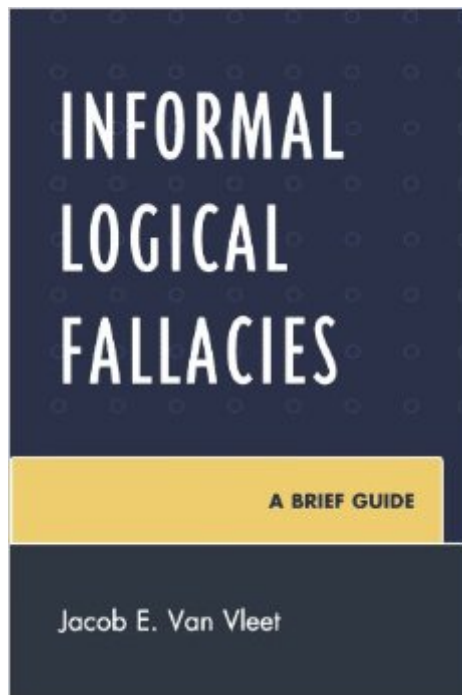


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Informal Logical Fallacies: A Brief Guide



Synopsis

Critical thinking is now needed more than ever. This accessible and engaging book provides the necessary tools to question and challenge the discourse that surrounds us - whether in the media, the classroom, or everyday conversation. Additionally, it offers readers a deeper understanding of the foundations of analytical thought. *Informal Logical Fallacies: A Brief Guide* is a systematic and concise introduction to more than forty fallacies, from anthropomorphism and argumentum ad baculum, to reductionism and the slippery slope argument. With helpful definitions, relevant examples, and thought-provoking exercises, the author guides the reader through the realms of fallacious reasoning and deceptive rhetoric. This is an essential guide to philosophical reflection and clear thinking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had been wishing that a reference guide of the fallacies existed for quite some time when I received this as a gift. This is a guide to retain long after completion of a course in logic, as everyday interaction beyond the classroom requires identification of fallacies for critical analysis.

Gives me a common language with which to explain to my students what is wrong with their writing and thinking. Contains the most common errors explained in a way that students can understand. Helps me in my own thinking and expression too, of course.

I really love this book because it exposes to me the flaws in arguments that people always use. It opens up my mind and make me realize that I should not blindly accept all the arguments because most of the ideologies that I have been accepting since I was young always have flaws.

What interested me in this book was seeing my students using it in my class for quick reference when evaluating the arguments of both their peers and of "professional philosophers." Having read it, I find it to be an invaluable reference for just such occasions: when the name or explanation of a fallacy in reasoning is detected, but one cannot recall exactly what they are looking for, a look through this handbook will bring directly to mind what the appropriate critique of an argument is, for which one was searching. For this reason alone, it is worth the price. However, when combined with its accuracy of explanation and content, along with the helpful examples, it is a "must" for any thinker's shelf and/or backpack!

Dr. Van Vleet's *Informal Logical Fallacies* is a straightforward and intellectually balanced book. This book encompasses various erroneous reasoning that we can easily hear in daily life and from popular media. The explanations of each fallacy is extremely refined and moderate so that you can preclude the risk of overthinking. The examples very down-to-earth, readers could easily grasp the heart of each fallacy. I highly recommend this book.

This is a somewhat useful listing of informal logical fallacies, brevity being one of its chief virtues. Considering what passes for political discussion and debate on TV these days, it's helpful to have some idea of the ways people use fallacious reasoning to distort issues and create misleading impressions. That said, the book suffers from weak scholarship and a lack of subtlety. Examples of fallacious reasoning should have at least a superficial plausibility, but under the Fallacy of Composition we get, "The terrorists who attacked us were Muslims. Therefore, all Muslims are terrorists." This is so illogical it's stupid. I'd have preferred a more plausible fallacy, such as "Men who cheat on their wives lie about where they are and what they're doing. Mary's husband lied to her about where he was and what he was doing, so he must be cheating on her." This may seem plausible, but change the statement to "Men who cheat on their wives have belly buttons. Mary's husband has a belly button, so he must be cheating on her." and the flawed reasoning emerges. A further weakness is the choice of descriptors Bifurcation and False Dilemma. According to the author, Bifurcation is the presentation of two choices as if they were the only choices, whereas False Dilemma is the presentation of three or more such choices. While Bifurcation (also called

False Dichotomy) literally means TWO choices, so, really, does False Dilemma. The "bi" in bifurcation and the "di" in dilemma and dichotomy are Greek for TWO. And while American Heritage's usage notes indicate that some of their experts accept more than two choices for dilemma, many still consider it limited to two. Other than that, if you're interested in the subject of fallacious reasoning, this is a good way to stick your toe in the water.

Enjoyable read.

If you are new to the topic, this is a good introduction. The narrative is simple, embellished with examples hence easy to understand.

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