



EduTrend Contents

P4C · FALLACIES AND TRICKY THINKING · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fallacy Detectives

Matching common reasoning mistakes to everyday examples

Ages 11–13

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Fallacy Detectives

Students learn four fallacies with simple names: attacking the person instead of the argument, the strawman (twisting what someone said), the false choice (pretending there are only two options) and the bandwagon (everyone does it). In teams they match fallacy cards to invented arguments from school, home and adverts, then write their own examples and enquire into why these tricks work so well.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- identify four common fallacies;
- explain why each is flawed;
- create examples;
- reflect on persuasion.

KEY WORDS

fallacy · ad hominem · strawman ·
false dilemma · bandwagon ·
persuade

CURRICULUM LINKS

English: persuasive techniques.
Citizenship: political debate. PSHE:
media literacy.

1

STIMULUS

Share something to
think about

2

THINK

Quiet thinking time

3

QUESTION

Create and choose
a question

4

ENQUIRE

Reason together

5

BUILD

Agree, disagree,
add

6

REFLECT

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Fallacy cards
- Example cards
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people,
and use the story or invented examples rather
than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Share the fallacy and example cards.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Why do bad arguments sometimes persuade people?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Write a short argument containing one fallacy and challenge a partner to find and fix it.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

A fallacy is a mistake in reasoning that can make a weak argument seem strong.

Knowing the names of fallacies helps people notice them, but the key is explaining what goes wrong.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Any argument I disagree with is a fallacy.” Fallacies are specific errors.
- “Fallacies are always deliberate.” People make them by accident.
- “Naming a fallacy wins the argument.” You must explain the flaw.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use two fallacies.

Stretch

Find a real example in a news article or advert.

WORKSHEET 1

Fallacy match

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Match and explain.

Fallacy match

Example	Fallacy	What goes wrong

WORKSHEET 2

Thinking moves

Use these in the enquiry.

Thinking moves

Thinking move	My example
I agree with... because...	
I disagree with... because...	
An example is...	
A counter-example is...	
Building on what... said...	

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Is using a fallacy the same as lying? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Fallacy Detectives is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Fallacies and Tricky Thinking programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

© 2026 EduTrend Contents. This activity may be printed and copied for use with students in your own school, club or home. It may not be resold or published elsewhere. Photos: Vitaly Gariev / Unsplash.