

Test 2 Cheatsheet

Relevance

Positive Relevance A statement that counts in favor to another statement

Negative Relevance A statement that counts against another statement

Logical Irrelevance A statement that counts neither for or against another statement

Fallacies of Relevance

Definition

Mistakes in reasoning that occur because the premises are logically irrelevant to the conclusion

Personal Attack (Ad Hominem) Rejecting someone's argument or claim by attacking the other person rather than the person's argument or claim

Attacking the Motive The error of criticizing a person's motivation for offering a particular argument or claim, rather than examining the worth of the argument or claim itself

Look Who's Talking (Tu Quoque) An arguer rejects another person's argument or claim because that person fails to practice what he preaches

Two Wrongs Make a Right When an arguer attempts to justify a wrongful act by claiming that some other act is just as bad or worse

Scare Tactics When an arguer threatens harm to a reader or listener if he or she does not accept the arguer's conclusion and this threat is irrelevant to the truth of the arguer's conclusion

Appeal to Pity When an arguer inappropriately attempts to evoke feelings of pity or compassion from his listeners or readers

Bandwagon Argument Plays on a person's desire to be popular, accepted, or valued, rather than appealing to logically relevant reasons or evidence

Straw Man When an arguer distorts an opponent's argument or claim to make it easier to attack

Red Herring When an arguer tries to sidetrack his audience by raising an irrelevant issue and then claims that the original issue has effectively been settled by the irrelevant diversion

Equivocation When a key word is used in two or more senses in the same argument and the apparent success of the argument depends on the shift in meaning

Begging the Question When an arguer states or assumes as a premise the very thing he or she is trying to prove as a conclusion

Fallacies of Insufficient Evidence

Definition

Mistakes in reasoning that occur because the premises, though logically relevant to the conclusion, fail to provide sufficient evidence to support the conclusion.

Inappropriate Appeal to Authority When an arguer cites a witness or authority who, there is good reason to believe, is unreliable.

- Is the source not an authority on the subject at issue?
- Is the source biased?
- Is the accuracy of the source's observations questionable?
- Is the source known to be generally unreliable?

- Has the source been cited incorrectly?
- Does the source's claim conflict with expert opinion?
- Is the source's claim not one that can be settled by an appeal to expert opinion?
- Is the claim highly improbable on its face?

Appeal to Ignorance When an arguer asserts that a claim must be true because no one has proven it false or, conversely, that a claim must be false because no one has proven it true.

False Alternatives When an arguer poses a false either/or choice.

Loaded Question When an arguer asks a question that contains an unfair or unwarranted presupposition.

Questionable Cause When an arguer claims, without sufficient evidence, that one thing is the cause of something else.

Post Hoc Fallacy When an arguer assumes, without adequate evidence, that because one event, A, occurred before another event, B, A is the cause of B.

Mere Correlation Fallacy When an arguer assumes, without sufficient evidence, that because A and B regularly occur together, A must be the cause of B or vice versa.

Oversimplified Cause Fallacy When we assume, without adequate evidence, that A is the sole cause of B when, in fact, there are several causes of B.

Hasty Generalization When we draw a general conclusion from a sample that is biased or too small.

Slippery Slope When we claim, without sufficient evidence, that a seemingly harmless action, if taken, will lead to a disastrous outcome.

Weak Analogy When an arguer compares two (or more) things that aren't really comparable in relevant respects.

Inconsistency When an arguer asserts inconsistent or contradictory claims.

Language

Vagueness A word or phrase is vague when its meaning is fuzzy and inexact

Overgenerality Words are over general if the information they provide us too broad and unspecific in a given context

Ambiguity A word expression is ambiguous if it has two or more distinct meanings and the context does not make clear which meaning is intended