

AVOIDING LOGICAL FALLACIES IN HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

A fallacy is the use of faulty reasoning in the construction of an argument.

PRESENTISM

Introducing present-day ideas into interpretations of the past; evaluating the past in terms of today's norms and values instead of from the perspectives of people living at the time.



POST HOC

Confusing correlation with causality based on sequence; after this, therefore because of this: since Event Y followed Event X, Event Y must have been caused by Event X.

GENETIC FALLACY

Ignoring or rejecting a claim based solely on the source or origins of the claim; failing to assess the claim on its own merits.



CONFIRMATION BIAS

Searching for and interpreting information in a way that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs, and ignoring evidence that might refute those beliefs.

HASTY GENERALIZATION

Reaching a conclusion based on insufficient evidence; using a small sample group to represent an entire population; stereotyping.



AD POPULUM

Concluding that a statement or argument must be true because many or most people believe it.

SLIPPERY SLOPE

Assuming a small action or insignificant event will cause a chain reaction, resulting in disastrous consequences.



FALSE ANALOGY

Assuming that because two things are alike in one or more ways, they are necessarily alike in some other way.