

Hum 1B – Student Examples of Fallacies 1

* = not a good example

** = a good example

No asterisk = almost a good example

Ad Hominem:

1. “You don’t like dairy products because you are Chinese.” (Mariel Martinez)*
2. Person A: “I think Rover is the smartest dog in the world.”
Person B: “Naturally, he is your dog. So, he could not possibly be as smart as you say he is.” (Amir Gillani)*
3. I’m going to give my friend presents because I like him, but I won’t give his girlfriend any presents because I don’t like her shoes. (Tracey Wong)*
4. Dave: The economy is affecting everything! It all comes down from Bush.**
Bill: You can’t blame everything on Bush. He is not responsible for the system being broken.
Dave: Yes he is! You’re just saying that because the economy is affecting your ability to think! (Ryan Bettencourt)*
5. You are a racist, therefore your opinion on the economy is invalid. (Tom McClellan)
6. “You started dating Jake? I’ve heard he’s had a lot of girlfriends.” (Alyssa Benoist)*
7. Go away. It’s because I hate your uncle. (Larry Chan)*
8. Somebody might try to exclude somebody from a math club because he/she got a bad grade in an English class. English class is not relevant to being good at math. (Stephanie Fung)*
9. Mary can’t be our 4th grade class-president because she doesn’t play 4-square at recess. (Ailea Merriam-Pigg)*
10. Joey’s brother borrowed his sweatshirt with out asking. When Joey confronts his brother about this, his brother exclaims, “Well you’re just mad because you are ugly and nobody likes you!” (Stephanie Casas)*
11. Jacob is not qualified for office because he once used drugs. (Taylor Louie)*
12. An advocate for an environmental group argues that, “Global warming is an issue we need to deal with! It jeopardizes us in ways that could potentially wipe out the existence of the human race as we know it!” And a right wing politician counteracts the statement by adding that, “you own a car don’t you?” (Ivan Chew)**
13. Of course you would think abortion is wrong, you are a priest. (Amanda Saxer)*
14. Offers information that is completely irrelevant to the argument as a conclusion to the argument, such as, “I am not a good piano player because I am too short”. (Kristyn Van Cleave)*
15. A defendant claims he did not commit the crime. However, the defendant has a history of crimes and is a "bad" person. Therefore, the defendant committed the crime. (Alan Tan)

Subjunctive Fallacy:

1. “If I had worked more on my kicks and punches, I would have won the sparring tournament.” (Mariel Martinez)
2. If I studied for that extra hour, I would have passed my math class. (Jeffrey Chow)
3. I failed my driving test 2 times; if I had practiced more I wouldn’t have failed those two times. (Tracey Wong)
4. If Mel Gibson was a pastor, then his church would take over the world! (Ryan Bettencourt)
5. “Maybe he wouldn’t have cheated on me if I were more attractive.” (Alyssa Benoist)
6. Had I only been introduced to the fine arts as a child I could have been a famous violinist or the next Donatello. (Ailea Merriam-Pigg)

7. Sally opens her report card in front of her parents this semester. They are disappointed she received a D in her dance class; in her defense she says, “If only I ate healthier I would be able to get an A!” (Ivan Chew)

Slippery Slope:

1. “Since I started reading the book, I might as well finish the chapter.” (Mariel Martinez)*
2. Person A: “I can’t have dessert. If I have one bite, I won’t be able to stop myself from finishing it.” (Amir Gillani)
3. My roommate says he is going to cut back on the junk food, but he is hungry and buys one candy bar, which turns into 2 candy bars, a bag of chips, and a soda. (Tracey Wong)*
4. Rumor has it that since many Roman citizens were homosexual, it destroyed individual trust which destroyed the economy, which in turn led to the fall of Rome! (Ryan Bettencourt)**
5. You smoke marijuana, therefore you will eventually die of a heroine overdose. (Tom McClellan)
6. “If you buy from Nike, you may as well be supporting sweatshop labor.” (Alyssa Benoist)*
7. Since I stopped exercising, I might as well become a couch potato. (Larry Chan)*
8. My friend tells me that I shouldn’t drink or else I might as well smoke weed, do drugs, or throw myself out a window because all of them can physically harm me. (Stephanie Fung)*
9. Why can’t I stay out late tonight? You let me stay out late last weekend. (Amanda Saxer)*
10. Stray cats and dogs should not be neutered/spayed because then all cats and dogs will be altered and they will be unable to reproduce. Thus, the dog and cat species of this world will cease to exist. (Ailea Merriam-Pigg)**
11. If you drive to work every day then you will never exercise, become obese, and develop diabetes, and then die at a young age. (Stephanie Casas)**
12. If we don't put a stricter restriction on cheating and plagiarism then students will continue cheating their entire life. (Taylor Louie)*
13. If I do not go to my next class, I will not go to my class for the rest of the year, and as a result I will fail the class and be kicked out of college. (Sophia Bonnin)**
14. The government is going to war with Iraq to take all their oil. Then they are going to take Iran, then Afghanistan then the whole Middle East! Then soon the world! (Ivan Chew)**
15. Carol thought since she only needs a 2.0 GPA, she can fail all of her finals and still pass. (Jeffrey Chow)*
16. In the post WWII era, there was a fear of communism. In Europe and Asia, there was a domino theory in that once one country converts to Communism, others will follow. In Europe, an iron curtain divided many of the countries. In Asia, China became a Communist country and many feared that the domino theory would happen so the United States intervened in Vietnam. (Alan Tan)
17. “If the department of education requires all high schools to sell only healthy foods, the teenage obesity crisis will be solved.” (Kristyn Van Cleave)*

False Dichotomy:

1. “I’ll cross my heart, hope to die, and stick a needle in my eye if I ever spill the secret.” (Mariel Martinez)*
2. “You are going to Boston, are you going to drive or fly?” (Tom McClellan)**
3. I would have gotten a better grade on my final if I were a suck up like Johnny. (Amanda Saxer)

4. I often use this one on my little brother. I usually tell him he must do something (usually a favor, getting me something from the fridge, doing his homework, etc.) or else I will tickle him to the ground. (Stephanie Fung)*
5. Either you take me to see the chick flick, or you don't love me anymore. (Amanda Saxer)
In Taiwan, you are either for the Kuomintang or against it. (Larry Chan)**
6. If he does not like my new outfit I'll die! (Stephanie Casas)*
7. You either vote for your president or you are unpatriotic. (Taylor Louie)**
8. If I don't turn in my fallacy homework, I am going to fail out of school! (Ivan Chew)**
9. "If Jon is in my music theory class, I'm going to shoot myself." (Kristyn Van Cleave)
10. Quote from George W. Bush "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." (Alan Tan)**

Appeal to Sympathy:

1. "I need an A in this class or I will fail the course and lose my scholarship." (Mariel Martinez)
2. Student to teacher: "You have to excuse me from the exam, because I'm sick and going to have surgery the day before." (Amir Gillani)
3. My friend is applying for a position as an RA, he wants the job because he needs the money, but that does not mean he has the correct qualifications. (Tracey Wong)*
4. President Obama just moved into the White House! Don't condemn his policies, he was busy moving in his furniture! (Ryan Bettencourt)*
5. The murderer has children, so he should not go to jail. (Tom McClellan)*
6. "I'm so sorry I was late for class, professor! I had to take my dog to the vet last night, and I was stuck at the vet for hours; I couldn't even e-mail you the homework assignment." (Alyssa Benoist)
7. I didn't shoot the victim. I beg you not to find me guilty. I have already suffered enough from my insanity. (Larry Chan)
8. Somebody tells a hiring manager they need a job because otherwise they wouldn't be able to pay their rent and would be evicted from their apartment. (Stephanie Fung)
9. Jessica has worked so hard on the project. She at least deserves an A for effort. (Jeffrey Chow)*
10. Please sir, I have 3 children at home and a wife who says she will leave me if I don't get this job. (Ailea Merriam-Pigg)**
11. Sally just received a D- on her midterm. After class, she goes to her professor and explains that she does not deserve such a low grade because she stayed up all night studying, and her friend borrowed her book so she could not review the study questions, and her baby sister was up all night crying so she did not get a good night sleep. (Stephanie Casas)
12. I couldn't complete my examples of fallacies because my cat just died. (Taylor Louie)
13. Because migrant workers stand on corners willing to do hard labor in order to send money back to their families, my father should hire a few workers to paint our house. (Sophia Bonnin)
14. Kyle is twelve; he is picked on by other boys in his class which adds to his already devastatingly poor grades. He asks his teacher if it is possible to give him and B in this semester because he really needs to pass the seventh grade. The teacher gives him the grade, he passes, on with life. (Ivan Chew)*
15. A company hires someone for a job. The person might not be qualified for the job but needs the job because of extraordinary circumstances at home. (Alan Tan)*

Appeal to False Authority

1. “Hey Stephanie, I think Plato is one of the most inspirational philosophers.” Stephanie says “No way, Aristotle is better. Just ask Professor Mesher.” (Jeffrey Chow)*
2. Person A: “Oxy-Clean is the best cleaning product ever.”
Person B: “Why is that?”
Person A: “Well, considering how Billy Mays endorses it, it has to be a good product.”
Person B: “Who is Billy Mays? Is he an expert in cleaning products?”
Person A: “I don’t think so, but I trust his judgment.” (Amir Gillani)
3. My friend and I arguing over which is the better ice cream flavor, I say chocolate, and she says strawberry. She says strawberry because her boyfriend says so, and I say chocolate because my roommate says so. (Tracey Wong)*
4. My math teacher said that commas should always be placed after names! (Ryan Bettencourt)
5. Steve Young says Toyotas are the best trucks, he must be right. (Tom McClellan)
6. “Did you see the Britney Spears’ parenting advertisement?” (Alyssa Benoist)*
7. Michael Phelps maybe the best swimmer. I think that Pieter van den Hoogenband is the best. My aunt said so, that’s why. (Larry Chan)
8. One can make up a fake source of authority. One could try to prove that smoking marijuana isn’t bad for your health by quoting a fake scientific journal and make it sound legitimate.* (Stephanie Fung)
9. Of course Santa Clause is real, my parents said he was. (Amanda Saxer)*
10. Little Timmy only wears Hanes clothing because Michael Jordan says that they are the best clothing and extremely comfortable. (Stephanie Casas)*
11. My dermatologist told me that if I hold my breath for 30 seconds my hiccups will go away. (Taylor Louie)*
12. While flipping through a magazine I noticed that Brittany Spears was wearing a t-shirt about saving penguins, because of that, I too shall donate and wear t-shirts about saving emperor penguins. (Sophia Bonnin)*
13. My friend has painted many doors for a secondary job in the past month. I decide to ask him how doors are constructed; he offers a wild, but semi-believable conclusion. I ask him “How do you know?” and he responds, “I’ve seen a lot of doors recently, I should know!” (Ivan Chew)*
14. Mr. Pierson says that San Jose State University has the best marching band in the state so it must be true. (Ailea Merriam-Pigg)*
15. “According to Oprah Winfrey, if you read the book ‘The Secret’ all your life’s problems will be solved. (Kristyn Van Cleave)*
16. A doctor endorses a drug. Public thinks that the product must be good because the doctor claims so. But the doctor specializes in another area of medicine. (Alan Tan)

Red herring

1. Bob said: “Hey Jeff, how come you haven’t asked that girl out yet?” Then I replied, “When was the last time you took a shower?” (Jeffrey Chow)
2. Person A: “I think riding your bike to school or work is a great idea. I do almost everyday. After all, Earth is in danger and we wouldn’t want our carbon emissions to cause any more harm.” (Amir Gillani)*
3. Mother: “Do you realize how much money you spent on chocolates! I should take your credit card away from you!”

Son: “Hey! Don’t tell me that, you spent ten thousand dollars on that useless chandelier that no one uses!” (Ivan Chew)**

4. A teenager is late for their curfew and when reprimanded by their parents, they respond by saying, “I was with my friend whom you like and think is a good influence on me.” (Kristyn Van Cleave)

Begging the Question

1. “Jerome Iginla is the best hockey player in the world!” When asked why, “Because he is better than anyone else duh!” (Ivan Chew)**