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strawman

Misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack.

By exaggerating, twisting or distorting someone's argument, strawman arguments make it easier to attack. Strawman arguments are often used in political debates.

After Bill and Ted see the strawman argument, they both agree that strawman arguments are often used in political debates.

false cause

Assuming that a real or perceived relationship between things means that one is the cause of the other.

Many people make a connection between things happening together, or assumed to be connected, but they are actually not. The false cause fallacy is a common one.

Reading a story that says that a person who has a bad cold has a bad cold because they ate a bad cold is a false cause fallacy.

slippery slope

Assuming that if we allow it to happen, then it will consequently happen too, therefore it should not happen.

The problem with the slippery slope is that it is not always true. The slippery slope is a common fallacy.

After Bill and Ted see the slippery slope, they both agree that the slippery slope is a common fallacy.

ad hominem

Attacking your opponent's character or personal traits in an attempt to undermine their argument.

Ad hominem arguments are not logical. They are attacks on a person's character or personal traits.

After Bill and Ted see the ad hominem, they both agree that ad hominem arguments are not logical.

special pleading

Moving the goalposts or making up exceptions when a claim is shown to be false.

Special pleading is a common fallacy. It is a way of making a claim seem more plausible by making up exceptions.

After Bill and Ted see the special pleading, they both agree that special pleading is a common fallacy.

loaded question

Asking a question that has an assumption built into it so that if it is answered without objection, it is assumed to be true.

Loaded questions are a common fallacy. They are questions that have an assumption built into them.

After Bill and Ted see the loaded question, they both agree that loaded questions are a common fallacy.

the gambler's fallacy

Believing that 'hot' or 'cold' streaks in random events are evidence of a pattern.

The gambler's fallacy is a common fallacy. It is a belief that a 'hot' or 'cold' streak in random events is evidence of a pattern.

After Bill and Ted see the gambler's fallacy, they both agree that the gambler's fallacy is a common fallacy.

bandwagon

Appealing to popularity or the fact that many people do something as an attempt to prove its validity.

Bandwagon arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that appeal to popularity.

After Bill and Ted see the bandwagon, they both agree that bandwagon arguments are a common fallacy.

appeal to authority

Saying that because an authority thinks something is true, therefore it is true.

Appeal to authority arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that appeal to authority.

After Bill and Ted see the appeal to authority, they both agree that appeal to authority arguments are a common fallacy.

composition/division

Assuming that what is true about one part of something is also true about the whole, or vice versa.

Composition and division arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that assume that what is true about one part of something is also true about the whole, or vice versa.

After Bill and Ted see the composition/division, they both agree that composition/division arguments are a common fallacy.

no true Scotsman

Making what could be called an appeal to purity as a way to dismiss evidence or criticism of an argument.

No true Scotsman arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that make an appeal to purity as a way to dismiss evidence or criticism of an argument.

After Bill and Ted see the no true Scotsman, they both agree that no true Scotsman arguments are a common fallacy.

middle ground

Saying that a compromise, or middle point, between two extremes must be the truth.

Middle ground arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that say that a compromise, or middle point, between two extremes must be the truth.

After Bill and Ted see the middle ground, they both agree that middle ground arguments are a common fallacy.

appeal to emotion

Misrepresenting an emotional response in place of a valid or compelling argument.

Appeal to emotion arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that misrepresent an emotional response in place of a valid or compelling argument.

After Bill and Ted see the appeal to emotion, they both agree that appeal to emotion arguments are a common fallacy.

tu quoque

Answering having to engage with criticism by turning it back on the accuser - answering critics with criticism.

Tu quoque arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that answer criticism by turning it back on the accuser.

After Bill and Ted see the tu quoque, they both agree that tu quoque arguments are a common fallacy.

personal incredulity

Saying that because one finds something difficult to understand, it is therefore not true.

Personal incredulity arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that say that because one finds something difficult to understand, it is therefore not true.

After Bill and Ted see the personal incredulity, they both agree that personal incredulity arguments are a common fallacy.

ambiguity

Using double meanings or ambiguities of language to mislead or misinterpret the truth.

Ambiguity arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that use double meanings or ambiguities of language to mislead or misinterpret the truth.

After Bill and Ted see the ambiguity, they both agree that ambiguity arguments are a common fallacy.

genetic

Judging something good or bad on the basis of where it comes from, or from whom it comes.

Genetic arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that judge something good or bad on the basis of where it comes from, or from whom it comes.

After Bill and Ted see the genetic, they both agree that genetic arguments are a common fallacy.

black-or-white

Where two alternative states are presented as the only possibilities, even when in fact more possibilities exist.

Black-or-white arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that present two alternative states as the only possibilities, even when in fact more possibilities exist.

After Bill and Ted see the black-or-white, they both agree that black-or-white arguments are a common fallacy.

begging the question

A circular argument in which the conclusion is included in the premises.

Begging the question arguments are a common fallacy. They are circular arguments in which the conclusion is included in the premises.

After Bill and Ted see the begging the question, they both agree that begging the question arguments are a common fallacy.

appeal to nature

Making the argument that because something is 'natural' it is therefore valid, justified, inevitable, good, or right.

Appeal to nature arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that say that because something is 'natural' it is therefore valid, justified, inevitable, good, or right.

After Bill and Ted see the appeal to nature, they both agree that appeal to nature arguments are a common fallacy.

anecdotal

Using personal experience or an isolated example instead of a valid argument, especially to dismiss statistics.

Anecdotal arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that use personal experience or an isolated example instead of a valid argument, especially to dismiss statistics.

After Bill and Ted see the anecdotal, they both agree that anecdotal arguments are a common fallacy.

the Texas sharpshooter

Cherry-picking data clusters to suit an argument, or finding a pattern to fit a premeditation.

The Texas sharpshooter arguments are a common fallacy. They are arguments that cherry-pick data clusters to suit an argument, or find a pattern to fit a premeditation.

After Bill and Ted see the Texas sharpshooter, they both agree that Texas sharpshooter arguments are a common fallacy.

don't shat not commit logical fallacies

A logical fallacy is a flaw in reasoning. Strong arguments are valid of logical fallacies, while arguments that are weak tend to use logical fallacies to appear stronger than they are. They're like tricks or illusions of thought, and they're often very sneakily used by politicians, the media, and others to fool people.

Don't be fooled! This poster has been designed to help you identify some of the most common fallacies. If you see someone committing a logical fallacy online, link them to the relevant fallacy to school them in their logic. yourlogicalfallacy.com/strawman

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1. To hang up near your computer for when you are arguing with people on the internet.
2. To put up in your kids' bedroom so that they get all clever and whatnot, and are able to tell the difference between real news and faux news *cough*.
3. To gift, in a slightly passive-aggressive yet still socially acceptable way, to someone who is forever making weak arguments peppered with fallacies.
4. To hang up in a classroom, common room or other public space to make the world a more rational place.
5. Potato.

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