of civilization. To prevent this terrible consequence, we should make animal experimentation illegal right now."

SLIPPERY SLOPE



The arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place if we don't act, but there's really not enough evidence for that assumption.

The arguer asserts that if you take a step onto the 'slippery slope,' there's no stopping the momentum and we will slide all the way to the bottom!

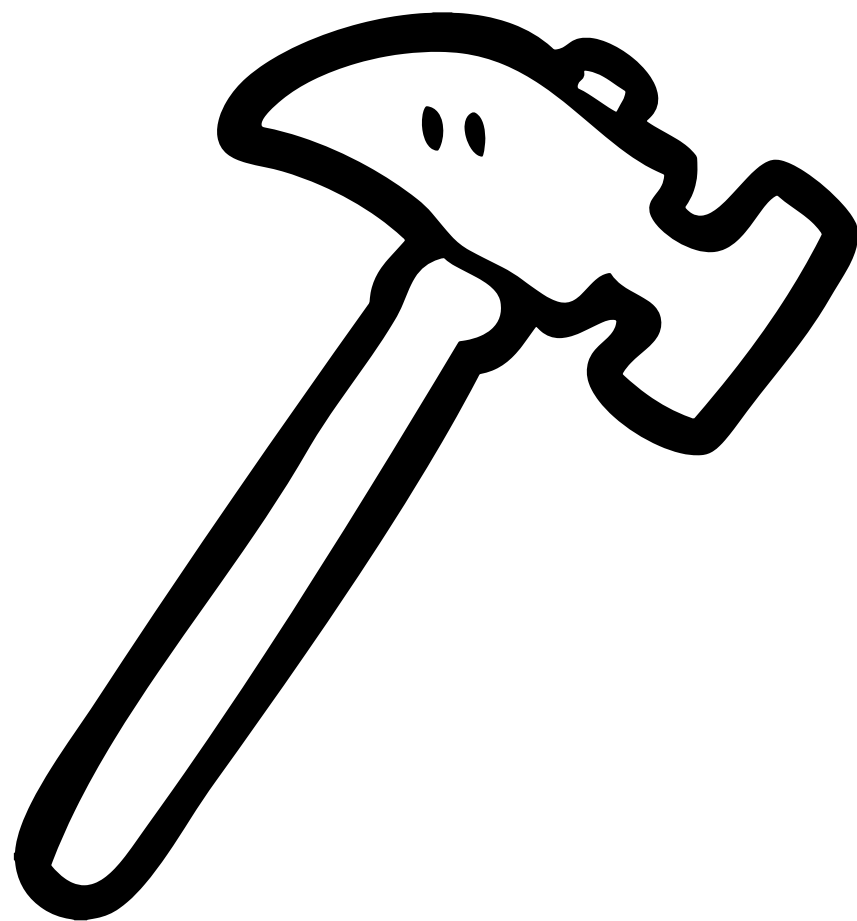
A more logical chain of events...

"If I fail English class, I won't be able to graduate. If I don't graduate, I probably won't have as much opportunity at a reputable college, so I may not end up on the exact path I set out for."

(4) SAY WHAT?!

"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 is equally as ridiculous.

WEAK/FALSE ANALOGY



When two things being compared are similar in some ways but not in ways relevant to the argument.

The wish to restrict guns is because they can kill large numbers of people at a distance, whereas hammers do NOT share this feature...it'd be hard to kill a crowd with a hammer, yes?

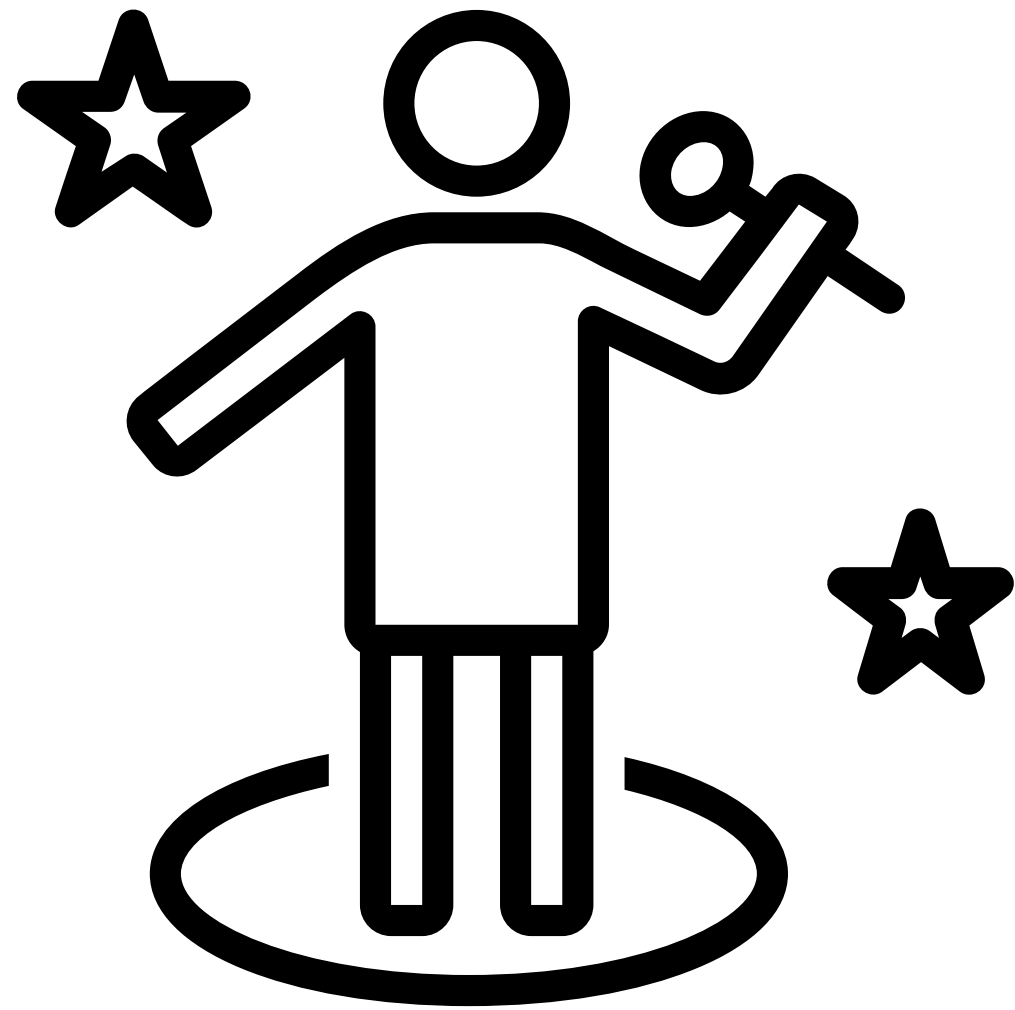
Adjustment Tip...

Identify what properties are important to the claim you're making, and see whether the two things you're comparing share those properties.

(5) SAY WHAT?!

"We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, including Oprah Winfrey have publically stated their opposition to it."

APPEALS TO AUTHORITY



An attempt to add strength to an argument by referring to respected sources'/authorities' position on the same issue, but that person is not an expert in the field being argued!

In this fallacy, the 'big name' we referenced isn't much of an expert on the topic we're arguing! Oprah Winfrey might be a trusted name in the entertainment business in general, but she is not necessarily an expert in criminal law.

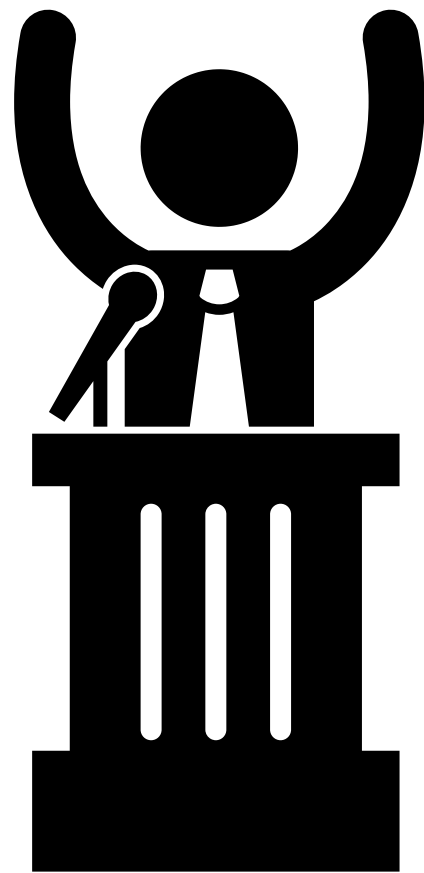
Adjustment Tip...

When using 'big names,' be sure the person you're citing is an expert in the field you're debating; be sure they're a fairly neutral or reasonable figure, as opposed to being biased.

(6) SAY WHAT?!

"The President is doing a good job. Seventy percent of Americans think so!"

AD POPULUM (AKA BANDWAGON)



The arguer takes advantage of the desire most people have to 'fit in' and uses that desire to get the audience to accept his/her argument.

'Believe this because everyone else does...'

American opinion is important in determining laws, but it is irrelevant when it comes to determining morals. (*i.e. remember when Segregation was favored?!*)

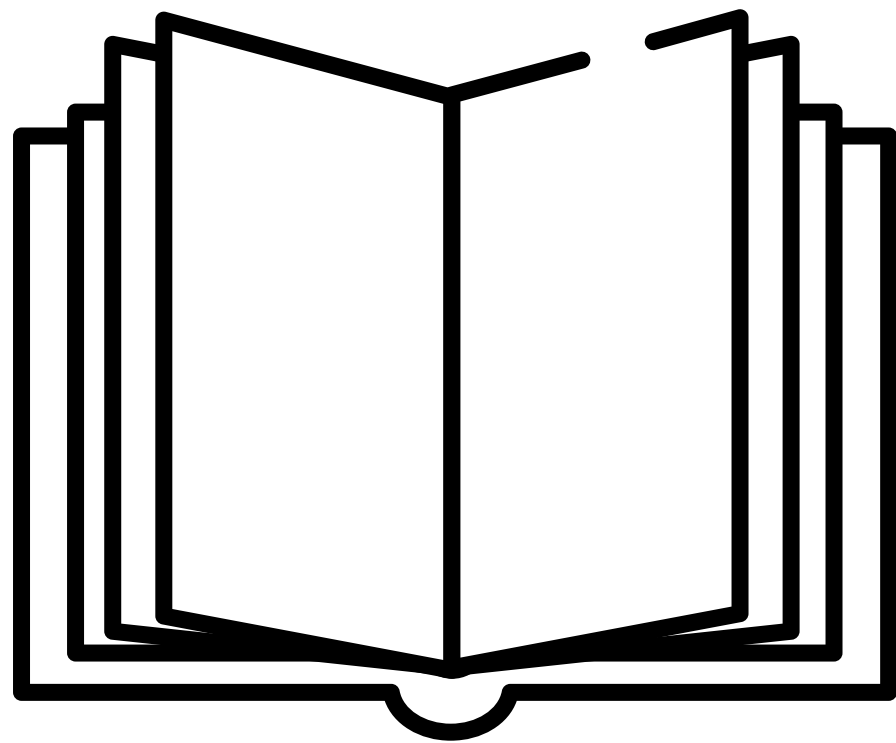
Adjustment Tip...

Remember, what's popular is not always right!

(7) SAY WHAT?!

"Anderson Myers has written several books on the injustices of stem cell research. But Myers is a bitter old man who just likes to stir controversy for the sake of hearing himself talk. So you shouldn't take him seriously."

AD HOMINEM (AGAINST THE PERSON)



Focuses attention on people rather than on arguments or evidence.

The arguer attacks his/her opponent as a person instead of the opponent's argument.

Adjustment Tip...

Be sure to stay focused on the opponent's reasoning, not on their personal character.

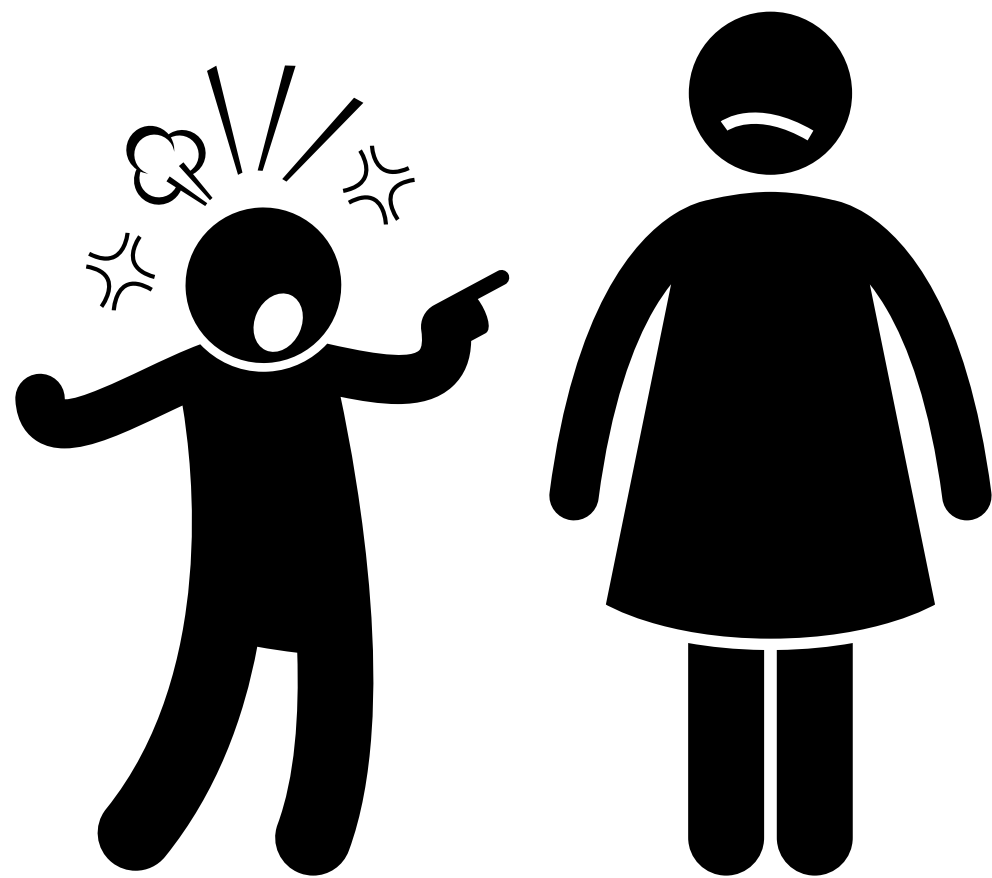
(8) SAY WHAT?!

PARENT: " You shouldn't smoke because it can damage your health, it's expensive, and it diminishes your appearance."

CHILD: "I won't accept your argument because you used to smoke when you were my age. You did it, too!"

TU QUOQUE

("YOU, TOO!" / HYPOCRITE)



Again, focuses attention on people rather than on the argument or evidence.

The fact that the parents have done the thing they're condemning doesn't change the fact that it is still harmful, expensive, and diminishes appearance...the premises of the original argument.

(9) SAY WHAT?!

"I know the exam is graded based on performance, but you should give me an A...my car broke down on the way to the exam, I didn't get any sleep because my cat is dying, and I was in the health clinic three times this week!"

APPEAL TO PITY (AD MISERICORDIAN)



Takes place when the arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by making them feel sorry for someone.

Adjustment Tip...

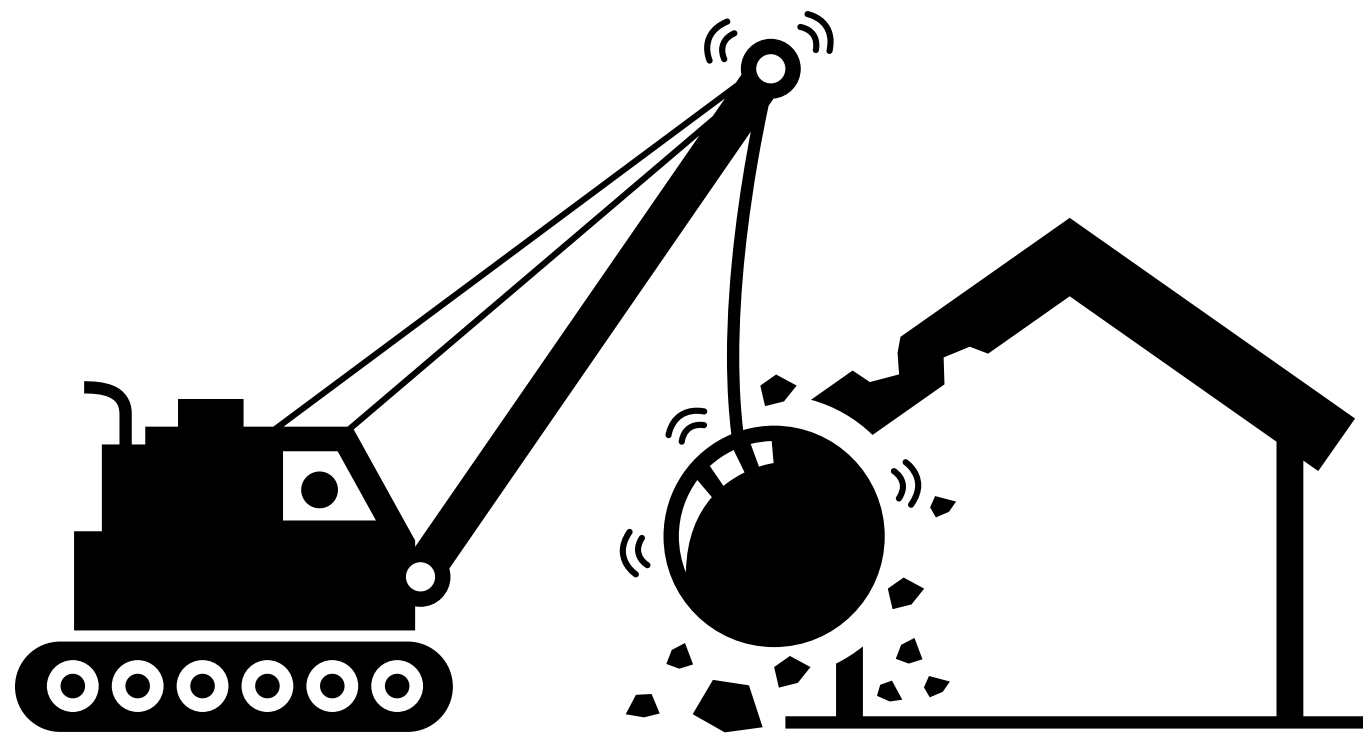
Make sure you aren't trying to get your audience to agree with you by making them feel bad.

(10) SAY WHAT?!

"Caldwell City Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear this aging building down and construct a new building or we continue to risk the safety of our citizens.

Obviously, we shouldn't do that so we must tear the old building down."

EITHER/OR (FALSE DICHOTOMY)



The arguer sets up a situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so the listener is only left with one option, but in reality, there are many options shielded from view!

Adjustment Tip...

The arguer fails to mention the possibility of possibly repairing the old building to bring it up to code, or keep citizens from the dangerous parts of the building in question.

(11) SAY WHAT?!

"Many people criticize Thomas Jefferson for being a slave owner. But Jefferson was one of our greatest presidents, and his Declaration of Independence is one of the most eloquent pleas for freedom and democracy ever written.

Clearly these criticisms are unwarranted."

RED HERRING



When the arguer goes off on a tangent part-way through the argument, raising a separate issue to distract the audience from what's really the issue.

The fact that Jefferson was a great president has nothing to do with whether or not he should be condemned for owning slaves.

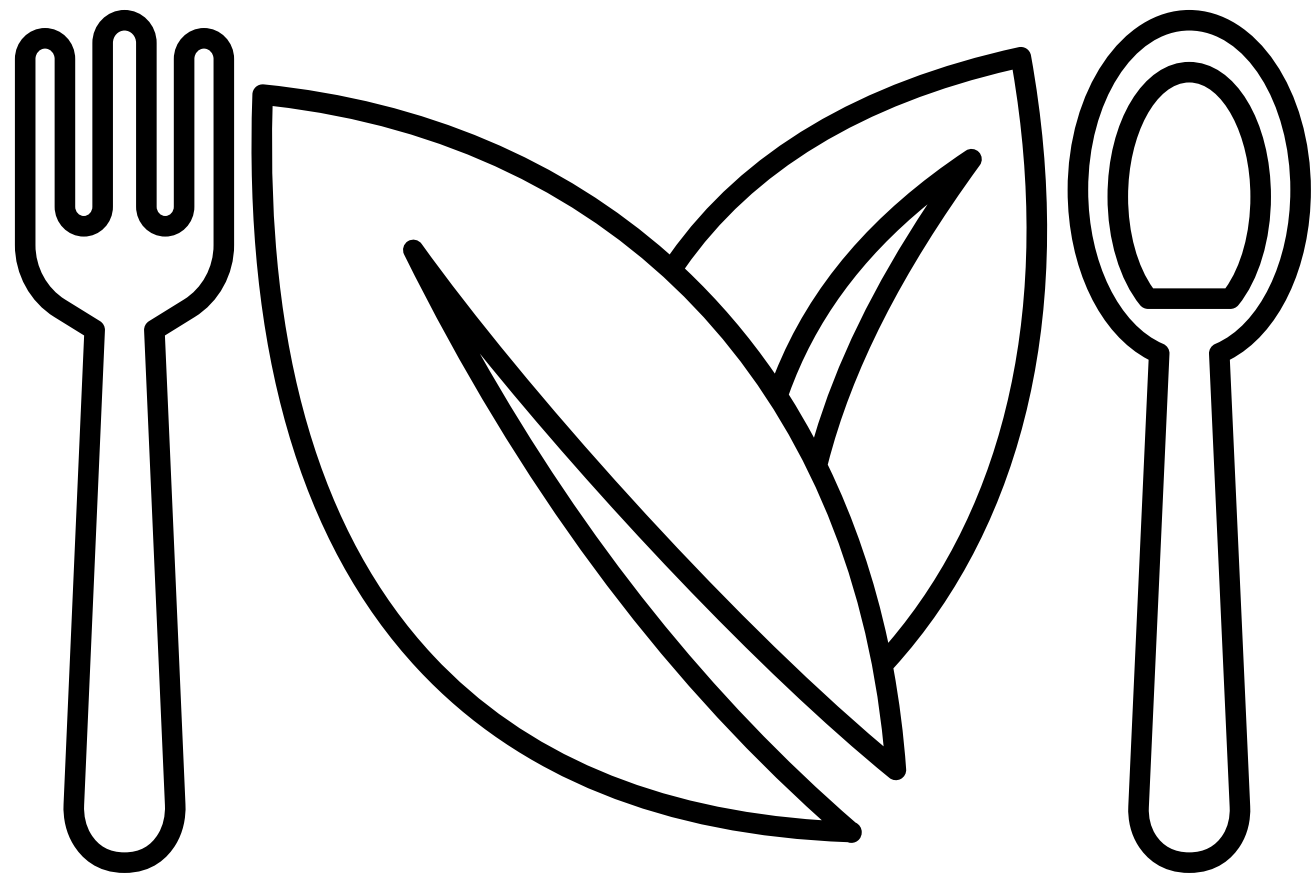
(12) SAY WHAT?!

"You're a vegetarian? You do realize Hitler was a vegetarian too?"

GENETIC FALLACY

Rejecting an argument based on its origins rather than on its own merits.

Just because a notorious figure, like Hitler, accepted or rejected a particular idea doesn't not make it right or wrong.



FUN WITH FALLACIES

Monty Python and the Quest for the Perfect Fallacy
Video

"Love is a Fallacy," by Max Shulman
Short Story
Video Interpretation

DIREC-TV Commercials...
Don't Wake Up in a Roadside Ditch
Don't Attend Your Own Funeral