Most Common Logical Fallacies
Errors In Reasoning

Faulty Cause and Effect
Assuming that one thing causes another without any proof that they do.

Non sequitur: When there is no connection between the writer's premise and conclusion.
Example: Carlyn loved college, so I'm sure she will make an excellent teacher.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc: Assumes that because B follows A, then A must be the cause of B.
Example: Tourism in this city started declining right after Mayor Scott was elected. To save our
        tourist industry, we must replace her now!

Slippery slope (or camel's nose): Predicts that one action will cause a multitude of other
        consequences, usually negative.
Example: If we enact gun control laws, ordinary citizens won't be allowed to have
        guns; only outlaws will have guns.

Faulty Generalization
Making generalizations based on limited or no information.

Allness: Assumes that everyone or all situations fit a certain characteristic.
Example: College students spend a lot of time at parties.

Either/or: Assumes that there are only two alternatives in a given situation.
Example: The case is clear: either we support the death penalty or we allow crime to run rampant.

False authority: Assumes an unidentified authority, such as actor or athletes, can support an assertion.
Example: Ten doctors surveyed chose GoPain over all other pain remedies, so it must be a good
        product.

Oversimplification: Making a question seem easier than it is. This often makes uncritical use of
        statistics.
Example: The total for all scores in the 9 am class was higher than the total for all scores in the 10 am
        class. Therefore, all students in the 9 am class must be smarter.

Proof by example (or too few examples): Assumes that one example is sufficient to prove a point.
Example: The Holiday Inn where we stayed in Philadelphia was very unorganized. It's clear that
        Holiday Inns just don't train employees well.

Argument from ignorance:
    a. Because a claim hasn’t been disproved, it must be accepted.
    b. Or the converse: Because a claim hasn't been proved, it must be rejected.
Examples:
    a. Despite years of research, no one has conclusively proved that the Loch Ness monster exists;
       therefore, we should expect to see it at any time.
    b. No one has ever shown that there is life on any other planet. So the thought of other living
       things in the universe is unthinkable.
Misdirection
Changing the direction of the argument to something irrelevant.

**Argument ad hominem**: An attack against the opponent instead of the opponent's argument.
Example: How can you accept Professor Brown's plan for a new curriculum? You know that he always comes to class late.

**Bandwagon appeal**: Everybody's doing it, so join the "in" crowd.
Examples: Join the successful ones. Drive a Toyota FJ Cruiser.

**Guilt by Association**: Attacking against someone by associating them with someone or something that the audience considers negatively.
Example: Don't vote for Congresswoman Annie Parker because she accepts money from people who associate with those who want to cut Medicare.

**False analogy**: An analogy must be accurate to be used as a basis for logical reasoning. Often, the analogy is false, overlooking the fact that the differences between two things being compared are greater than their similarities.
Example: Why am I required to take certain courses before I can graduate from this college? No one requires me to buy certain groceries before I can leave the supermarket.

**Begging the question**: When a writer assumes as true the point that he or she is arguing.
Example: Improving public transportation in this city will solve freeway congestion. Therefore, we must support the new bus system.

**Red herring**: When something irrelevant or deliberately misleading is thrown into the argument (like a red herring).
Example: We, as teachers, need to be tougher on students. After all, we are in the middle of a budget crisis, and we don’t want to lose our salaries.

**Veiled threat**: An argument that tries to frighten listeners by hinting that you may be hurt if you don’t agree.
Example: Democrats want to raise taxes for rich people. If you support a Democrat, soon we’ll all be working for the government and giving them all our money.

**Straw man**: When someone misrepresents opponents’ ideas and then bases her or his argument on that misrepresentation.
Example: Rebecca loves language change and variety in language, and she doesn’t care if students write standard English. Therefore no one at EAC should be graded on grammar or punctuation.

**Flattery** (also called apple polishing or wheel greasing): tries to persuade the reader through flattery or compliments.
Example: A student as smart as you will certainly want to own this computer.

**In-crowd appeal**: flattery that tries to persuade by trying to get listeners to identity with a high-status group.
Example: The whole U of A softball team uses Egelloch brand equipment; therefore, you should too.