

# Fallacies and their meanings

[Business](#), [Decision Making](#)



Fallacies and Their Meanings Critical thinking and decision making are learned traits. When one makes decisions, whether a small decision, such as choosing which clothes to wear or whether a more significant decision, such as solving an issue at work or settling a dispute, it is important to learn that tools are available to help the "mind" make decisions. One such tool that is useful, is learning how to identify and work with fallacies. In order to understand how to use fallacies, it is important to understand what a fallacy is. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary on line, the definitions of fallacy are; " obsolete; guile, trickery; deceptive appearance; deception; a false or mistaken idea; erroneous character; an often plausible argument using false or invalid inference". A person could conclude that when decisions are made, fallacies should not be the only deciding factor. Fallacies can be formal and informal. The validity of an argument is considered the function of the form of an argument. A deductive argument is a formal fallacy and an informal fallacy is invalid or weak in reasoning. Aristotle categorized fallacies by relevance, fallacies that involved causal reasoning and fallacies that result from ambiguities. (Wikipedia). Eight main fallacies that one should be aware of and learn about are given in the resource section for students of the University of Phoenix. This Master List of Logical Fallacies include the following: ad hominem or attacking the person; ad ignorantium or appeal to ignorance; ad verecuniam or appeal to authority; affirming the consequent; amphiboly; appeal to emotion; argument from analogy or false analogy and begging the question. The three fallacies that will be discussed in this paper are the ad ignorantium-appeal to ignorance; ad verecuniam or appeal to authority and affirming the consequent. Upon a brief discussion of each of

these fallacies, an example will be given to explain how the use of the fallacy is used in real life decision making and critical thinking. Ad ignorantium or appeal to ignorance is when one argues on something that may or may not be proven true or false. Sometimes the argument can seem quite reasonable. It is important to learn how to recognize when this fallacy is used because one can fall into believing something simply because they do not know if it can be proven. When trying to make a decision this fallacy can be confusing because one does not necessarily have to prove that the basis of the argument is true, nor do they have to prove it is false. The religious sector is a good example of using appeal to ignorance. The Holy Bible States, " In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth." (Holy Bible-King James Version) This is a fallacy because there is no way to prove if God did or did not create heaven and earth. Ad verecuniam or appeal to authority is when one tries to convince another of something by appealing to an expert or a person of celebrity status. This type of fallacy is most often used in commercials. Often times, political candidates will attempt to cash in on votes and popularity by running advertisement and announcements using their political influence to sway someone into thinking their way or most recently to do a major fund raiser. This past summer, former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton did advertising campaigns for money raisers to help hurricane victims on the Gulf Coast. This was a little unusual even in these days, but the purpose of it had good intentions. When people saw that two totally opposing political parties were willing to work together for a cause, it helped to persuade the general public to put aside their political beliefs and help other people. Affirming the consequent is considered an

invalid form of argument in which in order for one thing to be true, something else has to happen or cause it to happen. A popular story learned by most people in grade school is the one about Sir Issac Newton, he was sitting under an apple tree and an apple fell on his head. He determined that in order for the apple to fall, something had to occur to make it fall. His research thus began the cause and effect of , if a happens, then b must follow. (Newton's Law). This holds true for many things when studying the fallacy of affirming the consequent, there has to be a reason for something to happen or to cause it to happen. Fallacies are important to recognize in determining critical thinking and decision making issues. The more one learns to fine tune their skills, the better they become as critical thinkers and decision makers.