Logical fallacies to watch out for…

When developing an academic argument, it is important to make sure that you are not drawing conclusions based on a flawed application of logic. Watch out for the following:

Missing the Point
The premises of an argument do support a particular conclusion—but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws.

Hasty Generalisations
Making assumptions about a whole group or range of cases based on a sample that is inadequate

Post-hoc (after the event)
Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B.

Straw Man
The arguer sets up a weak version of the opponent's position and tries to score points by knocking it down.

Slippery Slope
The arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but there's really not enough evidence for that assumption.

Weak Analogy
Many arguments rely on a comparison between two or more things. If the two things that being compared aren't really alike in the relevant respects, the argument becomes flawed.

Ad hominem (against the person)
The arguer attacks his or her opponent instead of the opponent's argument.

Bandwagon
The arguer tries to convince the audience to do or believe something because everyone else (supposedly) does.

Either/or
The arguer sets up the situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so it seems that we are left with only one option.

Circular Argument
This restates the claim in another way rather than actually proving it.

Red Herring
Partway through an argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from what's really at stake.

Ad Populum (to the people)
An appeal to positive (such as patriotism, religion, democracy) or negative (such as terrorism or fascism) concepts rather than the real issue at hand.