

## WORKSHEET

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### INVALID ARGUMENTS: SOME LOGICAL FALLACIES

Logical fallacies are invalid arguments that often appear when someone is trying to manipulate or deceive the reader/ listener, or when someone is fooling himself or herself.

- 1. Red Herring: A red herring is designed to mislead by presenting irrelevant information that distracts the reader or listener from the real issue.**

*Example:* I don't see why you're worrying about our soldiers dying if we start a war with China! After all, fifty thousand Americans die every year in car accidents.

- 2. Ad Hominem: This literally means "to the man." Ad hominem arguments attack an opponent *personally* rather than actually trying to prove the opponent wrong.**

*Example:* How can anyone possibly accept Professor Simpson's ideas about the importance of increased funding for the schools when Professor Simpson was accused of shoplifting ten years ago?

- 3. Straw Man: Pretending your opponent believes something silly and easy to prove wrong, and arguing against that instead of against his *real* beliefs. Often this involves exaggerating something your opponent believes until it becomes ridiculous.**

*Example:* The President says that we should give every citizen a free BMW, but obviously if we do that the country will go bankrupt!

- 4. False Analogy: Pretending two situations are similar or parallel when there are actually important differences.**

*Example:* We all know that nails only work correctly when we hit them on the head. Therefore, we should not hesitate to hit our students to make them work.

- 5. False Dilemma: Pretending that there are only two choices, when in reality there are other alternatives.**

*Example:* Either you're for me no matter *what* I do, or you're against me!

- 6. Non Sequitur: Literally this means "it does not follow." Non sequitur involves pretending there's a logical connection between two things when there really isn't.**

*Example:* I know you'll tell me all your secrets. I have a right to know everything because we're friends.