

SOME VERY COMMON LOGICAL FALLACIES

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BEWARE OF LOGICAL FALLACIES in media reporting, on Blogs and in opinion columns

- Equivocation – the misleading use of a term with more than one meaning (by glossing over which meaning is intended at a particular time).
- Ecological fallacy – inferences about the nature of specific individuals are based solely upon aggregate statistics collected for the group to which those individuals belong.
- Etymological fallacy – which reasons that the original or historical meaning of a word or phrase is necessarily similar to its actual present-day meaning.
- Fallacy of many questions – someone asks a question that presupposes something that has not been proven or accepted by all the people involved.
- Fallacy of the single cause (oversimplification) – it is assumed that there is one, simple cause of an outcome when in reality it may have been caused by a number of only jointly sufficient causes.
- False attribution – an advocate appeals to an irrelevant, unqualified, unidentified, biased or fabricated source in support of an argument.
- Fallacy of quoting out of context – refers to the selective excerpting of words from their original context in a way that distorts the source's intended meaning.
- False authority (single authority) – using an expert of dubious credentials and/or using only one opinion to sell a product or idea. Related to the appeal to authority fallacy.
- Hedging – using words with ambiguous meanings, then changing the meaning of them later.
- Historian's fallacy – occurs when one assumes that decision makers of the past viewed events from the same perspective and having the same information as those subsequently analyzing the decision.
- Fallacy of composition – assuming that something true of part of a whole must also be true of the whole.
- Fallacy of division – assuming that something true of a thing must also be true of all or some of its parts

Note: These common fallacies are not original with me, but I gathered and adapted them from several sources.