LOGICAL FALLACIES
What is Fallacy?

- Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments.
- very, very common and can be quite persuasive at least to the causal reader or listener.
- dozens of examples of fallacious reasoning in newspapers, advertisements, and other sources.
- hard to evaluate whether an argument is fallacious.
Slippery Slope

Definition: The arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but there's really not enough evidence for that assumption.

- The arguer asserts that if we take even one step onto the "slippery slope," we will end up sliding all the way to the bottom; he or she assumes we can't stop halfway down the hill.
Slippery Slope

**Example:** "Animal experimentation reduces our respect for life. If we don't respect life, we are likely to be more and more tolerant of violent acts like war and murder. Soon our society will become a battlefield in which everyone constantly fears for their lives. It will be the end of civilization. To prevent this terrible consequence, we should make animal experimentation illegal right now."

- Since animal experimentation has been legal for some time and civilization has not yet ended, it seems particularly clear that this chain of events won't necessarily take place."
Non Sequitur

**Definition:** A statement that does not logically follow from what preceded it; a conclusion that does not follow from the premises.

"it does not follow"

**Example:** there occurred an increase of births during the full moon. Conclusion: full moons cause birth rates to rise.

But does a full moon actually cause more births, or did it occur for other reasons, perhaps from expected statistical variations?
False Analogy

**Definition:** analogy between two or more objects, ideas, or situations. If the two things that are being compared aren't really alike in the relevant respects.
False Analogy

**Example:** "Guns are like hammers--they're both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers--so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous."
False Authority

Definition: referring to respected sources or authorities and explaining their positions on the issues we're discussing.

• If, however, we try to get readers to agree with us simply by impressing them with a famous name or by appealing to a supposed authority who really isn't much of an expert, we commit the fallacy of appeal to authority.
False Authority

Example: "We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, such as actor Guy Handsome, have publicly stated their opposition to it."
False Dilemma

**Definition:** sets up the situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so it seems that we are left with only one option: the one the arguer wanted us to pick in the first place.
False Dilemma

Example: "Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students' safety. Obviously we shouldn't risk anyone's safety, so we must tear the building down."
Ad hominem attack

- The arguer suggests that her opponent’s view is unacceptable because of some negative character trait.
- Attack the person rather than the argument.
Ad hominem Attack

- People who say that hazing in the military is wrong are just a bunch of wimps.
- He’s a liar so there’s no reason to listen to him.
- …But Ginsberg’s arguments are nothing but trash. Ginsberg was a marijuana-smoking homosexual and a thoroughgoing advocate of the drug culture….
Appeal to Fear

- The arguer tries to get you to accept their view on the grounds that you will be harmed if you don’t.
- They attempt to motivate you from fear rather than logically persuade you.
Can you name this Fallacy?

10) We have to stop the tuition increase! The next thing you know, they'll be charging $40,000 a semester!

SLIPPERY SLOPE
Can you name this Fallacy?

11) The book *Investing for Dummies* really helped me understand my finances better. The book *Chess for Dummies* was written by the same author, was published by the same press, and costs about the same amount, so it would probably help me understand my finances as well.

FALSE ANALOGY
Can you name this Fallacy?

12) Look, you are going to have to make up your mind. Either you decide that you can afford this stereo, or you decide you are going to do without music for a while.

FALSE DILEMMA
Can you name this Fallacy?

15) I'm not a doctor, but I play one on the hit series "Bimbos and Studmuffins in the OR." You can take it from me that when you need a fast acting, effective and safe pain killer there is nothing better than MorphiDope 2000. That is my considered medical opinion.

FALSE AUTHORITY
Green Peace’s strategies are not effective because they are all a bunch of dirty, lazy hippies.

- Ad hominem
If we ban Hummers because they are bad for the environment, then eventually the government will ban all cars, so we should not ban Hummers.

Slippery Slope
I stole the lipstick because the sky was blue.

Non Sequitur
• False Analogy

"Potato chips aren't rubbery and blubbery like fat. They're crispy and crunchy like lettuce. That proves they're diet food!"
• Appeal to Fear

“What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?”