

## EXERCISES FOR CRITICAL THINKING: ANSWERS

(Please note: these are the first answers that came to mind. You may find other logical problems in these statements. Consult with your for explanations of these fallacies.)

1. **Begging the question.** The judge is assuming the answer to the very question that a trial is supposed to answer.
2. **Non sequitur.** It doesn't follow that because something is good for us the government should enforce compliance. It also could be "straw man" since McDonalds' is not the only entity that inspires unhealthy nutrition (and if you eat McDonalds' salads, you're not eating unhealthily).
3. **Post hoc fallacy.** There is no proof that watching these particular TV shows is the cause of high or low school grades. It's more reasonable to suppose that children who do well or poorly in school select one show or the other because of its appeal to their level of intelligence and achievement.
4. **Hasty generalization or small sample.** A faulty prediction for one month is not enough for an accusation of unreliability. Moreover, the mistaken predictions may not be the forecaster's fault; the models s/he uses may be unreliable, climactic conditions may have changed, or an unforeseen event (such as a volcanic cloud) may have affected the weather. And weather, of course, is not a predictable process, so quality control in forecasting is almost impossible, despite the mayor of Moscow's threats (<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/050302/344/fdjxr.html>).
5. **Two wrongs don't make a right.** The writer thinks that death and danger are unacceptable for men in combat, but subjecting women to death and danger doesn't make these "wrongs" more acceptable. This could also be equivocation. Moreover, this could be ignoring the question because the argument shifts the grounds that are usually used to exclude women from combat.
6. **Faulty appeal to authority/celebrity.** Taste is a matter of individual preference. It would be hard to prove that Cher is superior to anybody else in her choice of a sweetener. She may only be posing for a paid advertisement.)
7. **Two wrongs don't make a right (or tu quoque).** The arguer seems to infer that gambling is wrong, but legalizing it won't make it morally right. (This is what Norm Cousins calls "cop-out realism," or "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.") This could also be the bandwagon fallacy—everybody does it so it must not be wrong....
8. **Unknown facts or faulty comparison or non sequitur.** What was money spent for in the past? Have conditions changed that may make the expenditure of more money appropriate now? Even though a great deal of money has been spent, have we spent enough and in the right places? (Where does our state stand in *per capita* expenditures on education, for instance?)
9. **Non sequitur.** It doesn't follow that campus newspapers select the best or even good writers. They usually have to settle for those who make themselves available or those who can make deadlines. And writers on a student paper like *The Johnsonian* are usually just learning their craft, so the quality of their writing may be uneven, or due to good editing, etc.
10. **Begging the question or circular argument.** The arguer assumes that standard English is not needed because not all employment needs Standard English, but that remains to be proved. Standard English has other uses unrelated to employment. It's circular in that the speaker is saying "We don't need Standard English because we don't need Standard English."
11. **Faulty definition or equivocation.** In this case, discrimination means "making choices based on applicable standards." It should not necessarily be considered a negative thing. To perform their duties, which may involve physical exertion, police officers (or other public officials such as firefighters) may reasonably be required to meet certain physical standards.
12. **Faulty comparison or begging the question.** Qualified lawyers and law students are different. Lawyers have passed the very rigorous bar exam (without using books) and thus proven they know the law; they use books to research precedents, not to show that they understand basic torts. By definition a student is still being tested and access to information in books during the testing process may defeat the purposes of testing.
13. **Faulty definition or equivocation or sweeping generalization.** Chemicals are the building blocks of nature. Some may be unsafe, but they are not all synonymous with "poison" by any means—yet this arguer seems to imply that all chemicals are bad. Water, for instance, is made up of the chemicals hydrogen and oxygen.
14. **Begging the question or false analogy.** The arguer assumes that the only relevant criterion for choosing courses is payment of tuition. But a student enters into an implicit contract when he or she enrolls in the college or university and accepts the criteria laid down by the institution for the granting of a diploma. Likewise students do not *know* what well-educated people in their field know, and so their choices may not lead to *earning* the diploma. And education is not like shopping at the mall—you don't choose courses based on whether you like them or not, but on their ability to help you master an area of study.

15. **Either/or (false dilemma).** The writer assumes that there are only two alternatives available to those who want to marry. But there is at least one more-- marriages freely chosen that are not based on romantic love. Besides, we have no way of knowing how well arranged marriages worked. Staying married when divorce is difficult or unavailable doesn't prove the success of the marriage.

16. **Hasty generalization or small sample.** Three examples are not sufficient to support a generalization about a population of hundreds of thousand millions. And if you disagree, I'll go postal on you. ☺

17. **Hasty generalization or small sample.** One example of a highly intelligent athlete is not enough to prove the intelligence of a large population, just as one example of a dumb athlete does not prove that all athletes are brainless.

18. **Insufficient information and hasty generalization.** There is insufficient evidence in this quotation to prove reasons for Sasway's failure to register, which may or may not be based on moral principles. The speaker is jumping to conclusions about Sasway's motives.

19. **Post hoc fallacy.** We have no way of knowing if the exercise videos are the cause of Beyonce's great shape.

20. **False analogy.** Harris is making an analogy between inanimate objects — buildings, cars, ham — and animate objects or students. Students, after all, have choices and some control over their education.

21. **Post hoc fallacy.** There is no evidence here that doctrines of feminism have caused women to turn to crime. Changes in the crime rate are usually the result of many factors that are difficult to separate. There is also no proof that more women are committing crimes; it may be that just more crimes involving women are being reported or that improved law enforcement means more women are getting caught.

22. **Non sequitur.** It doesn't follow that just because an activity is healthful the university should require it. (There are numbers of things that are good for us that Winthrop does not choose to make mandatory parts of its curriculum. Getting plenty of sleep, for instance, is very healthful. How many of you could/would survive if Winthrop had a mandatory curfew and "lights out" time?)

23. **Ad hominem with a little bit of straw man.** Meany is attacking the habits (and by implication, the character) of the younger generation, not their views, which remain unknown.

24. **Non sequitur.** It doesn't follow that early poverty makes a candidate sympathetic to the problems of the poor. In fact, the opposite may be true: the candidate may feel that since s/he managed to rise up out of poverty, other people should do the same without assistance.

25. **False comparison with some equivocation.** In the European cases troops were engaged in crushing freedom; in the Little Rock case they were engaged in extending it.

26. **Post hoc fallacy or hasty generalization.** There is no evidence that the election of Governor Sanford is the cause of the corruption. The corruption may have been going on before he was elected. Attacking the governor before proving he's responsible for the corruption on his watch is not logical.

27. **Either/or or False dilemma.** These may not be the only alternatives for the voters. There may be ways to improve education without a pay increase.

28. **Post hoc fallacy.** It would be hard to prove a cause-effect relation.

29. **False analogy.** The dissimilarities between the two civilizations are probably much greater than the similarities. In ancient Rome, food and entertainment were provided free to all the citizens, often out of the personal wealth of the emperor; in our world, the free food goes only to those at a certain level of poverty and TV sets, cable, etc., must be paid for.

30. **Post hoc fallacy.** Self-explanatory. Try substituting "have worn underwear" for "have eaten tomatoes."

31. **Faulty use of authority/celebrity appeal.** Just because Aristotle said it doesn't make it true—science requires testing for proof.

32. **Slippery slope.** The progression projected by Brustein — from Congress curtailing grants to artists whose work is controversial to Congress ordering the execution of artists whose work is deemed blasphemous — is hardly inevitable. One thing will not necessarily lead to another.