2024 Presidential Debate: Logical Fallacies Activity Worksheet

Moderator's question:

_____

Let' Analyze the answers! Below are some commonly used logical fallacies:

Avoiding the Question: Did either nominee dodge the question?

	Trump	Harris
1. Red Herring	☐	☐
2. Ad Hominem Attacks	☐	☐
3. Tu Quoque	☐	☐
4. Appeal to the People	☐	☐
5. Straw Man	☐	☐

Making Assumptions: Are they assuming things without evidence?

	Trump	Harris
1. Circular Reasoning	☐	☐
2. Equivocation	☐	☐
3. Loaded Question	☐	☐
4. Slippery Slope	☐	☐
5. Begging the Question	☐	☐

Propaganda: Are they using emotional tactics to convince you?

	Trump	Harris
1. Appeal to Fear	☐	☐
2. Appeal to Pity	☐	☐
3. Bandwagon	☐	☐
4. Repetition	☐	☐

Did the nominees answer the question directly?

Trump: _____

Harris: _____

Logical Fallacy Activity Instructions

① Before the debate starts:

Take a few moments to read through the attached reference pages with your students.These pages will provide quick and easy definitions of the most common logical fallacies, along with simple examples to help you spot them during the debate.

This is a beginner's guide to logic, focusing on the most frequently used fallacies. It's designed to introduce students to the basics of logical thinking in a straightforward and enjoyable way.

② Once it starts:

Make sure to have your pencils and activity pages ready to jot down what you hear once the debate begins. Try to stay as neutral as possible so you can focus on the content of the answers. This is a perfect opportunity to sharpen your skills in language and logic!

Feel free to print out extra activity pages—one for each debate question!

③ After the Debate:

Take a moment to review the Reflections page at the end. Consider the questions carefully, and feel free to engage in a respectful discussion or debate with others about what you observed. This is a great opportunity to practice your logical thinking skills and deepen your understanding of arguments!

Fallacies Definitions:
Avoiding the Question

1 Red Herring:

Definition: Distracting from the main issue with something irrelevant.
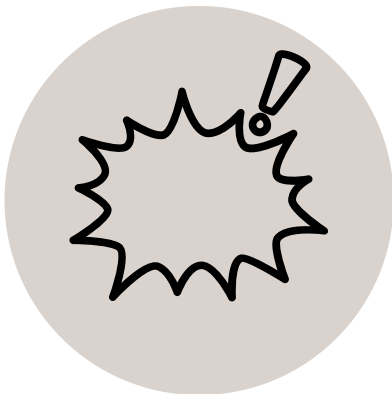Example: Moderator: "What's your plan for education reform?"
Nominee: "Well, let me tell you about my success with the economy first."

2 Ad Hominem Attack:

Definition: Attacking the person instead of their argument.
Example: Moderator: "What's your healthcare plan?"
Nominee: "You can't trust anything they say because they've lied before."

3 Tu Quoque ("You too")

Definition: Criticizing the person for doing the same thing they're being criticized for.
Example: Moderator: "How will you reduce pollution?"
Nominee: "Well, they haven't done anything about it either!"

4 Appeal to the People:

Definition: Claiming something is true because it's popular or many people believe it.
*Example:*Nominee: "Everyone agrees that my plan is the best, so it must be right."

5 Straw Man:

Definition: Misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack.
Example: Nominee A: "We need better environmental regulations."
Nominee B: "They want to shut down all businesses!"
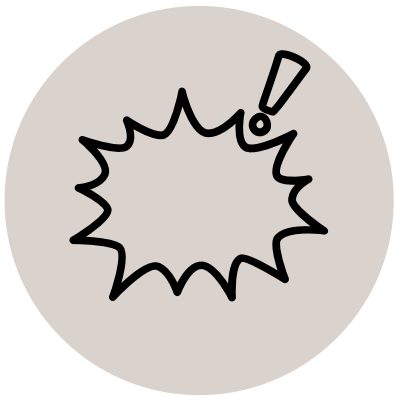
Fallacies Definitions:
Making Assumptions

① Circular Reasoning:

Definition: Restating the conclusion as a reason without proving it.Example: Nominee: "I'm the best candidate because no one is better than me."

② Equivocation:

Definition: Using a word with multiple meanings to mislead.
Example: Nominee: "I have the right to do this," (mixing legal 'right' with moral 'right').

③ Loaded Question:

Definition: Asking a question that has an assumption built in, making it hard to answer.
Example: Moderator: "Why are you failing to address climate change?"
(This assumes failure, regardless of the actual answer.)

④ Slippery Slope:

Definition: Suggesting one action will lead to extreme and unlikely outcomes.
Example: Nominee: "If we allow this, soon we'll have no freedom left."

⑤ Begging the Question:

Definition: Assuming the conclusion in the premise without evidence.
Example: Nominee: "We must do this because it's the right thing to do."
(This assumes the action is 'right' without proving why.)

Fallacies Definitions:
Propaganda

1 Appeal to Fear:

Definition: Trying to scare people into agreeing with a claim.
Example:
Nominee: "If you don't vote for me, the country will fall apart!"

2 Appeal to Pity:

Definition: Trying to make people feel sorry to win support.
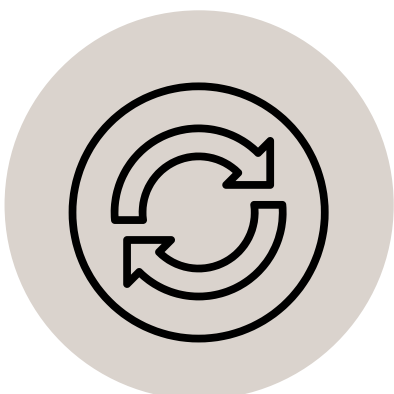*Example:*
Nominee: "Think of the children! We must act now or they'll suffer."

3 Bandwagon:

Definition: Suggesting something is true or right because it's popular.
Example:
Nominee: "Everyone supports this policy, so you should too!"

4 Repetition:

Definition: Repeating a message over and over until people believe it.
Example:
Nominee: "I'm the best choice, I'm the best choice, I'm the best choice!"

Post Debate Reflections

1 **Which logical fallacies did you notice most often during the debate, and how did they affect your understanding of the arguments?**

_____

_____

2 **Did either nominee surprise you with how they answered—or avoided—the questions? How did this impact your opinion of their responses?**

_____

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3 **How can identifying logical fallacies help you become a more critical thinker in everyday life, not just during debates?**

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4 **Other comments**

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