



**Comm Skills Virtual Learning**

**Debate I &**

**Adv Competitive Debate**

**Logical Fallacies - False Dilemma**

**May 06, 2020**



Lesson: May 6, 2020

**Objective/Learning Target:  
Define, identify, and refute logical fallacies.**

# Bell Ringer/Let's Get Started

You are debater 1. What is your response to Debater 2?

Debater 1: I am advocating for a policy that reduces police surveillance of in America.

Debater 2: My opponent either wants to fight crime or support justice. They can't have it both ways.

Debater 1: \_\_\_\_\_

# Lesson/Activity: False Dilemma (dichotomy)

A fallacy is a false or mistaken idea.

A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning or a false assumption.

Identifying logical fallacies in debate can help shorten the time it takes to come up with a response to your opponent. It can also make you sound really smart if you can label the logical fallacy your opponent is using. Finally, learning about logical fallacies can help *you* not use them during a debate.

Today, we will explore the False Dilemma. The next several slides will show a definition and an example of the False Dilemma.

# The False Dilemma - definition and form

Watching this [video](#) might help you understand the following information.

False Dilemma definition: When only two choices are presented yet more exist, or a spectrum of possible choices exists between two extremes. False dilemmas are usually characterized by “either this or that” language, but can also be characterized by omissions of choices. (Bennett, Bo. “Logically Fallacious.” *Logically Fallacious*, [www.logicallyfallacious.com/](http://www.logicallyfallacious.com/))

Logical Form of False Dilemma:

- Either X or Y is true.

# Examples of False Dilemma:

1. You are for us, or you are against us.
2. I thought you cared about other people, but I didn't see you at the fundraiser for the Harris Family.
3. Child to parent: Either you buy me this new book, or you decide that reading is not important at all.
4. Politician: We have to decide if we are going to support school choice or if we are going to support failing schools. Those are the only two options.
5. Drink water every day and be healthy, or continue to drink sodas and be unhealthy. Those are the only options.
6. The animal shelter is a place that values animal rights and never euthanizes animals, or the animal shelter is a place that kills innocent animals.

(Source: [https://www.softschools.com/examples/fallacies/false\\_dilemma\\_examples/491/](https://www.softschools.com/examples/fallacies/false_dilemma_examples/491/))

# The False Dilemma - refutation

When refuting or countering the False Dilemma in debate, follow one of these suggestions from Effectiviology.com:

1. **Refute the premise of *mutual exclusivity*.** Specifically, explain why two or more of the available options can both be selected (or be true) at the same time, which shows that they aren't mutually exclusive. For example, if the false dilemma suggests that your feelings toward someone can be either positive or negative, explain that it's possible to have mixed feelings. This method is known as *escaping between the horns of the dilemma*.
2. **Refute the premise of *collective exhaustivity*.** Specifically, provide a counterexample which shows that there are additional options beyond the ones which were presented. For example, if the false dilemma includes only two options, show that a third alternative is also possible. This method is also known as *escaping between the horns of the dilemma*.

(Source: [https://effectiviology.com/false-dilemma/#How\\_to\\_respond\\_to\\_a\\_false\\_dilemma](https://effectiviology.com/false-dilemma/#How_to_respond_to_a_false_dilemma))

# Practice - False Dilemma

Think about one of your debate topics this year.

What was a common False Dilemma you or your opponents used in an argument?

Write an example of a False Dilemma argument.

Now, use the refutation tips to refute that argument.



# Additional Resources

[WIRELESS PHILOSOPHY](#)

Explore [MORE](#) fallacies