



Bridgedale Academy

School for Athletes

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Bridgedale Academy Complementary Course

Introduction to Logic

Argument and Informal Fallacies

In its purest sense, the verb “to argue” means “to provide rational reasons for or against an idea or action.” And in today’s world we are absolutely bombarded with arguments. From TV advertisements to political campaigns, we are “persuaded” why we should or should not do something. But are these types of “arguments” generally supported by *rational* reasons?

Very often the reasons provided are simply irrelevant. Sometimes they are based on presumptions that simply aren’t true. Sometimes they are intentionally unclear.

Fortunately the study of logic can help, because these issues of irrelevance, untrue presumptions and lack of clarity are the basis of virtually all fallacies in argument.

The application of logic helps bring sense to things. Logic is the art and science of reasoning. It is the human being’s tool for survival. Other animals rely on instincts to survive. Man, on the other hand, uses logic to arrange and give order to the world around him. And because man must constantly evaluate “arguments” for or against ideas or actions, his ability to recognize and refute false arguments is crucial to his survival.

In this introductory class, we will investigate the so-called informal fallacies. Using fun and interactive scenarios, we will introduce our students to the “art of argument,” teaching critical thinking so they learn to recognize and refute illogical arguments. We will explore:

The so-called *Ad Fontem* (i.e. against the source) arguments

- *Ad Hominem Abusive, Ad Hominem Circumstantial, etc.*

Arguments that are designed to appeal to emotions

- *Appeals to Fear, Appeals to Pity*

Arguments involving so-called Red Herrings

- *Appeals to Ignorance, Straw Man Fallacy*