

## Chapter 10 – Informal fallacies

Answers to select “Getting familiar with...” exercises.

Getting familiar with... informal fallacies.

### A. Short answer

1. Without looking back at the text, define the term “fallacy.”

**An error in reasoning whereby one draws a conclusion from a premise or a set of premises when that conclusion does not follow.**

3. Denying the antecedent is a distortion of which valid form of inference?

**modus tollens**

5. Is it possible for the conclusion of a fallacious argument to be true? Explain why or why not.

**Yes. An argument is fallacious when the premises do not support the conclusion strongly or validly because of an error on the part of the arguer. There are no other constraints on what counts as a fallacious argument. It could have true premises and a true conclusion, false premises and a false conclusion, true premises and a false conclusion, false premises and a true conclusion, or a mix of true and false premises and either a true or false conclusion.**

**B. Use the fallacies we have discussed so far to identify the fallacy committed in each of the following arguments.**

1. “What an idiot! Mark never reads and he plays video games all day long. He is not qualified to advise the state’s finance committee.”

***ad hominem, abusive***

3. “People who use heavy hallucinogens almost always started with marijuana, so marijuana is a gateway drug to heavy hallucinogens. And that’s the main reason to ban marijuana.”

**slippery slope**

5. Your English professor says, “Of course God exists. There’s undeniable evidence for His existence.”

**appeal to inappropriate authority (*ad verecundiam*)**

7. “It’s obvious: violence in heavy metal music makes kids want to go out and commit violent acts in the real world.”

**false cause**

9. “Every swan I’ve ever seen has been white—in books, on TV, in the movies, on the Internet—so all swans are white.”

**hasty generalization**

11. The *National Enquirer* newspaper prints: “Monkey-boy is his own father!”

**appeal to inappropriate authority (*ad verecundiam*)**

13. “You’ll support what we’re saying here, right? You wouldn’t want your windows broken, would you?”

**appeal to force (*ad baculum*)**

15. “You can’t really expect me to believe that stealing is wrong. Everyone does it.”

**appeal to the people (*ad populum*)**