

Learning the Art of Argument:

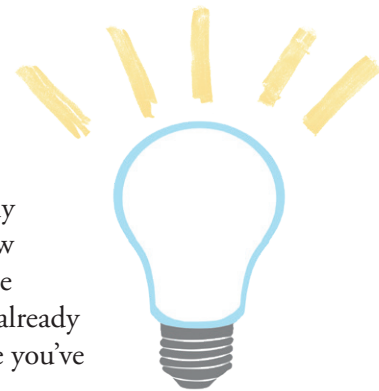
Some Important Points for Students



Teachers, this is a resource that you can draw from to create your syllabus for your course. Note that you will want to share all these points with your students in class, but you may also wish to include some of these points in your syllabus. Much of the language is taken from the introduction for teachers but has been modified to address students. You can use some or all of the text from this document for your syllabus, if you think that will be helpful! Do keep in mind that you know your students best, and it might be even better if you tweak and summarize the points in this document for use in your own syllabus instead of simply copying and pasting.

The First Rule of Logic: Define Your Terms!

In the “What is Logic?” chapter at the beginning of the book, you’ll spend some time learning how to build good definitions. It is very important that you learn and understand how to craft a good definition. It can be easy to take shortcuts and be a little lazy when it comes to building and memorizing definitions (especially early on in the course, when the definitions are easy and there are only a few to remember). But, if you are diligent with the memorization from the beginning, you will find that by the time you get to unit 3 (and have already learned 25 fallacies), memorizing the definitions will be easier because you’ve already had so much practice.



Definitions of the Fallacies

You will notice that there are slight variations among the definitions for each fallacy. We have given each fallacy four definitions: the definition in the unit introduction, the first definition in the chapter (under the Definition heading), the definition in the Genus-Difference sidebar (which shows the genus and difference of the particular fallacy), and the definition in the Category sidebar (which shows the broadest category to which the particular fallacy belongs—relevance, presumption, or clarity—and any subgroups that the fallacy belongs in, such as *ad fontem* arguments, appeals to emotion, or red herrings).

The first definition in the chapter (under the Definition heading) is the one that you should memorize and is the definition that appears in the glossary. It is also the definition that you should provide whenever you are asked to define the fallacy in an exercise or on a test. This definition includes the translation of the Latin name (where applicable), the subcategory that the fallacy belongs to, and a description about what makes this fallacy distinct from the other fallacies in the same category. (In the glossary entry for the fallacy, there might also be additional

notes about etymology for words that are from Greek or Latin but that don't have Greek or Latin names. These notes are listed after the glossary definition.)

The second definition (the definition in the Genus-Difference sidebars) varies the most from the first definition. This variation is intended to help sharpen your understanding of the fallacies. These Genus-Difference sidebars offer language that might expand or clarify words in the original definition. The third definition (the definition in the Category sidebar) just describes what is distinct about each fallacy; it uses the same exact language as the first definition, only it lists the subcategory that the fallacy belongs to in a different part of the sidebar.

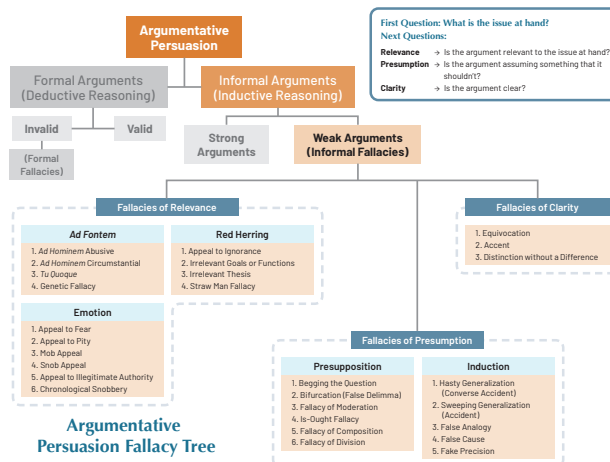
The definitions in this text vary because the same thing can be said in many different ways. It's important to remember that your ultimate goal is not merely to memorize the definitions of the fallacies but to gain a mastery, or a deep understanding, of them. At the end of the day, demonstrating a real working understanding of the fallacies (for example, by offering a fallacy definition that is accurate but does not use the exact words of the first definition) is more important than repeating the exact, minor details of the wording in the text.



The Fallacy Tree

The Art of Argument features some organization in the form of a taxonomic fallacy tree. This tree organizes each fallacy according to its category and subcategory.

The complete fallacy tree shows the three categories of fallacies (relevance, presumption, and clarity), the subcategories (*ad fontem* arguments, appeals to emotion, red herrings, fallacies of presupposition, fallacies of induction, and fallacies of clarity), and all the individual fallacies. The fallacy tree builds from chapter to chapter so that you have a visual representation of the fallacies in a category (relevance, presumption, or clarity) that you have already learned and the ones that they are going to learn. If you are a visual learner, the fallacy tree will be especially useful as a study tool.



Fallacy Examples in the Text: Training Students to Be Active Readers

Before each collection of fallacy examples, you will be prompted to think through the fallacy examples on your own before you read the explanations. Don't take the shortcut and jump right to the explanations! Remember that one of the goals of learning logic is to learn how engage in discussion so that you can participate in debate that is both robust and charitable. When you encounter a fallacy example, actively engage the text by asking questions and seeking to understand as you read. If you actively engage the arguments and ideas in this text, you will be all the more prepared to actively engage the arguments you encounter every day outside the classroom.



Creating Fallacy Examples

Whenever you are asked to find or create examples of the fallacies—whether for a review exercise, a chapter review, a cumulative fallacy worksheet, or a test—you should not be searching the internet for examples that someone else has already labelled and categorized. For these exercises, you should be writing down examples that you have heard in conversation or have come across when reading or when watching a movie, a video online, or a TV show. If you can't think of examples you have come across, you should just create examples of your own.

Keeping a Fallacy Notebook

Fallacies are present in the world around us. You should be on the lookout for them as you make your way through this course. You will find them in history, literature, science, movies, family conversations, essays, news reports, music, and more. Keeping an eye out for fallacies will allow you to reinforce and practice the logical skills you will learn in this course.

Consider building a list of fallacy examples in a notebook. In this notebook, you can jot down bad arguments as you come across them. If you see what fallacy is at work in the argument, write down the name of the fallacy along with your thoughts about how the argument demonstrates that particular fallacy. Even if you don't immediately know what fallacy the argument uses, you can come back to it once you've learned more fallacies. Your teacher might require you to keep a fallacy notebook. But, if your teacher doesn't require it, consider keeping one on your own for your own benefit! Keeping a fallacy notebook will give you even more practice in identifying bad arguments and specific fallacies and in articulating your ideas.

