

# Introduction to Logical Reasoning

## *Appealing to Authorities*

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# The Need for Authorities

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When reflecting on difficult and complicated questions, it is entirely reasonable to be guided by the judgement of an acknowledged expert. Doing so is not necessarily fallacious. However, defending a position by appealing to authority does not constitute a deductively *valid* argument. Even so, it may be inductively *strong*.

# Experts

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An **expert** is a person who has access to the relevant information in question and is good at judging and evaluating that evidence. However, it is important to emphasize that this person must be an *acknowledged* expert, someone who has the education, experience, reputation among peers, along with the various professional accomplishments and accolades.

This makes the person trustworthy, though this all does *not* mean that he or she never errs.

# Is Tom Cruise an Expert?

In June of 2005, the actor Tom Cruise was interviewed by the *Today Show* in the United States where he presented his views on the effectiveness of psychiatry.



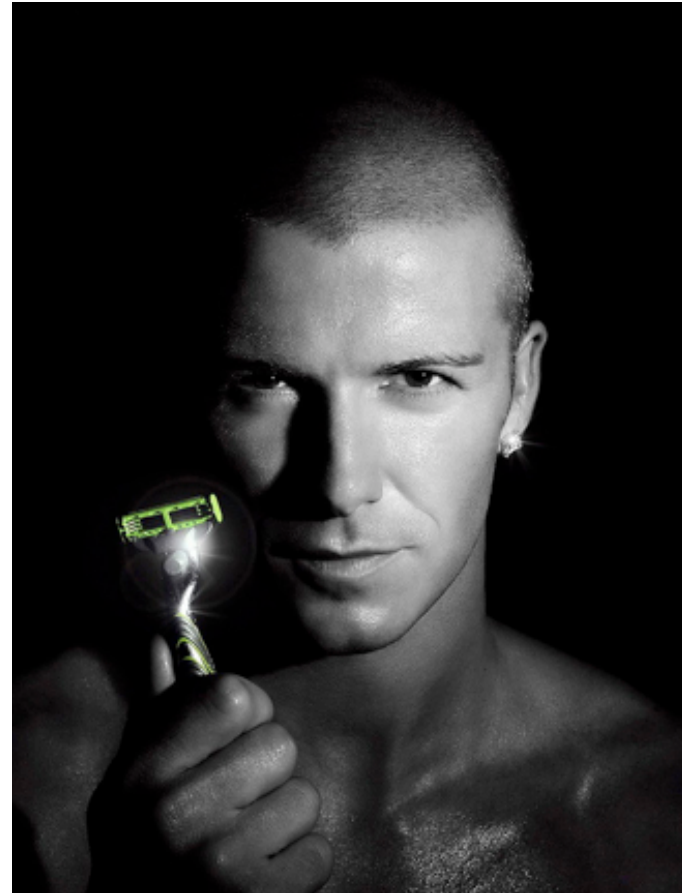
# The Right Appeal to Authority

One acceptable appeal to authority is to doubt claims that conflict with any consensus opinions (or overwhelming majority opinions) held by the acknowledged experts in that area.

However, if there is no such consensus amongst these experts concerning the claim, then there is no reason to accept *or* deny it. One must suspend judgment or do the research oneself to find the right answer.

# • The Wrong Appeal to Authority

An appeal to inappropriate authority (*argumentum ad vercundiam* or “appeal to modesty”) is a fallacy in which a conclusion is based on the judgment of a supposed authority who has no legitimate claim to expertise in the matter.



# The Wrong Appeal to Authority

The two main types of appeals to inappropriate authority are the following:

1. Appealing to the authority of an expert on an issue for which that person is not an expert.
2. Appealing to the authority of a non-expert as if he or she is an expert.

Both fallacious appeals equally apply when a person is appealing to *their own* “authority” on the issue.

# • The Wrong Sorts of Experts

Laura Schlessinger



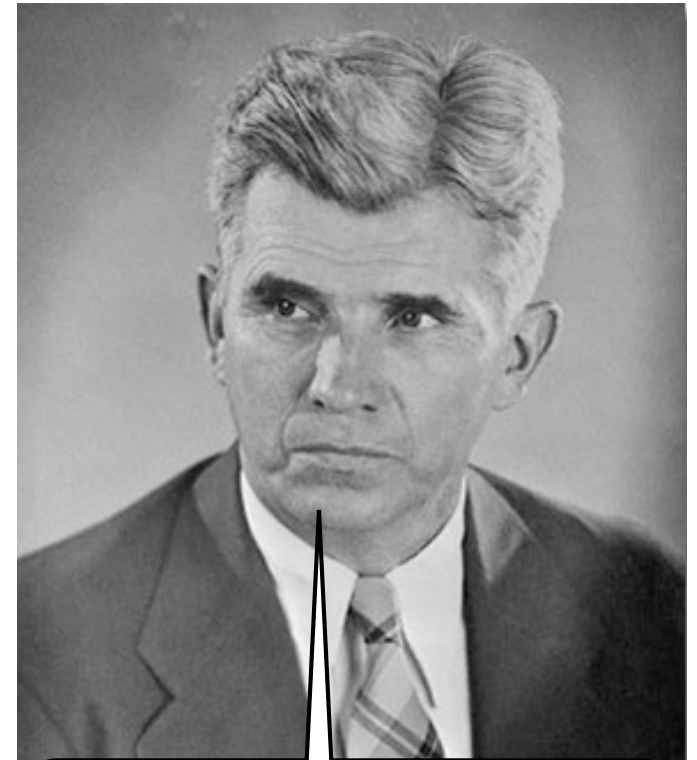
I'm *Dr.* Laura. With a Ph.D. in physiology, I am prepared to offer you advice in psychology.

James Irwin



I walked on the Moon. I'm also convinced that the remains of Noah's ark are on Mount Ararat, Turkey.

J.B. Rhine



While I am a botanist, I am also convinced that the evidence for Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) is real.



# The Concern of Bias

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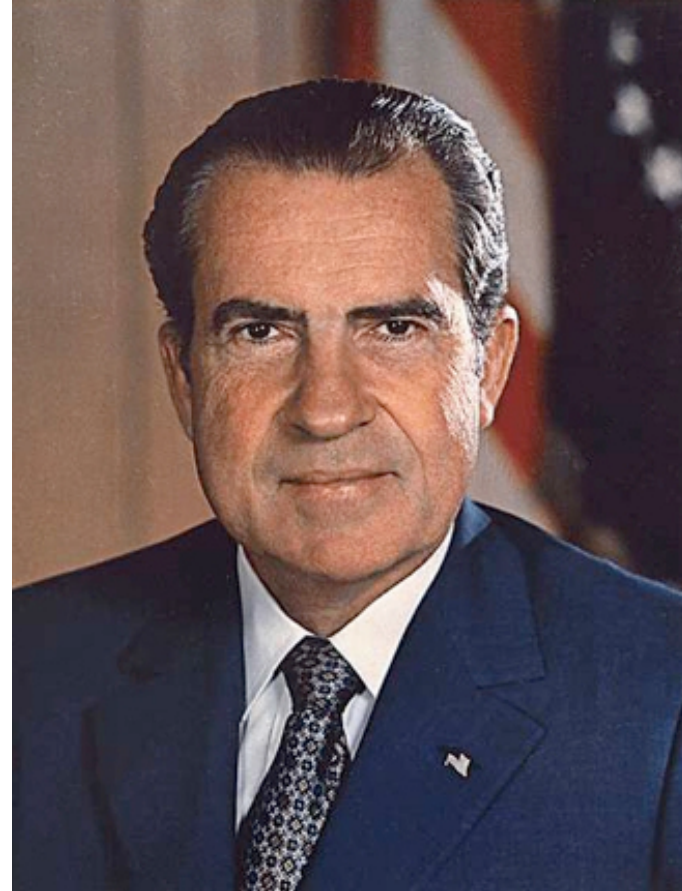
We should still be aware of potential biases of acknowledged experts on certain matters. If they stand to financially gain from the claims they are making, then we should examine their reasoning very carefully. The same holds if the supposed expert is in the grips of an ideology that might cloud their judgments.

# ☛ You Can Trust Me!

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I realize that some will wonder about the truth of these particular statements that I have made. I'm going to hand out later my May 22<sup>ND</sup> statement, my August 15<sup>TH</sup> statement, and one with regard to these two tapes. You can believe them if you want. *I can tell you it is the truth because I have listened to or have had knowledge of them from someone I have confidence in as to what is in the tapes.*

—Richard Nixon on the  
Watergate Tapes



# SATURDAY

*with jenna*

See how she and son Beckett go off duty in style.



*quality time*

"Lucky for me, I ended up with a boy whose favorite color is pink. Toenail painting is way more fun in neon."

# J. Crew Plants the Seeds for Gender Identity

By Dr. Keith Ablow

April 11, 2011—FoxNews.com—A recent feature in J. Crew's online catalogue portrays designer Jenna Lyons painting her son Beckett's toe nails hot pink. . . .

Yeah, well, it may be fun and games now, Jenna, but at least put some money aside for psychotherapy for the kid—and maybe a little for others who'll be affected by your “innocent” pleasure.

This is a dramatic example of the way that our culture is being encouraged to abandon all trappings of gender identity—homogenizing males and females when the outcome of such “psychological sterilization” [my word choice] is not known. . . .

If you have no problem with the J. Crew ad, how about one in which a little boy models a sundress? What could possibly be the problem with that?

Well, how about the fact that encouraging the choosing of gender identity, rather than suggesting our children become comfortable with the ones that they got at birth, can throw our species into real psychological turmoil—not to mention crowding operating rooms with procedures to grotesquely amputate body parts? . . .



*Keith Ablow, MD is a psychiatrist, Fox News Contributor and New York Times best-selling author.*

# The Limit to Authority

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Keep in mind that for some of the most important areas of life—morality, politics, religion, love—it is doubtful that there are any credible experts on which you may rely. While many people may claim to be experts on these matters, it is usually in your interest to carefully use your own critical thinking abilities.

# Informal Fallacies

## Fallacies of Irrelevance (*Non Sequitur*)

The Appeal to Emotion  
The Appeal to Popularity  
(*Argumentum Ad Populum*)  
The Appeal to Tradition  
(*Argumentum Ad Antiquitatem*)  
The Genetic Fallacy  
The Red Herring  
(*Ignoratio Elenchi*)  
The Straw Man  
*Argumentum Ad Hominem*  
The Appeal to Force  
(*Argumentum Ad Baculum*)

The Appeal to Pity  
(*Argumentum Ad Misericordiam*)

The Appeal to Vanity

## Fallacies of Defective Induction

The Appeal to Ignorance  
(*Argumentum Ad Ignorantiam*)

The Slippery Slope

The Hasty Generalization

The Faulty Analogy

The Appeal to Inappropriate Authority  
(*Argumentum Ad Verecundiam*)

Abusive { Guilt by Association

Circumstantial {

The Appeal to Consistency

Poisoning the Well

{ The Appeal to Hypocrisy

{ Two Wrongs Make a Right

## Fallacies of Presumption

The Complex Question  
Begging the Question  
(*Petitio Principii*)  
The False Dilemma

## Fallacies of Ambiguity

Equivocation  
Composition  
Division

# Exam #3 Schedule

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Because of the differing final schedules of Carnegie Mellon and Northwestern, the times for **Exam #3** must be split up as follows:

**NU-Q Students:** Sunday, April 24 from 11:00AM to 12:00PM (noon) in room 2163.

**CMU-Q Students:** Sunday, April 24 from 2:00PM to 3:00PM in classroom 1190.

You *must* attend the exam based on the university with which you are enrolled for this course.

# Next Class...

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We will look at thinking critically about the media.