

Glossary

Ad hominem argument. An attack on the character, interests or circumstances of an opponent who is making a claim rather than challenging the claim itself.

Affirming the consequent fallacy. This fallacy is committed when the consequent in a conditional statement is affirmed and the antecedent is taken to be true on these grounds.

Analogy. Reasoning by analogy is based on comparison with similar cases. An argument based on analogy only succeeds when the similarities between the cases or entities are relevant.

Analyzing arguments. The process of dismantling arguments in order to identify their premises and conclusions.

Antecedent. An antecedent is the condition that is claimed to lead to a certain effect (also called the consequent).

Appeal to force fallacy. This fallacy occurs when an arguer appeals to the threat of force or coercion to persuade an opponent to accept a point.

Appeal to the masses. Fallacious reasoning based on mass sentiment, popular feelings, or nationalism, rather than offering good reasons for accepting a conclusion.

Argument. An argument is a group of statements, one of which is called the conclusion, whose truth or acceptability the argument is intended to establish. The other statements are called premises, which are supposed to support the conclusion.

Argumentative writing. Argumentative writing argues for or against a particular point of view. It is concerned with arguments and the point of an argument is to convince the reader or the audience that a claim is true or acceptable.

Begging the question fallacy. This fallacy occurs when what is supposedly proved by the conclusion of an argument is already assumed to be true in the premises.

Cause-and-effect reasoning. A kind of inductive argument in which it is argued that a particular event or effect occurs on the basis of specific antecedent conditions or causal factors.

Comparative writing. A kind of writing that compares or contrasts two or more things, events or viewpoints by focusing on similarities and differences.

Complex question fallacy. The complex question fallacy is committed when a question is asked (a) that rests on a questionable assumption, and (b) to which all answers appear to endorse that assumption.

Conclusion. The main claim in an argument that the premises are intended to prove.

Conclusion indicator. A signal word or phrase that precedes a conclusion.

Consequent. A consequent is what is said to follow if the antecedent condition is assumed true.

Counterargument. This is an argument an arguer formulates in answer to another argument.

Counterexample. A counterexample is a specific example which defeats or runs counter to the claim made in an argument.

Critical reasoning. Critical reasoning involves the ability to actively and skillfully conceptualise, analyse, question and evaluate ideas and beliefs.

Critical self-reflection. Critical self-reflection is an act of examining one's own thoughts and beliefs; related to self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Critical thinking. Synonym for critical reasoning.

Deductive argument. An argument in which the premises are claimed to give sufficient support for the conclusion to follow.

Denying the antecedent fallacy. This type of fallacy occurs when someone argues that because the antecedent doesn't happen, the consequent cannot happen.

Descriptive writing. A kind of writing that describes something or gives information about state of affairs or events.

Distraction fallacies. These fallacies occur when attention is distracted from the weak point of an argument.

Emotion fallacies. These fallacies confuse emotion with reason.

Empirical argument. An argument in which the premises assert that some empirically determinable facts apply.

Equivocation. The fallacy of equivocation occurs when a word or phrase is used in one sense in one part of an argument and in a different sense in another part of the same argument.

Evaluating arguments. The process of critically examining the plausibility of claims advanced in an argument; critically considering assumptions; and weighing possible solutions to issues.

Fallacy. A fallacy is a deceptive argument that tries to persuade us to accept the claim that is being advanced, but the reasons in support of the claim are irrelevant or inappropriate.

False appeal to authority. This fallacy is committed when someone cites an authoritative or famous person who is not an expert in the field under discussion.

False dilemma. A false dilemma is created when an arguer presents an either-or choice when, in fact, there are more than two alternatives.

Faulty analogy. The error of faulty analogy occurs when a comparison is drawn between two different cases or issues, and there are no relevant similarities between them.

Fallacious reasoning. Invalid reasoning that suppresses relevant evidence, or contains questionable premises.

Hasty generalization. The fallacy of hasty generalization occurs when a conclusion is drawn on the basis of ill-considered or insufficient evidence.

Inductive argument. An argument in which the conclusion is subject to probability, even if the premises are assumed to be true.

Invalid deductive argument. An argument in which the structure is invalid and the premises fail to give sufficient support to the conclusion.

Logical definition. This type of definition defines a term by selecting those properties that are shared by and confined to all the things that the term covers.

Narrative writing. A kind of writing that aims at unfolding a story or recounting a series of events.

Persuasive definition. A type of definition that aims at influencing the reader's attitude and thinking by suggesting a new meaning for a term that is already in common use.

Preconceived idea. A preconceived idea is a societal assumption that decisively influence our thinking, but which we have not critically reflected upon.

Premise indicator. A signal word or phrase that precedes a premise.

Premise. A premise is a statement that serves as a reason in support of an argument's conclusion.

Principle of charitable interpretation. This principle entails that when more than one interpretation of an argument is possible, the argument should be interpreted so that the premises provide the strongest support for the conclusion.

Slippery slope argument. A slippery slope argument leads one from seemingly unimportant and obviously true first premises to exaggerated consequences in the conclusion.

Social conditioning. Seeing only what we expect to see.

Sound. An argument is sound if it is valid and you accept that all its premises are true.

Soundness. Refers to the truth or strength of the premises of an argument.

Statement. A statement is an assertion that is either true or false.

Statistical extrapolation. A kind of inductive reasoning that refers to some statistical study or evidence. An inference is drawn about a target population on the basis of what is taken to be true of a sample group.

Stereotypes. Generalisations, or assumptions, that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group, based on an image (often wrong) about what people in that group are like.

Stipulative definition. A kind of definition that stipulates that a given term should be used in a particular way.

Straw man argument. A fallacious form of reasoning that consists of making one's own position appear strong by misrepresenting, or ridiculing an opponent's position.

Structural fallacies. These fallacies contain flaws in reasoning because their form or structure is invalid.

Thesis. The conclusion of an extended argument.

Valid. A criterion of cogent reasoning that requires that the premises of an argument in fact support its conclusion, either deductively or inductively.

Valid deductive argument. An argument of which the structure is valid and the premises give sufficient support for the conclusion to follow.

Validity. Refers to the relationship between the premises and the conclusion of an argument.

Value argument. An argument that asserts a claim of preference or a moral judgment about right and wrong, good and bad.

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