

Rhetorical Fallacies

Sometimes rhetorical appeals ask you to make a conclusion or buy a product based on a false or misleading argument. These appeals are called FALLACIES.

FALSE DICHOTOMY: The speaker pretends like there are only two choices, when in reality there is a middle ground. One choice is extreme, and the other is the thing the speaker wants you to do.

Ex. “Well, if you don’t want us pigs to eat the extra apples, then you must want Mr. Jones to come back.”

AD HOMINEN: “Against the man” This approach attacks the opposing viewpoint by going after the speaker.

Ex. “Who are you going to believe, that ex-convict or me?”

BANDWAGON: Speaker preys on your sense of belonging or fear of being different. The logic is that if everybody’s using the product, it must be good.

Ex. “Over 10 million people have called to order Proactive. Do the same today!”

SLIPPERY SLOPE: This fallacy says that if one event occurs, a whole string of much worse events will occur as well.

Ex. “If you let the government take away our handguns, next they’ll want to limit our free speech.”

Ex. “Mom, if I can’t go to the dance, I’ll be the laughingstock of the school, fail out, and end up living in a cardboard box by the bus stop.”