**The Trouble with Fallacies...**

Below are descriptions of various kinds of faulty reasoning or bad logic that undermine the integrity of your work. Familiarizing yourself with these examples may help you recognize similar patterns in your own writing and the writing of others.

**FAULTY ASSUMPTION OF CAUSALITY (cause and effect)...**

Because the family is smiling, we know they've just come from the circus.

**FAULTY ASSUMPTION OF INTENTIONALITY...**

The Joneses clearly bought a gigantic high definition flat screen to annoy us.

**I *AM* THE WORLD...**

I don't listen to accordion music. Thus, accordion music is not popular.

***I KNOWTHE* WORLD (broad generalization)...** Nobody likes grape popsicles.

**JUDGING WITHOUT COMPARISON TO ALTERNATIVES...**

Investing in U.S. Treasury bills is more exciting because it's riskier.

**ARGUMENT BY BIZARRE DEFINITION...**

She's not a criminal; she just does things that are against the law.

**INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOME THINGS HAVE MULTIPLE CAUSES...** The Beatles were popular because they had really good haircuts.

**ANYTHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IS EASY TO DO...**

If you have the right tools, how hard can it be to generate nuclear fission at home?

**HASTY OR BROAD GENERALIZATION...**

As the immigrants from El Salvador are clearly disillusioned, all immigrants likely feel the same.

**IGNORING EVERYTHING SCIENCE KNOWS ABOUT THE BRAIN...**

People choose to be obese/gay/alcoholic because they prefer the lifestyle.

**THE FEW ARE THE SAME AS THE WHOLE...**

Some Seattleites are caffeine-crazed media junkies. Some Seattleites belong to a strict religious sect that forbids caffeine and secular entertainments. Therefore, Seattleites are hypocrites.

**AMAZINGLY BAD ANALOGY...**

You can train a dog to fetch a stick; therefore, you can train a potato to dance.

**TOTAL LOGICAL DISCONNECT...**

I enjoy pasta because my house is made of bricks.

**IGNORING STATISTICAL DATA...**

I'm putting all of my money on the lottery this week because the jackpot is so big.

**SUBSTITUTING CLICHES FOR COMMON SENSE...**

Remember, "All things come to those who wait." So don't bother looking for a job.

**REACHING BIZARRE CONCLUSIONS WITHOUT ANY INFORMATION...**

The car won't start. I'm certain the spark plugs have been stolen by rogue clowns.

**CIRCULAR REASONING...**

I'm correct because I'm smarter than you. And I must be smarter than you because I'm correct.

**IRRELEVANT COMPARISION...**

Two dollars is a great price for a shoes, compared to sixty thousand for a college education.

**INCOMPLETENESS AS PROOF OF DEFECT...**

Your theory of gravity doesn't address why there are no unicorns, so it must be wrong.

**IGNORING THE ADVICE OF EXPERTS WITHOUT GOOD REASON...**

Experts may think it silly to ride a bicycle into the eye of a hurricane, but I have my own theory.

**FOLLOWING THE ADVICE OF KNOWN IDIOTS...**

Uncle Harry says I'm the botanist of the family. I am clearly meant to study plants.

**FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE WHAT'S IMPORTANT...**

My house is on fire! Quick, call the post office and tell them to hold my mail!

**UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT OF SUNK COSTS...**

We've spent millions developing a water-powered pogo stick. We can't stop investing now, or it will all be wasted.

**OVERAPPLICATION OF OCCAM'S RAZOR (the simplest explanation is usually right)...** The simplest explanation for the moon landings is that they were hoaxes.

**IGNORING ALL ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE...**

I always get hives after eating strawberries. I continue to eat strawberries daily because I have not found reliable scientifically-controlled data to connect hives and strawberries.

**FALSE DILEMMA (or, assuming only certain options exist)...**

I have to go to my parents' alma mater or else pay my own way through school.

**SHIFTING GROUND (or, subtly moving to another point without addressing the first)...** The author brings up an interesting point about string theory, but more interesting is that schizophrenia is not purely an urban population phenomenon.

**STRAW MEN (or, exaggeration to make an argument seem ridiculous)...**

Senator Jankowski says that we should not fund the attack submarine program. I disagree entirely. I can't understand why she wants to leave us defenseless like that.