Fallacy examples

I. Appeal to Popularity  
(Many people believe p is true; therefore...p is true)
Ford makes the best pickup trucks in the world. After all, more people drive Ford pickups than any other light truck.

Michael Jackson was the best white female singer of the 1980’s because she sold the most records.

Everyone one I know is signing the petition, so you shouldn’t hesitate to sign it also.

II. False Cause  
(A came before B; therefore... A caused B)
Since I brought my umbrella, it didn’t rain.

I placed the quartz crystal on my forehead, and in five minutes my headache was gone. The crystal made my headache go away.

After getting new dishes, I started to sneeze. I must be allergic to the new dishes.

III. Appeal To Ignorance  
(There is no proof that p is true; therefore... p is false)
I have not seen an alien, so they must not exist.

The ivory-billed woodpecker hasn’t been seen in 50 years, so it must be extinct.

IV. Hasty Generalization  
(A and B are linked one or a few times; therefore...A causes B or vice versa)
Two cases of childhood leukemia have occurred along the street where the high-voltage power lines run. The power lines must be the cause of these illnesses.

In a mock election, my 4th grade class voted 25-5 for Gerald Ford over Jimmy Carter. Therefore Ford will win the election.

Each of my brother’s 3 dogs has fleas. Therefore all dogs have fleas.

Isabelle had vegetarian food for lunch every day last week, so she must be a vegetarian.

V. Limited Choice  
(p is false; therefore...only q can be true)
Mark McGwire did not proclaim his innocence of the steroid charges. Therefore McGwire is guilty.

You don’t support the President, so you are not a patriotic American.

At a hearing to decide a child custody case, a lawyer asks the mother: “Have you stopped using drugs?”

VI. Appeal To Emotion  
(p is associated with a positive emotional response; therefore...p is true)
If Proposition ‘Q’ fails, your children won’t have good schools.

A TV commercial shows a happy, attractive family dining at Ma & Pa’s restaurant.

A TV commercial shows two people who fall in love while wearing a certain brand of blue jeans.

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VII. Personal Attack (I have a problem with the person or group claiming p therefore... p is not true)
Melba: You should stop drinking because it’s hurting your grades, endangering people when you drink and drive, and destroying your relationship with your family.
Florine: I’ve seen you drink a few too many on occasions yourself!

When confronted with questions from the press about alleged scandals, a congressman replies that the allegations against him should be ignored since his accuser is part of a vast right-wing conspiracy.

VIII. Circular Reasoning (p is true; p is restated in different words.)
Society has an obligation to shelter the homeless because the needy have a right to the resources of the community.

You should brush your teeth every day because brushing your teeth is very important.

IX. Diversion (p is related to q and I have an argument concerting q; therefore...p is true)
We just remodeled the restaurant, so our food is delicious!

We must limit immigration to the US in order to sustain the prosperous economy. A strong economy is vital to the health and wealth of the American people and the future of our children.

We should not build more prisons, because crime has been decreasing in New York City.

X. Straw Man (I have an argument concerning a distorted version of p; therefore...I hope you are fooled into concluding I have an argument concerning the real version of p.)
Mayor Brown opposes a tax increase to build new schools. His opponent in the upcoming election states: Mayor Brown is not concerned with improving the quality of education for our children.

One candidate favors eliminating affirmative action programs. The other candidate states: “My opponent doesn’t think there’s anything wrong with discrimination.”