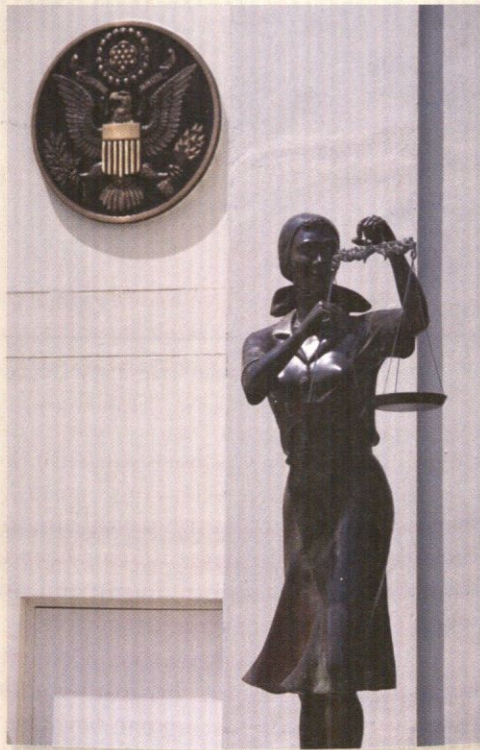


## In Depth

### Innocent Until Proved Guilty

We must point out that sometimes there are specific reasons why the burden of proof is placed entirely on one side. The obvious case in point is in criminal court, where it is the prosecution's job to prove guilt. The defense is not required to prove innocence; it must only try to keep the prosecution from succeeding in its attempt to prove guilt. We are, as we say, "innocent until proved guilty." As a matter of fact, it's possible that more trials might come to a correct conclusion (i.e., the guilty get convicted and the innocent acquitted) if the burden of proof were equally shared between prosecution and defense. But we have wisely decided that if we are to make a mistake, we would rather it be one of letting a guilty person go free than one of convicting an innocent person. Rather than being a fallacy, then, this lopsided placement of the burden of proof is how we guarantee a fundamental right: the presumption of innocence.



In general, the affirmative side gets the burden of proof because it tends to be much more difficult—or at least much more inconvenient—to prove the negative side of an issue. Imagine a student who walks up to the ticket window at a football game and asks for a discounted student ticket. "Can you prove you're a student?" he is asked. "No," the student replies, "Can you prove I'm not?" Well, it may be possible to prove he's not a student, but it's no easy chore, and it would be unreasonable to require it.

Incidentally, some people say it's impossible to "prove a negative." But difficult is not the same as impossible. And some "negatives" are even easy to prove. For example, "There are no elephants in this classroom."

3. *Special circumstances.* Sometimes getting at the truth is not the only thing we want to accomplish, and on such occasions we may purposely place the burden of proof on a particular side. Courts of law provide us with the most obvious example. (See the box "Innocent Until Proved Guilty.") Specific agreements can also move the burden of proof from where it would ordinarily fall. A contract might specify, "It will be presumed that you receive the information by the tenth of each month unless you show otherwise." In such cases, the rule governing the special circumstances should be clear and acceptable to all parties involved.

## In the Media

### So Much for Presumed Innocence . . .

I would rather have an innocent man executed than a guilty murderer go free.

—Caller on *Talk Back Live* (CNN)

This not uncommon thought is a bizarre false dilemma, since if the innocent man is executed, the guilty murderer *does* go free.

One important variety of special circumstances occurs when the stakes are especially high. For example, if you're thinking of investing your life savings in a company, you'll want to put a heavy burden of proof on the person who advocates making the investment. However, if the investment is small, one you can afford to lose, you might be willing to lay out the money even though it has not been thoroughly proved that the investment is safe. In short, it is reasonable to place a higher burden of proof on someone who advocates a policy that could be dangerous or costly if he or she is mistaken.

These three rules cover most of the ground in placing the burden of proof properly. Be careful about situations where people put the burden of proof on the side other than where our rules indicate it should fall. Take this example:

PARKER: I think we should invest more money in expanding the interstate highway system.

MOORE: I think that would be a big mistake.

PARKER: How could anybody object to more highways?

With his last remark, Parker has attempted to put the burden of proof on Moore. Such tactics can put one's opponent in a defensive position; if he takes the bait, Moore now has to show why we should *not* spend more on roads rather than Parker having to show why we *should* spend more. This is an inappropriate burden of proof.

You should always be suspicious when someone tells you that your inability to disprove his claim shows that his claim is true. Take note of where the burden of proof falls in such situations; your speaker may be trying to erroneously place that burden on you. We should also point out that if repeated attempts to prove something end in failure, that may be a reason for doubting it. Psychics' repeated failure to prove that ESP exists is a reason to be skeptical of ESP.

### BEGGING THE QUESTION

Here's a version of a simple example of begging the question, a fairly silly one but one that makes the point clearly (we'll return to it later):

Two gold miners roll a boulder away from its resting place and find three huge gold nuggets underneath. One says to the other, "Great!

Gay marriages should not be legal because if there wasn't anything wrong with them they would already be legal, which they aren't.

—From a student essay

If you examine this "reasoning" closely, it says that gay marriages shouldn't be legal because they aren't legal.

This is not quite "X is true just because X is true," but it's close. The issue is whether the law should be changed. So, giving the existence of the law as a "reason" for its not being changed can carry no weight, logically.

That's one nugget for you and two for me," handing one nugget to his associate.

"Wait a minute!" says the second miner. "Why do you get two and I get just one?"

"Because I'm the leader of this operation," says the first.

"What makes you the leader?" asks miner number two.

"I've got twice the gold you do," answers miner number one.

This next example is as famous as the first one was silly: Some people say they can prove God exists. When asked how, they reply, "Well, the Scriptures say very clearly that God must exist." Then, when asked why we should believe the Scriptures, they answer, "The Scriptures are divinely inspired by God himself, so they must be true."

The problem with such reasoning is that the claim at issue—whether God exists—turns out to be one of the very assumptions the argument is based on. If we can't trust the Scriptures, then the argument isn't any good, but the reason given for trusting the Scriptures requires the existence of God, the very thing we were questioning in the first place! Examples like this are sometimes called circular reasoning or arguing in a circle because they start from much the same place as they end up.

## Real Life

### Getting Really Worked Up over Ideas

Not long ago, the editor of *Freethought Today* magazine won a court case upholding the constitutional separation of church and state. Following are a few samples of the mail she received as a result (there was much more), as they were printed in the magazine. We present them to remind you of how worked up people can get over ideas.

Satan worshipping scum . . .

If you don't like this country and what it was founded on & for get the f— out of it and go straight to hell.

F— you, you communist wh—.

If you think that mathematical precision that governs the universe was established by random events then you truly are that class of IDIOT that cannot be aptly defined.

These remarks illustrate extreme versions of more than one rhetorical device mentioned in this part of the book. They serve as a reminder that some people become defensive and emotional when it comes to their religion. (As Richard Dawkins, professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, was prompted to remark, "A philosophical opinion about the nature of the universe, which is held by the great majority of America's top scientists and probably the elite intelligentsia generally, is so abhorrent to the American electorate that no candidate for popular election dare affirm it in public.")

Adapted from *Free Inquiry*, Summer 2002.

## On Language

### Begging . . . or Begging For?

We should point out that the phrase "beg the question" is frequently used incorrectly these days, presumably by people who do not know its actual meaning (after reading this book and taking your class, this does not include you). Here's an example:

Brett Favre has now started in 250 consecutive games. That begs the question, "Can any other quarterback ever hope to approach that record?"

No, it doesn't beg the question; it begs for the question, or it calls for the question, or it brings up the question about other quarterbacks approaching Favre's record.

One of your authors first saw this misuse of the phrase in a television ad for Volvo automobiles in about 2001. Since then, it has begun to turn up everywhere. It may be that common usage will eventually sanction this new usage; in the meantime, we recommend that you not use it. You can also feel a bit smug about knowing better when you hear it or see it in print.

Rhetorical definitions can beg questions. Consider an example from an earlier chapter: If we define abortion as "the murder of innocent children," then it's obvious that abortion is morally wrong. But, of course, anyone who doubts that abortion is morally wrong is certainly not going to accept this definition. That person will most likely refuse to recognize an embryo or early-stage fetus as a "child" at all and will certainly not accept the word "murder" in the definition.

And this brings us to the real problem in cases of question begging: a misunderstanding of what premises (and definitions) it is reasonable for one's audience to accept. We are guilty of **begging the question** when we ask our audience to accept premises that are as controversial as the conclusion we're arguing for and that are controversial on the same grounds. The sort of grounds on which people would disagree about the morality of abortion are much the same as those on which they would disagree about the definition of abortion above. The person making the argument has not "gone back far enough," as it were, to find common ground with the audience whom he or she wishes to convince.

Let's return to our feuding gold miners to illustrate what we're talking about. Clearly, the two disagree about who gets the gold, and, given what being the leader of the operation means, they're going to disagree just as much about that. But what if the first miner says, "Look, I picked this spot, didn't I? And we wouldn't have found anything if we'd worked where you wanted to work." If the second miner agrees, they'll have found a bit of common ground. Maybe—the first miner can then convince the second that this point, on which they agree, is worth considering when it comes to splitting the gold. At least there's a chance of moving the discussion forward when they proceed this way.

In fact, if you are ever to hope for any measure of success in trying to convince somebody of a claim, you should always try to argue for it based on whatever common ground you can find between the two of you. Indeed, the attempt to find common ground from which to start is what underlies the entire enterprise of rational debate.

## Recap

The fallacies in this chapter, like those in Chapter 6, may resemble legitimate arguments, but none gives a reason for accepting (or rejecting) a claim. The discussions in this part of the book should help make you sensitive to the difference between relevant considerations and emotional appeals, factual irrelevancies, and other dubious argumentative tactics.

In this chapter, we examined:

- Personal attack *ad hominem*—thinking a person's defects refute his or her beliefs
- Inconsistency *ad hominem*—thinking a person's inconsistencies refute his or her beliefs
- Circumstantial *ad hominem*—thinking a person's circumstances refute his or her beliefs
- Poisoning the well—encouraging others to dismiss what someone will say, by citing the speaker's defects, inconsistencies, circumstances, or other personal attributes
- Genetic fallacy—thinking that the origin or history of a belief refutes it
- Straw man—"rebutting" a position held or presumed to be held by others by offering a distorted or exaggerated version of that position
- False dilemma—an erroneous narrowing down of the range of alternatives; saying we have to accept X or Y (and omitting that we might accept Z)
- Perfectionist fallacy—arguing that if a solution does not solve a problem completely and perfectly, it should not be adopted at all
- Line-drawing fallacy—requiring that a precise line be drawn someplace on a scale or continuum when no such precise line can be drawn; usually occurs when a vague concept is treated like a precise one
- Slippery slope—refusing to take the first step in a progression on unwarranted grounds that doing so will make taking the remaining steps inevitable, or insisting erroneously on taking the remainder of the steps simply because the first one was taken
- Misplacing the burden of proof—requiring the wrong side of an issue to make its case
- Begging the question—assuming as true the claim that is at issue and doing this as if you were giving an argument

## Additional Exercises

### Exercise 7-2

Working in groups, invent a simple, original, and clear example of each fallacy covered in this chapter. Then, in the class as a whole, select the illustrations that are clearest and most straightforward. Go over these illustrations before doing the remaining exercises in this chapter, and review them before you take a test on this material.

### Exercise 7-3

Identify any examples of fallacies in the following passages. Tell why you think they are present, and identify which category they belong in, if they fit any category we've described.

- ▲ 1. Of course, Chinese green tea is good for your health. If it weren't, how could it be so beneficial to drink it?
2. Overheard: "No, I'm against this health plan business. None of the proposals are gonna fix everything, you can bet on that."
3. You have a choice: Either you let 'em out to murder and rape again and again, or you put up with a little prison overcrowding. I know what I'd choose.
- ▲ 4. "The legalization of drugs will not promote their use. The notion of a widespread hysteria sweeping across the nation as every man, woman, and child instantaneously becomes addicted to drugs upon their legalization is, in short, ridiculous."  
—From a student essay
5. Way I figure is, giving up smoking isn't gonna make me live forever, so why bother?
6. "I tell you, Mitt Romney would *have* to favor the Mormons if he were to become president. After all Mormons are supposed to believe that theirs is the one true religion."  
—From a newspaper call-in column
- ▲ 7. Aid to Russia? Gimme a break! Why should we care more about the Russians than about our own people?
8. Well, most of the recent Treasury secretaries have been officers of Goldman Sachs at one time or another. It's no wonder their claims about the economy always favor the company.
9. I believe Tim is telling the truth about his brother, because he just would not lie about that sort of thing.
- ▲ 10. I think I was treated unfairly. I got a ticket out on McCrae Road. I was doing about sixty miles an hour, and the cop charged me with "traveling at an unsafe speed." I asked him just exactly what would have been a *safe* speed on that particular occasion—fifty? forty-five?—and he couldn't tell me. Neither could the judge. I tell you, if you don't know what speeds are unsafe, you shouldn't give tickets for "unsafe speeds."

### Exercise 7-4

Identify any fallacies in the following passages. Tell why you think they are present, and identify which category they belong in, if they fit any of those we've described. Instances of fallacies are all from the types found in Chapter 7.

- ▲ 1. Suspicious: "I would forget about whatever Moore and Parker have to say about pay for college teachers. After all, they're both professors themselves; what would you *expect* them to say?"
2. It's obvious to me that abortion is wrong—after all, everybody deserves a chance to be born.

3. Overheard: Well, I think that's too much to tip her. It's more than 15 percent. Next time it will be 20 percent, then 25 percent—where will it stop?
- ▲ 4. CARLOS: Four A.M.? Do we really have to start that early? Couldn't we leave a little later and get more sleep?  
JEANNE: C'mon, don't hand me that! I know you! If you want to stay in bed until noon and then drag in there in the middle of the night, then go by yourself! If we want to get there at a reasonable hour, then we have to get going early and not spend the whole day sleeping.
5. I know a lot of people don't find anything wrong with voluntary euthanasia, where a patient is allowed to make a decision to die and that wish is carried out by a doctor or someone else. What will happen, though, is that if we allow voluntary euthanasia, before you know it we'll have the patient's relatives or the doctors making the decision that the patient should be "put out of his misery."
6. "Rudy Giuliani's position on terrorism has to be the best [of the candidates in 2008]. After all, when 9/11 happened, he was *there*."
- ▲ 7. Whenever legislators have the power to raise taxes, they will always find problems that seem to require for their solution doing exactly that. This is an axiom, the proof of which is that the power to tax always generates the perception on the part of those who have that power that there exist various ills the remedy for which can only lie in increased governmental spending and hence higher taxes.
8. Don't tell me I should wear my seat belt, for heaven's sake. I've seen you ride a motorcycle without a helmet!
9. I'll tell you what the Congress passed. They call it health care reform, but what it really is is communism, pure and simple. It's designed to tax everybody who works so people who don't work can still have an easy life.
- ▲ 10. When it comes to the issue of race relations, either you're part of the solution, or you're part of the problem.
11. What! So now you're telling me we should get a new car? I don't buy that at all. Didn't you claim just last month that there was nothing wrong with the Plymouth?
12. Letter to the editor: "The Supreme Court decision outlawing a moment of silence for prayer in public schools is scandalous. Evidently the American Civil Liberties Union and the other radical groups will not be satisfied until every last man, woman and child in the country is an atheist. I'm fed up."  
—Tri-County Observer
- ▲ 13. We should impeach the attorney general. Despite the fact that there have been many allegations of unethical conduct on his part, he has not done anything to demonstrate his innocence.
14. Amnesty International only defends criminals. This is obvious because the people they help are already in jail, and that shows they're guilty of something.
15. Overheard: "Hunting immoral? Why should I believe that, coming from you? You fish, don't you?"
16. "Will we have an expanding government, or will we balance the budget, cut government waste and eliminate unneeded programs?"  
—Newt Gingrich, in a Republican National Committee solicitation

17. When Bill O'Reilly appeared on *The David Letterman Show*, the conversation was spirited and widely reported. At one point, O'Reilly presented Letterman with the following question: "Do you want the United States to win in Iraq?" This is a fairly clever example of one of our fallacies and a standard debating ploy. Identify the fallacy and describe the problem it presents for Letterman.

### Exercise 7-5

Identify any fallacies in the following passages. Tell why you think they are present, and identify which category they belong in, if they fit in any of those we've described.

- ▲ 1. Despite all the studies and the public outcry, it's still true that nobody has ever actually *seen* cigarette smoking cause a cancer. All the anti-smoking people can do is talk about statistics; as long as there isn't real proof, I'm not believing it.
2. "Clinton should have been thrown in jail for immoral behavior. Just look at all the women he has had affairs with since he left the presidency."  
"Hey, wait a minute. How do you know he has had affairs since he was president?"  
"Because if he didn't, then why would he be trying to cover up the fact that he did?"
3. On *The Colbert Report*, Steven Colbert regularly asked his guests: "George W. Bush: a great president? or the greatest president?"
- ▲ 4. In 1996, a University of Chicago study gave evidence that letting people carry concealed guns appears to sharply reduce murders, rapes, and other violent crimes. Gun-control backer Josh Sugarman of the Violence Policy Center commented: "Anyone who argues that these laws reduce crime either doesn't understand the nature of crime or has a preset agenda."
5. Letter to the editor: "I strongly object to the proposed sale of alcoholic beverages at County Golf Course. The idea of allowing people to drink wherever and whenever they please is positively disgraceful and can only lead to more alcoholism and all the problems it produces—drunk driving, perverted parties, and who knows what else. I'm sure General Stuart, if he were alive today to see what has become of the land he deeded to the county, would disapprove strenuously."  
—Tehama County Tribune
6. Letter to the editor: "I'm not against immigrants or immigration, but something has to be done soon. We've got more people already than we can provide necessary services for, and, at the current rate, we'll have people standing on top of one another by the end of the century. Either we control these immigration policies or there won't be room for any of us to sit down."  
—Lake County Recorder
- ▲ 7. Letter to the editor: "So now we find our local crusader-for-all-that-is-right, and I am referring to Councilman Benjamin Bostell, taking up arms against the local adult bookstore. Is this the same Mr. Bostell who owns the biggest liquor store in Chilton County? Well, maybe booze isn't the

same as pornography, but they're the same sort of thing. C'mon, Mr. Bostell, aren't you a little like the pot calling the kettle black?"

—Chilton County Register

8. Letter to the editor: "Once again the *Courier* displays its taste for slanted journalism. Why do your editors present only one point of view?"
- "I am referring specifically to the editorial of May 27, regarding the death penalty. So capital punishment makes you squirm a little. What else is new? Would you prefer to have murderers and assassins wandering around scot-free? How about quoting someone who has a different point of view from your own, for a change?"

—Athens Courier

9. There is only one way to save this country from the domination by the illegal drug establishment to which Colombia has been subjected, and that's to increase tenfold the funds we spend on drug enforcement and interdiction.
- ▲ 10. It's practically a certainty that the government is violating the law in the arms deals with Saudi Arabians. When a reporter asked officials to describe how they were complying with the law, he was told that details about the arms sales were classified.

### Exercise 7-6

Identify any examples of fallacies in the following passages. Tell why you think these are fallacies, and identify which category they belong in, if they fit any category we've described.

- ▲ 1. Letter to the editor: "I would like to express my feelings on the recent conflict between county supervisor Blanche Wilder and Murdock County Sheriff Al Peters over the county budget.
- "I have listened to sheriffs' radio broadcasts. Many times there have been dangerous and life-threatening situations when the sheriff's deputies' quickest possible arrival time is 20 to 30 minutes. This is to me very frightening.
- "Now supervisor Wilder wants to cut two officers from the Sheriff's Department. This proposal I find ridiculous. Does she really think that Sheriff Peters can run his department with no officers? How anyone can think that a county as large as Murdock can get by with no police is beyond me. I feel this proposal would be very detrimental to the safety and protection of this county's residents."
2. Letter to the editor: "Andrea Keene's selective morality is once again showing through in her July 15 letter. This time she expresses her abhorrence of abortion. But how we see only what we choose to see! I wonder if any of the anti-abortionists have considered the widespread use of fertility drugs as the moral equivalent of abortion, and, if they have, why they haven't come out against them, too. The use of these drugs frequently results in multiple births, which leads to the death of one of the infants, often after an agonizing struggle for survival. According to the rules of the pro-lifers, isn't this murder?"

—North-State Record

3. In one of her columns, Abigail Van Buren printed the letter of "I'd rather be a widow." The letter writer, a divorcée, complained about widows who said they had a hard time coping. Far better, she wrote, to be a widow than to be a divorcée, who are all "rejects" who have been "publicly dumped" and are avoided "like they have leprosy." Abby recognized the fallacy for what it was, though she did not call it by our name. What is our name for it?
- ▲ 4. Overheard: "Should school kids say the Pledge of Allegiance before class? Certainly. Why shouldn't they?"
5. Letter to the editor: "Once again the Park Commission is considering closing North Park Drive for the sake of a few joggers and bicyclists. These so-called fitness enthusiasts would evidently have us give up to them for their own private use every last square inch of Walnut Grove. Then anytime anyone wanted a picnic, he would have to park at the edge of the park and carry everything in—ice chests, chairs, maybe even grandma. I certainly hope the Commission keeps the entire park open for everyone to use."
6. "Some Christian—and other—groups are protesting against the placing, on federal property near the White House, of a set of plastic figurines representing a devout Jewish family in ancient Judaea. The protestors would of course deny that they are driven by any anti-Semitic motivation. Still, we wonder: Would they raise the same objections (of unconstitutionality, etc.) if the scene depicted a modern, secularized Gentile family?"
- National Review
- ▲ 7. "It's stupid to keep on talking about rich people not paying their fair share of taxes while the budget is so far out of balance. Why, if we raised the tax rates on the wealthy all the way back to where they were in 1980, it would not balance the federal budget."
- Radio commentary by Howard Miller
8. From a letter to the editor: "The counties of Michigan clearly need the ability to raise additional sources of revenue, not only to meet the demands of growth but also to maintain existing levels of service. For without these sources those demands will not be met, and it will be impossible to maintain services even at present levels."
9. In February 1992, a representative of the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico gave a radio interview (broadcast on National Public Radio) in which he said that the Church was against the use of condoms. Even though the rate of AIDS infection in Puerto Rico is much higher than on the U.S. mainland, the spokesman said that the Church could not support the use of condoms because they are not absolutely reliable in preventing the spread of the disease. "If you could prove that condoms were absolutely dependable in preventing a person from contracting AIDS, then the Church could support their use."
- ▲ 10. [California] Assemblyman Doug La Malfa said AB 45 [which bans hand-held cell phone use while driving] is one more example of a "nanny government." "I'm sick and tired of being told what to do on these trivial things," he said. "Helmet laws, seat-belt laws—what's next?"

### Exercise 7-7

Identify any examples of fallacies in the following passages. Tell why you think they are present, and identify which category they belong in, if they fit any category we've described.

- ▲ 1. The U.S. Congress considered a resolution criticizing the treatment of ethnic minorities in a Near Eastern country. When the minister of the interior was asked for his opinion of the resolution, he replied, "This is purely an internal affair in my country, and politicians in the U.S. should stay out of such affairs. If the truth be known, they should be more concerned with the plight of minority peoples in their own country. Thousands of black and Latino youngsters suffer from malnutrition in the United States. They can criticize us after they've got their own house in order."
2. It doesn't make any sense to speak of tracing an individual human life back past the moment of conception. After all, that's the beginning, and you can't go back past the beginning.
3. MOE: The death penalty is an excellent deterrent for murder.  
JOE: What makes you think so?  
MOE: Well, for one thing, there's no evidence that it's *not* a deterrent.  
JOE: Well, states with capital punishment have murder rates just as high as states that don't have it.  
MOE: Yes, but that's only because there are so many legal technicalities standing in the way of executions that convicted people hardly ever get executed. Remove those technicalities, and the rate would be lower in those states.
- ▲ 4. Overheard: "The new sculpture in front of the municipal building by John Murrah is atrocious and unseemly, which is clear to anyone who hasn't forgotten Murrah's mouth in Vietnam right there along with Hayden and Fonda calling for the defeat of America. I say: Drill holes in it so it'll sink and throw it in Walnut Pond."
5. Overheard: "Once we let these uptight guardians of morality have their way and start censoring *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, the next thing you know they'll be dictating everything we can read. We'll be in fine shape when they decide that *Webster's* should be pulled from the shelves."
6. It seems the biggest problem the nuclear industry has to deal with is not a poor safety record but a lack of education of the public on nuclear power. Thousands of people die each year from pollution generated by coal-fired plants. Yet, to date there has been no death directly caused by radiation at a commercial nuclear power plant in the United States. We have a clear choice: an old, death-dealing source of energy or a safe, clean one. Proven through the test of time, nuclear power is clearly the safest form of energy and the least detrimental to the environment. Yet it is perceived as unsafe and an environmental hazard.
- ▲ 7. A high school teacher once told my class that, if a police state ever arose in America, it would happen because we freely handed away our civil rights in exchange for what we perceived would be security from the government. We are looking at just that in connection with the current drug crisis.  
For almost thirty years, we've seen increasing tolerance, legally and socially, of drug use. Now we are faced with the very end of America as

we know it, if not from the drug problem, then from the proposed solutions to it.

First, it was urine tests. Officials said that the innocent have nothing to fear. Using that logic, why not allow unannounced police searches of our homes for stolen goods? After all, the innocent would have nothing to fear.

Now we're looking at the seizure of boats and other property when even traces of drugs are found. You'd better hope some drug-using guest doesn't drop the wrong thing in your home, car, or boat.

The only alternative to declaring real war on the real enemies—the Asian and South American drug families—is to wait for that knock on the door in the middle of the night.

8. The mayor's argument is that, because the developers' fee would reduce the number of building starts, ultimately the city would lose more money than it would gain through the fee. But I can't go along with that. Mayor Tower is a member of the Board of Realtors, and you know what *they* think of the fee.
9. Letter to the editor: "Next week the philosopher Tom Regan will be in town again, peddling his animal rights theory. In case you've forgotten, Regan was here about three years ago arguing against using animals in scientific experimentation. As far as I could see then and can see now, neither Regan nor anyone else has managed to come up with a good reason why animals should not be experimented on. Emotional appeals and horror stories no doubt influence many, but they shouldn't. I've always wondered what Regan would say if his children needed medical treatment that was based on animal experiments."
- ▲ 10. Not long before Ronald and Nancy Reagan moved out of the White House, former chief of staff Don Regan wrote a book in which he depicted a number of revealing inside stories about First Family goings-on. Among them was the disclosure that Nancy Reagan regularly sought the advice of a San Francisco astrologer. In response to the story, the White House spokesman at the time, Marlin Fitzwater, said, "Vindictiveness and revenge are not admirable qualities and are not worthy of comment."

### Exercise 7-8

#### Elegant Country Estate

- Stunning Federal-style brick home with exquisite appointments throughout
- 20 picturesque acres with lake, pasture, and woodland
- 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths
- 5,800 sq. ft. living space, 2,400 sq. ft. basement
- Formal living room; banquet dining with butler's pantry; luxurious foyer, gourmet kitchen, morning room
- 3 fireplaces, 12 chandeliers



Maude and Clyde are discussing whether to buy this nice little cottage. Identify as many fallacies and rhetorical devices as you can in their conversation. Many are from this chapter, but you may see something from Chapters 5 and 6 as well.

- CLYDE: Maude, look at this place! This is the house for us! Let's make an offer right now. We can afford it!
- MAUDE: Oh, Clyde, be serious. That house is way beyond our means.
- CLYDE: Well, I think we can afford it.
- MAUDE: Honey, if we can afford it, pigs can fly.
- CLYDE: Look, do you want to live in a shack? Besides, I called the real estate agent. She says it's a real steal.
- MAUDE: Well, what do you expect her to say? She's looking for a commission.
- CLYDE: Sometimes I don't understand you. Last week you were pushing for a really upscale place.
- MAUDE: Clyde, we can't make the payments on a place like that. We couldn't even afford to heat it! And what on earth are we going to do with a lake?
- CLYDE: Honey, the payments would only be around \$5,000 a month. How much do you think we could spend?
- MAUDE: I'd say \$1,800.
- CLYDE: Okay, how about \$2,050?
- MAUDE: Oh, for heaven's sake! Yes, we could do \$2,050!
- CLYDE: Well, how about \$3,100?
- MAUDE: Oh, Clyde, what is your point?
- CLYDE: So \$3,100 is okay? How about \$3,200? Stop me when I get to exactly where we can't afford it.
- MAUDE: Clyde, I can't say exactly where it gets to be too expensive, but \$5,000 a month is too much.
- CLYDE: Well, I think we can afford it.
- MAUDE: Why?
- CLYDE: Because it's within our means!
- MAUDE: Clyde, you're the one who's always saying we have to cut back on our spending!
- CLYDE: Yes, but this'll be a great investment!
- MAUDE: And what makes you say that?
- CLYDE: Because we're bound to make money on it.
- MAUDE: Clyde, honey, you are going around in circles.
- CLYDE: Well, can you prove we can't afford it?
- MAUDE: Once we start spending money like drunken sailors, where will it end? Next we'll have to get a riding mower, then a boat for that lake, a butler for the butler's pantry—we'll owe everybody in the state!
- CLYDE: Well, we don't have to make up our minds right now. I'll call the agent and tell her we're sleeping on it.
- MAUDE: Asleep and dreaming.

### Exercise 7-9

In groups, vote on which option best depicts the fallacy found in each passage; then compare results with other groups in the class. *Note:* The fallacies include those found in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

- ▲ 1. The health editor for *USA Today* certainly seems to know what she is talking about when she recommends we take vitamins, but I happen to know she works for Tishcon, Inc., a large manufacturer of vitamin supplements.
- smoke screen/red herring
  - subjectivism
  - appeal to popularity
  - circumstantial ad hominem
  - no fallacy
2. The president is right. People who are against fighting in Afghanistan are unwilling to face up to the threat of terrorism.
- common practice
  - peer pressure
  - false dilemma
  - straw man
  - begging the question
3. Well, I, for one, think the position taken by our union is correct, and I'd like to remind you before you make up your mind on the matter that around here we employees have a big say in who gets rehired.
- wishful thinking
  - circumstantial ad hominem
  - scare tactics (argument from force)
  - apple polishing
  - begging the question
- ▲ 4. On the whole, I think global warming is a farce. After all, most people think winters are getting colder, if anything. How could that many people be wrong?
- argument from outrage
  - appeal to popularity
  - straw man
  - no fallacy
5. MARCO: I think global warming is a farce.  
CLAUDIA: Oh, gad. How can you say such a thing, when there is so much evidence behind the theory?  
MARCO: Because. Look. If it isn't a farce, then how come the world is colder now than it used to be?
- begging the question
  - appeal to popularity
  - red herring
  - circumstantial ad hominem
  - no fallacy

6. Of course you should buy a life insurance policy! Why shouldn't you?
- smoke screen/red herring
  - wishful thinking
  - scare tactics
  - peer pressure argument
  - misplacing the burden of proof
- ▲ 7. My opponent, Mr. London, has charged me with having cheated on my income tax. My response is, When are we going to get this campaign out of the gutter? Isn't it time we stood up and made it clear that vilification has no place in politics?
- smoke screen/red herring
  - wishful thinking
  - appeal to common practice
  - appeal to popularity
  - circumstantial ad hominem
8. Look, even if Bush did lie about the WMD threat, what's the surprise? Clinton lied about having sex with that intern, and Bush's own father lied about raising taxes.
- smoke screen/red herring
  - straw man
  - false dilemma
  - inconsistency ad hominem
  - common practice
9. If cigarettes aren't bad for you, then how come it's so hard on your health to smoke?
- circumstantial ad hominem
  - genetic fallacy
  - slippery slope
  - begging the question
- ▲ 10. GARRY: I think the people who lost their livelihood because of the Gulf oil spill ought to be paid their losses in full.  
HARRY: But there are disasters all over the place. You can't compensate everybody.
- perfectionist fallacy
  - straw man
  - appeal to tradition
  - appeal to common practice

### Exercise 7-10

In groups, vote on which option best depicts the fallacy found in each passage, and compare results with other groups. (It is all right with us if you ask anyone who is not participating in the discussions in your group to leave.) *Note:* The fallacies include those found in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

- ▲ 1. So what if the senator accepted a little kickback money—most politicians are corrupt, after all.
- argument from envy
  - argument from tradition

- common practice
  - subjectivism
  - no fallacy
2. Me? I'm going to vote with the company on this one. After all, I've been with them for fifteen years.
- genetic fallacy
  - groupthink fallacy
  - slippery slope
  - no fallacy
3. Public opinion polls? They're rigged. Just ask anyone.
- appeal to common practice
  - guilt trip
  - begging the question
  - appeal to popularity
  - no fallacy
- ▲ 4. Hey! It can't be time for the bars to close. I'm having too much fun.
- false dilemma
  - misplacing the burden of proof
  - wishful thinking
  - appeal to tradition
  - no fallacy
5. A mural for the municipal building? Excuse me, but why should public money, *our* tax dollars, be used for a totally unnecessary thing like art? There are potholes that need fixing. Traffic signals that need to be put up. There are a *million* things that are more important. It is an *outrage*, spending taxpayers' money on unnecessary frills like art. Give me a break!
- inconsistency ad hominem
  - argument from outrage
  - slippery slope
  - perfectionist fallacy
  - no fallacy
6. Mathematics is more difficult than sociology, and I *really* need an easier term this fall. So I'm going to take a sociology class instead of a math class.
- circumstantial ad hominem
  - argument from pity
  - false dilemma
  - begging the question
  - no fallacy
- ▲ 7. Parker says Macs are better than PCs, but what would you expect him to say? He's owned Macs for years.
- personal attack ad hominem
  - circumstantial ad hominem
  - inconsistency ad hominem
  - perfectionist fallacy
  - no fallacy
8. The congressman thought the president's behavior was an impeachable offense. But that's nonsense, coming from the congressman. He had an adulterous affair himself, after all.

- a. inconsistency ad hominem
  - b. poisoning the well
  - c. personal attack ad hominem
  - d. genetic fallacy
  - e. no fallacy
9. Your professor wants you to read Moore and Parker? Forget it. Their book is so far to the right it's falling off the shelf.
- a. poisoning the well
  - b. inconsistency ad hominem
  - c. misplacing the burden of proof
  - d. appeal to tradition
  - e. no fallacy
- ▲ 10. How do I know God exists? Hey, how do you know he doesn't?
- a. perfectionist fallacy
  - b. inconsistency ad hominem
  - c. misplacing the burden of proof
  - d. slippery slope
  - e. begging the question

### Exercise 7-11

In groups, vote on which option best depicts the fallacy found in each passage, and compare results with other groups. *Note:* The fallacies include those found in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

- ▲ 1. Laws against teenagers drinking?—They are a total waste of time, frankly. No matter how many laws we pass, there are always going to be some teens who drink.
- a. misplacing the burden of proof
  - b. perfectionist fallacy
  - c. line-drawing fallacy
  - d. no fallacy
2. Even though Sidney was old enough to buy a drink at the bar, he had no identification with him, and the bartender would not serve him.
- a. perfectionist fallacy
  - b. inconsistency ad hominem
  - c. misplacing the burden of proof
  - d. slippery slope
  - e. no fallacy
3. Just how much sex has to be in a movie before you call it pornographic? Seems to me the whole concept makes no sense.
- a. perfectionist fallacy
  - b. line-drawing fallacy
  - c. straw man
  - d. slippery slope
  - e. no fallacy
- ▲ 4. Studies confirm what everyone already knows: Smaller classes make students better learners.

- a. appeal to common practice
  - b. begging the question
  - c. misplacing the burden of proof
  - d. appeal to popularity
  - e. no fallacy
5. The trouble with impeaching the president is this: Going after every person who occupies the presidency will take up everyone's time, and the government will never get anything else done.
- a. inconsistency ad hominem
  - b. straw man
  - c. groupthink
  - d. argument from envy
  - e. red herring
6. The trouble with impeaching the president is this. If we start going after him, next we'll be going after senators, representatives, governors. Pretty soon, no elected official will be safe from partisan attack.
- a. inconsistency ad hominem
  - b. slippery slope
  - c. straw man
  - d. false dilemma
  - e. misplacing the burden of proof
- ▲ 7. MR. IMHOFF: That does it. I'm cutting down on your peanut butter cookies. Those things blimp me up.  
MRS. IMHOFF: Oh, Imhoff, get real. What about all the ice cream you eat?
- a. circumstantial ad hominem
  - b. subjectivism
  - c. straw man
  - d. slippery slope
  - e. inconsistency ad hominem
8. KEN: I think I'll vote for Andrews. She's the best candidate.  
ROBERT: Why do you say she's best?  
KEN: Because she's my sister-in-law. Didn't you know that?
- a. apple polishing
  - b. argument from pity
  - c. scare tactics
  - d. peer pressure argument
  - e. none of the above
9. MOE: You going to class tomorrow?  
JOE: I s'pose. Why?  
MOE: Say, don't you get tired of being a Goody Two-shoes? You must have the most perfect attendance record of anyone who ever went to this school—certainly better than the rest of us, right, guys?
- a. poisoning the well
  - b. argument from pity
  - c. scare tactics
  - d. no fallacy
  - e. none of the above
- peer pressure*

- ▲ 10. Morgan, you're down-to-earth and I trust your judgment. That's why I know I can count on you to back me up at the meeting this afternoon.
- apple polishing
  - argument from pity
  - scare tactics
  - guilt trip
  - no fallacy
11. "Do you want to sign this petition to the governor?"  
 "What's it about?"  
 "We want him to veto that handgun registration bill that's come out of the legislature."  
 "Oh. No, I don't think I want to sign that."  
 "Oh, really? So are you telling me you want to get rid of the Second Amendment?"
- false dilemma
  - personal attack ad hominem
  - genetic fallacy
  - misplacing the burden of proof
  - no fallacy
12. Outlaw gambling? Man, that's a strange idea coming from you. Aren't you the one who plays the lottery all the time?
- inconsistency ad hominem
  - circumstantial ad hominem
  - genetic fallacy
  - scare tactics
  - no fallacy

### Exercise 7-12

Most of the following passages contain fallacies from Chapter 6 or Chapter 7. Identify them where they occur and try to place them in one of the categories we have described.

- ▲ 1. "People in Hegers, Pennsylvania, hold an annual pigeon shoot in order to control the pigeon population and to raise money for the town. This year, the pigeon shoot was disrupted by animal rights activists who tried to release the pigeons from their cages. I can't help but think these animal rights activists are the same people who believe in controlling the human population through the use of abortion. Yet, they recoil at a similar means of controlling pigeons. What rank hypocrisy."  
 —Rush Limbaugh
2. Dear Mr. Swanson: I realize I'm not up for a salary increase yet, but I thought it might make my review a bit more timely if I pointed out to you that I have a copy of all the recent e-mail messages between you and Ms. Flood in the purchasing department.
3. I don't care if Nike has signed up Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, and even Santa Claus to endorse their shoes. They're a crummy company that makes a crummy product. The proof is the fact that they pay poor

Scare tactic

- women a dollar sixty for a long day's work in their Vietnamese shoe factories. That's not even enough to buy a day's worth of decent meals!
- ▲ 4. I don't care if Nike has signed up Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, and even Santa Claus to endorse their shoes. They're a crummy company, and I wouldn't buy their shoes no matter what the circumstance. You don't need any reason beyond the fact that they pay poor women a dollar sixty for a long day's work in their Vietnamese shoe factories. That's not even enough to buy a day's worth of decent meals!
5. Nike is a crummy company that makes crummy shoes. Look: they still sponsor Tiger Woods even after all the bad stuff that came to light about him.
6. POWELL FAN: Colin Powell says that diplomatic efforts to avoid war with Iraq were serious and genuine, and his word is good enough for me.  
 SKEPTIC: And what makes you so sure he's telling it like it is?  
 FAN: Because he's the one guy in the administration you can trust.
- ▲ 7. I know the repair guy in the service center screwed up my computer; he's the only one who's touched it since it was working fine last Monday.
8. If you give the cat your leftover asparagus, next thing you know you'll be feeding him your potatoes, maybe even your roast beef. Where will it all end? Pretty soon that wretched animal will be sitting up here on the table for dinner. He'll be eating us out of house and home.
9. Look, either we refrain from feeding the cat table scraps, or he'll be up here on the table with us. So don't go giving him your asparagus.
- ▲ 10. We have a simple choice. Saving Social Security is sure as hell a lot more important than giving people a tax cut. So write your representative now, and let him or her know how you feel.
11. Let gays join the military? Give me a break. God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.
12. So my professor told me if he gave me an A for getting an 89.9 on the test, next he'd have to give people an A for getting an 89.8 on the test, and pretty soon he'd have to give everyone in the class an A. How could I argue with that?
- ▲ 13. Those blasted Democrats! They want to increase government spending on education again. This is the same outfit that gave us \$10,000 toilets and government regulations up the wazoo.
14. The way I see it, either the senator resigns, or he sends a message that no one should admit to his misdeeds.
15. Lauren did a better job than anyone else at the audition, so even though she has no experience, we've decided to give her the part in the play.
- ▲ 16. TERRY: I failed my test, but I gave my prof this nifty argument. I said, "Look, suppose somebody did 0.0001 percent better than I, would that be a big enough difference to give him a higher grade?" And he had to say "no," so then I said, "And if someone did 0.0001 percent better than that second person, would that be a big enough difference?" And he had to say "no" to that, too, so I just kept it up, and he never could point to the place where the difference was big enough to give the other person a higher grade. He finally saw he couldn't justify giving anyone a better grade.  
 HARRY: Well? What happened?  
 TERRY: He had to fail the whole class.

non sequitur - pity

Red Herring  
 Begging question

Slippery Slope

17. "Many, but not all, on the other side of the aisle lack the will to win," said Representative Charlie Norwood of Georgia. "The American people need to know precisely who they are." He said, "It is time to stand up and vote. Is it Al Qaeda, or is it America?"  
—New York Times, June 15, 2006
18. Look, maybe you think it's okay to legalize tribal casinos, but I don't. Letting every last group of people in the country open a casino is a ridiculous idea, bound to cause trouble.
- ▲ 19. What, you of all people complaining about violence on TV? You, with all the pro football you watch?
20. You have three Fs and a D on your exams, and your quizzes are on the borderline between passing and failing. I'm afraid you don't deserve to pass the course.

### Exercise 7-13

Where we (Moore and Parker) teach, the city council recently debated relaxing the local noise ordinance. One student (who favored relaxation) appeared before the council and stated: "If 250 people are having fun, one person shouldn't be able to stop them."

We asked our students to state whether they agreed or disagreed with that student and to support their position with an argument. Here are some of the responses.

Divide into groups, and then identify any instances of fallacious reasoning you find in any answers, drawing from the materials in the last two chapters. Compare your results with those of other students, and see what your instructor thinks.

1. I support what the person is saying. If 250 people are having fun, one person shouldn't be able to stop them. Having parties and having a good time are a way of life for Chico State students. The areas around campus have always been this way.
2. A lot of people attend Chico State because of the social aspects. If rules are too tight, the school could lose its appeal. Without the students, local businesses would go under. Students keep the town floating. It's not just bars and liquor stores, but gas stations and grocery stores and apartment houses. This town would be like Orland.
3. If students aren't allowed to party, the college will go out of business.
4. We work hard all week long studying and going to classes. We deserve to let off steam after a hard week.
5. Noise is a fact of life around most college campuses. People should know what they are getting into before they move there. If they don't like it, they should just get earplugs or leave.
6. I agree with what the person is saying. If 250 people want to have fun, what gives one person the right to stop them?
7. I am sure many of the people who complain are the same people who used to be stumbling down Ivy Street twenty years ago doing the same thing that the current students are doing.

8. Two weeks ago, I was at a party, and it was only about 9:00 p.m. There were only a few people there, and it was quiet. And then the police came and told us we had to break it up because a neighbor complained. Well, that neighbor is an elderly lady who would complain if you flushed the toilet. I think it's totally unreasonable.
9. Sometimes the noise level gets a little out of control, but there are other ways to go about addressing this problem. For example, if you are a neighbor, and you are having a problem with the noise level, why don't you call the "party house" and let them know, instead of going way too far and calling the police?
10. I'm sure that these "narcs" have nothing else better to do than to harass the "party people."
11. You can't get rid of all the noise around a college campus no matter what you do.
12. The Chico noise ordinance was put there by the duly elected officials of the city and is the law. People do not have the right to break a law that was put in place under proper legal procedures.
13. The country runs according to majority rule. If the overwhelming majority want to party and make noise, under our form of government they should be given the freedom to do so.
14. Students make a contribution to the community, and in return they should be allowed to make noise if they want.
15. Your freedom ends at my property line.

### Exercise 7-14

Go back to Exercise 4-16 and determine whether the author of the article commits a fallacy in his criticism of Anthony Watts. Compare your decision with those of your classmates.

### Exercise 7-15

Listen to a talk-radio program (e.g., Air America, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Reagan, Michael Savage), and see how many minutes (or seconds) go by before you hear one of the following: ad hominem, straw man, ridicule, argument from outrage, or scare tactics. Report your findings to the class, and describe the first item from the above list that you heard.

### Exercise 7-16

Watch one of the news/public affairs programs on television (*NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, *Nightline*, *Face the Nation*, and so on), and make a note of any examples of fallacies that occur. Explain in writing why you think the examples contain fallacious reasoning.

Alternatively, watch *Real Time* with Bill Maher. It usually doesn't take long to find a fallacy there, either.

### Exercise 7-17

The following passages contain fallacies from both this chapter and the preceding one. Identify the category in which each item belongs.

- ▲ 1. "I can safely say that no law, no matter how stiff the consequence is, will completely stop illegal drug use. Outlawing drugs is a waste of time."  
—From a student essay
2. "If we expand the commuter bus program, where is it going to end? Will we want to have a trolley system? Then a light rail system? Then expand Metrolink to our area? A city this size hardly needs and certainly cannot afford all these amenities."  
—From a newspaper call-in column
3. YAEKO: The character Dana Scully on *The X-Files* really provides a good role model for young women. She's a medical doctor and an FBI agent, and she's intelligent, professional, and devoted to her work.  
MICHAEL: Those shows about paranormal activities are so unrealistic. Alien abductions, government conspiracies—it's all ridiculous.
4. Overheard: "The reason I don't accept evolution is that ever since Darwin, scientists have been trying to prove that we evolved from some apelike primate ancestor. Well, they still haven't succeeded. Case closed."
- ▲ 5. Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, I endorsed council member Morrissey's bid for reelection based on his outstanding record during his first term. Because you are the movers and shakers in this community, other people place the same high value on your opinions that I do. Jim and I would feel privileged to have your support.
6. It's totally ridiculous to suppose that creationism is true. If creationism were true, then half of what we know through science would be false, which is complete nonsense.
7. KIRSTI: I counted my CDs this weekend, and out of twenty-seven, ten of them were by U2. They are such a good band! I haven't heard anything by Bono for a long time. He has such a terrific voice!  
BEN: Is he bisexual?
8. Was Gerhard a good committee chair? Well, I for one think you have to say he was excellent, especially when you consider all the abuse he put up with. Right from the start, people went after him—they didn't even give him a chance to show what he could do. It was really vicious—people making fun of him right to his face. Yes, under the circumstances he has been quite effective.
- ▲ 9. Medical research that involves animals is completely unnecessary and a waste of money. Just think of the poor creatures! We burn and blind and torture them, and then we kill them. They don't know what is going to happen to them, but they know something is going to happen. They are scared to death. It's really an outrage.
10. Dear Editor—  
If Christians do not participate in government, only sinners will.  
—From a letter to the Chico Enterprise Record
11. The HMO people claim that the proposal will raise the cost of doing business in the state to such a degree that insurers will be forced to leave the state and do business elsewhere. What nonsense. Just look at what we get from these HMOs. I know people who were denied decent treatment for cancer because their HMO wouldn't approve it. There are doctors who won't recommend a procedure for their patients because they

- are afraid the HMO will cancel their contract. And when an HMO does cancel some doctor's contract, the patients have to find a new doctor themselves—if they can. Everybody has a horror story. Enough is enough.
12. From an interview by Gwen Ifill (PBS *News Hour*) with Senator Kit Bond, ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee:  
IFILL: Do you think that waterboarding, as I have described it, constitutes torture?  
BOND: There are different ways of doing it; it's like swimming: freestyle, backstroke. Waterboarding could be used, almost, to define some of the techniques that our trainees are put through. But that's beside the point. It's not being used. There are some who say that, in extreme circumstances, if there is a threat of an imminent major attack on the United States, it might be used.  
—From the video at < talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/060899.php >
  - ▲ 13. The opposing party is going to give its reply to the president's speech in just a few minutes. Prepare yourself for the usual misstatements of fact, exaggerated criticism, and attempts to distract from the real issues.
  14. The proposal to reduce spending for the arts just doesn't make any sense. We spend a paltry \$620 million for the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts], while the deficit is closing in on \$200 billion. Cutting support for the arts isn't going to eliminate the deficit; that's obvious.
  15. Year-round schools? I'm opposed. Once we let them do that, the next thing you know they'll be cutting into our vacation time and asking us to teach in the evenings and on the weekends, and who knows where it will end. We teachers have to stand up for our rights.
  - ▲ 16. Romney was for abortion rights before he began running for president. Now he's anti-abortion. I think he should be ignored completely on the subject since you can't depend on what he says.
  17. Even if we outlaw guns, we're still going to have crime and murder. So I really don't see much point in it.  
—From a student essay
  18. Do you think affirmative action programs are still necessary in the country? *Answers:*
    - a. Yes, of course. I don't see how you, a woman, can ask that question. It's obvious we have a very long way to go still.
    - b. No. Because of affirmative action, my brother lost his job to a minority who had a lot less experience than he did.
    - c. Yes. The people who want to end affirmative action are all white males who just want to go back to the good-old-boy system. It's always the same: Look out for number one.
    - d. No. The people who want it to continue know a good deal when they see one. You think I'd want to end it if I were a minority?

### Exercise 7-18

Explain in a sentence or two how each of the following passages involves a type of fallacy mentioned in either this chapter or the preceding one. *Many of these examples are difficult* and should serve to illustrate how fallacies sometimes conform only loosely to the standard patterns.

- ▲ 1. I believe that the companies that produce passenger airliners should be more strictly supervised by the FAA. I mean, good grief, everybody knows that you can make more money by cutting corners here and there than by spending extra time and effort getting things just right, and you know there have got to be airlines that are doing exactly that.
- 2. From a letter to a college newspaper editor: "I really appreciated the fact that your editorial writer supports the hike in the student activity fee that has been proposed. Since the writer is a senior and won't even be here next year, he will escape having to pay the fee himself, so of course there's no downside to it as far as he's concerned. I'm against the fee, and I'll be one of those who pay it if it passes. Mine is an opinion that should count."
- 3. "'There's a certain sameness to the news on the Big Three [ABC, NBC, and CBS] and CNN,' says Moody, . . . who is in charge of Fox News's day-to-day editorial decisions. That's the message, Moody says, that 'America is bad, corporations are bad, animal species should be protected, and every cop is a racist killer. That's where "fair and balanced" [Fox's slogan] comes in. We don't think all corporations are bad, every forest should be saved, every government spending program is good. We're going to be more inquisitive.'"

—From an interview with John Moody, vice president for news editorial at Fox News Network, in Brill's Content magazine

- ▲ 4. During the Reagan and G. H. W. Bush administrations, Democratic members of Congress pointed to the two presidents' economic policies as causing huge deficits that could ultimately ruin the country's economy. President Bush dismissed such charges as "the politics of doom and gloom." "These people will find a dark cloud everywhere," he has said. Was this response fallacious reasoning?
  - ▲ 5. "Louis Harris, one of the nation's most influential pollsters, readily admits he is in the polling business to 'have some impact with the movers and shakers of the world.' So poll questions are often worded to obtain answers that help legitimize the liberal Establishment's viewpoints."
- Conservative Digest
- 6. "At a White House meeting in February of 1983 with Washington, D.C., anchormen, Ronald Reagan was asked to comment on 'an apparent continuing perception among a number of black leaders that the White House continues to be, if not hostile, at least not welcome to black viewpoints.' President Reagan replied as follows: 'I'm aware of all that, and it's very disturbing to me, because anyone who knows my life story knows that long before there was a thing called the civil-rights movement, I was busy on that side. As a sports announcer, I didn't have any Willie Mayses or Reggie Jacksons to talk about when I was broadcasting major league baseball. The opening line of the Spalding Baseball Guide said, "Baseball is a game for Caucasian gentlemen." And as a sports announcer I was one of a very small fraternity that used that job to editorialize against that ridiculous blocking of so many fine athletes and so many fine Americans from participating in what was called the great American game.' Reagan then went on to mention that his father refused to allow him to see *Birth of a Nation* because it was based on the Ku Klux Klan and once slept in a

car during a blizzard rather than stay at a hotel that barred Jews. Reagan's 'closest teammate and buddy' was a black, he said."

—James Nathan Miller, *The Atlantic*

- 7. From a letter to the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*: "In all my reading and experience so far, I have found nothing presented by science and technology that precludes there being a spiritual element to the human being. . . . The bottom line is this: Maybe there are no angels, afterlife, UFOs, or even a God. Certainly their existence has not yet been scientifically proved. But just as certainly, their *nonexistence* remains unproved. Any reasonable person would therefore have to reserve judgment."
- 8. Stop blaming the developers for the fact that our town is growing! If you want someone to blame, blame the university. It brings the new people here, not the developers. Kids come here from God knows where, and lots of them like what they find and stick around. All the developers do is put roofs over those former students' heads.
- ▲ 9. Two favorite scientists of the Council for Tobacco Research were Carl Seltzer and Theodore Sterling. Seltzer, a biological anthropologist, believes smoking has no role in heart disease and has alleged in print that data in the huge 45-year, 10,000-person Framingham Heart Study—which found otherwise—have been distorted by anti-tobacco researchers. Framingham Director William Castelli scoffs at Seltzer's critique but says it "has had some impact in keeping the debate alive."
 

Sterling, a statistician, disputes the validity of population studies linking smoking to illness, arguing that their narrow focus on smoking obscures the more likely cause—occupational exposure to toxic fumes.

For both men, defying conventional wisdom has been rewarding. Seltzer says he has received "well over \$1 million" from the Council for research. Sterling got \$1.1 million for his Special Projects work in 1977–82, court records show.

—From "How Tobacco Firms Keep Health Questions 'Open' Year After Year," Alix Freedman and Laurie Cohen. The article originally appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* and was reprinted in the *Sacramento Bee*.
- 10. We have had economic sanctions in effect against China ever since the Tiananmen Square massacre. Clearly, they haven't turned the Chinese leadership in Beijing into a bunch of good guys. All they've done, in fact, is cost American business a lot of money. We should get rid of the sanctions and find some other way to make them improve their human rights record.

### Writing Exercises

- 1. Your instructor will assign one or more of the Essays for Analysis in Appendix 1 for you to scan for fallacies and rhetorical devices.
- 2. In the spring of 2010, the Texas State Board of Education voted to "put a conservative stamp on history and economics textbooks, questioning the Founding Fathers' commitment to a purely secular government and presenting Republican political philosophies in a more positive light." The majority of the board, a 10-vote bloc (of 15 total), "question Darwin's theory of evolution and believe the Founding Fathers were guided by

Christian principles." On the other side are "a handful of Democrats and moderate Republicans who have fought to preserve the teaching of Darwinism and the separation of church and state."

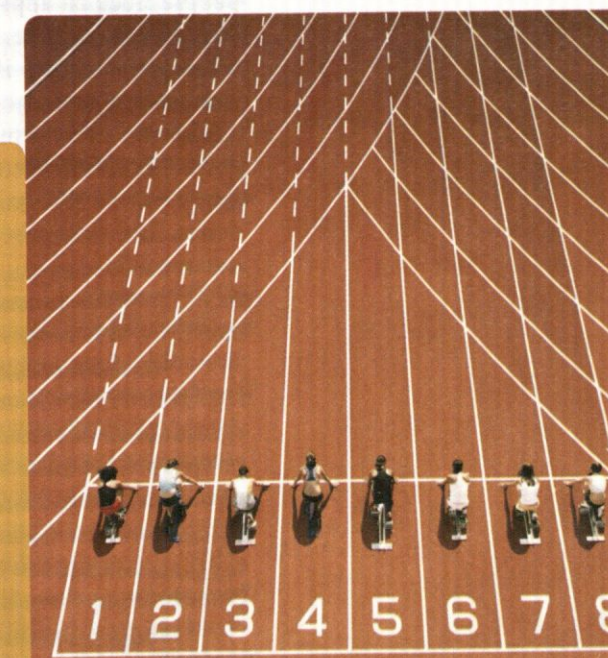
Which side do you think has the better case? Should Texas schools teach Darwin's theory of evolution? Should they teach that the United States was consciously founded on Christian principles? Write a two-page essay in which you describe and defend your position. When the class has finished, read the essays in groups, looking for fallacies and other rhetorical devices. (Your instructor may have further or alternative instructions.)

3. A Schedule I drug, as defined by the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, is one that (a) has a high potential for abuse, (b) has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and (c) has a lack of accepted safety for use of the drug under medical supervision. Should marijuana be classified as a Schedule I drug? Defend a position on the issue following the same instructions as for Writing Exercise 2.
4. Choose two of the examples in Exercise 7-17 and diagram them according to the procedure described in Chapter 2.

# 8

## Deductive Arguments I

### Categorical Logic



... The Science of Deduction and Analysis is one which can only be acquired by long and patient study, nor is life long enough to allow any mortal to attain the highest possible perfection in it.

—From an article by Sherlock Holmes,  
in *A Study in Scarlet* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

**F**ortunately, the greatest detective was doing some serious exaggerating in this quotation. While it may be that few of us mortals will attain "the highest possible perfection" in "the Science of Deduction," most of us can learn quite a bit in a fairly short time if we put our minds to it. In fact, you already have an understanding of the basics from Chapter 2.\* In this chapter and the next, you'll learn two kinds of techniques for making and evaluating deductive inferences—in other words, arguments.

If you flip through the pages of these two chapters, you'll see diagrams with circles and Xs, and in Chapter 9, page after page of weird symbols that remind some people of

\*An understanding that's somewhat better than Sir Arthur's, as a matter of fact. Many instances of what he has Sherlock Holmes referring to as "deduction" turn out to be inductive arguments, not deductive ones, as was mentioned in Chapter 2. We mean no disrespect, of course; one of your authors is a dyed-in-the-wool Holmes fanatic.

#### Students will learn to . . .

1. Recognize the four types of categorical claims and the Venn diagrams that represent them
2. Translate a claim into standard form
3. Use the square of opposition to identify logical relationships between corresponding categorical claims
4. Use conversion, obversion, and contraposition with standard form to make valid arguments
5. Recognize and evaluate the validity of categorical syllogisms