

## INFORMAL LOGIC FALLACIES

## EXERCISE 2

Below are 21 arguments that (arguably) illustrate each of the 21 fallacies in the Informal Logic Fallacy Toolkit Reference Sheet. Match each argument to a fallacy by placing a number from 1 to 21 (in accordance with the reference sheet) in the space provided. One of the “arguments” is not actually an argument. For this one, write NA for *no argument*.

1. It is impossible for a feather to be dark in colour, for a feather is light and whatever is light is not dark. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Lying is wrong. When Deidre lied to her mother about her mother’s hairdo, even though it was to protect her mother from ugly facts, she acted immorally. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Our team is the most outstanding team in the league, because it has the best players and the best coach. We know it has the best players and the best coach because it will win the league title. It will win the league title because it deserves to win the league title since it is the most outstanding team in the league. \_\_\_\_\_
4. “This jigsaw puzzle, when assembled, is circular in shape. Therefore, each piece is circular in shape.” (Hurley, Patrick J. (1988). *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (3rd Edition). Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, p. 149) \_\_\_\_\_
5. The mason employed on the building of a house may be quite ignorant of its general design, or at any rate, he may not keep it constantly in mind. So it is with man: in working through the days and hours of his life, he takes little thought of the character of his life as a whole. \_\_\_\_\_
6. If the federal government requires each gun owner to register his gun, then what will be next? Will we have to register our baseball bats, which, after all, can be used as a weapon? And what about a bread knife? Once we allow one infringement on our personal rights, other infringements will soon follow. \_\_\_\_\_
7. “People are not all the same. Isn’t that obvious? I mean, they look different, they have different tastes, different interests, different values, different experiences. This idea that people are just people is silly because it blurs over all the fascinating and wonderful idiosyncrasies that make individuals what they are. Equality means being the same, and there’s nothing good about it. So there’s no point in equality before the law either.” (Govier, Trudy. *A Practical Study of Argument*. Wadsworth Publishing, p. 121) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Less gasoline is consumed by a car than by a truck. Therefore, less gasoline is consumed in Canada by cars than by trucks. \_\_\_\_\_
9. “The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable [meaning *worthwhile*], is that people do actually desire it.” (John Stuart Mill, cited in Hamblin, C. L. (1970). *Fallacies*. Bungay, Suffolk: The Chaucer Press, p. 26) \_\_\_\_\_
10. If cigarettes were carcinogens, then every person who smokes would come down with cancer. But this is not so; some heavy smokers live to their 90s and die not of cancer, but of boredom. \_\_\_\_\_



## BLM 2.3 Continued

11. Professor Jones is an outstanding biologist. He has earned great fame for his study devoted to experimental investigations concerning the visual acuity of a variety of lower mammals. Professor Jones claims that corporal punishment for children does not usher in the maturity parents are seeking to develop in their children. Who would have the audacity to challenge an outstanding Professor's opinion on such a matter? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Mr. Song, Member of Parliament for Couchiching West, advocates increased social-security benefits for the poor. It is regrettable that Mr. Song finds it necessary to advocate socialism. Socialism has been tried for over 70 years in Russia, and it has been a miserable failure. A capitalistic free market has always been more efficient and productive and, without question, will continue to be so. \_\_\_\_\_
13. "Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy is not worth the paper it's printed on. Nietzsche was an immoral reprobate who went completely insane from syphilis before he died." (Hurley, p. 118) \_\_\_\_\_
14. Every time I write a test or exam with a black ballpoint pen, I do very well. Today, I am writing a test, so I will use a black ballpoint pen to ensure that I will do very well. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I was married once and it was a horrible experience. Because of that experience I shall never marry again and suggest that no one else get married ever. Marrying someone is a stupid thing to do. \_\_\_\_\_
16. A poll in 2005 showed that most Americans supported the invasion of Iraq. Because it was supported by most Americans, the invasion was the right thing to do. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I believe in reincarnation and, furthermore, through channeling I have been connected with my past lives. You cannot show that I am wrong. Prove that I did not have a past life as a Mongol warrior and another past life as a Greek slave maiden! Because you cannot prove that I am wrong, I am clearly right. \_\_\_\_\_
18. A: "Look, we should hold the house cross-country run at the Varsity Stadium because it makes for easy access for all of our students regarding the logistics of getting to and from the venue and it is a safe place to hold a run." B's response: "I disagree! It has been a long-standing tradition of our school to hold the run at High Park. Therefore, we should continue to hold the run at High Park." \_\_\_\_\_
19. Mr. Wilson, don't you think my paper is worth a higher grade? I'm working long hours outside to put myself through school, and it is not always easy, studying and waiting on tables while the other students are having a good time. \_\_\_\_\_
20. So you think it was wrong of me to invest in Trees for Condos because they practise clear-cut logging in the rainforests of South America. But look at you! You invested in Happy Bums, which is well known for producing diapers that cause long-term skin irritation. So stop being so morally self-righteous and leave me to my investments while I leave you to yours. \_\_\_\_\_
21. You are either a moral person or you are not. Since I caught you telling a lie last month, you are clearly an immoral person. Therefore, I do not trust you when it comes to moral behaviour. \_\_\_\_\_
22. Mrs. Granger: "Henrietta, I have compiled your test results according to the scheme in the course plan and note that your overall mark is 52 percent." Henrietta: "Mrs. Granger, the only reason you did not give me a good mark in mathematics is because you do not like girls and you bias your marking in favour of boys." \_\_\_\_\_

