**Euphemism:** a phrase or name that puts a positive spin on something.

Could you repeat what you just said, please? I’m having a senior moment.

**Dysphemism:** a phrase or name that puts a negative spin on something.

The oil spill off the coast of Crete exterminated thousands of sea gulls.

**Hyperbole:** an exaggerated description.

My dad is a total Hitler. He never lets me stay out past 10 on week nights.

**Persuasive Definition:** defines something in such a way as to cause others to take a certain perspective.

This war (the Civil War) is the birth of a nation.

**Persuasive Comparison:** a comparison between two things to cause others to take a certain perspective.

The people who fought the Soviet-backed government in Nicaragua were freedom fighters just as George Washington was in our country.

**Innuendo:** communicates something not by saying it, but by implying it.

“What do you think of the new Republican presidential candidate?”
“He has great handwriting, I guess.”

**Loaded Question:** an innuendo in the form of a question used to communicate a message without actually saying it.

Has Henry stopped beating his wife?

**Stereotype:** used to make groups based on a single feature and then expects the members to all be the same.

The mind of a political liberal is full of holes and his/her soul is without moral fibre.

**Proof Surrogate:** a statement given without any actual proof.

The polls say most people approve of Arnold’s decisions so far.

**Weasler:** used to add to a claim to weaken it, while seeming to be making the claim stronger, which allows for exaggeration of the qualities without actually lying.

It would appear, if you think about it in the right way, that the party was not a success.

**Downplayer:** “downplays” an event or fact, making it seem less important.

He had a little trouble in calculus but will make a great math teacher.

The euphemism “little trouble” makes the grade seem less important.

**Ridicule/Sarcasm:** may be polite, but the tone and the use of stereotypes portrays a negative attitude towards the expressed thought.

I just love itty bitty Chihuahua puppies that yip non stop.

**Rewrite with a Positive Spin:**

The mayor got very drunk at the party and flirted outrageously.
Rhetorical fallacies, or fallacies of argument, don’t allow for the open, two-way exchange of ideas upon which meaningful conversations depend. Instead, they distract with various appeals instead of using sound reasoning. They can be divided into three categories and tend to overlap:

**EMOTIONAL FALLACIES**  
*Unfairly appeals to the audience’s emotions*

**Sentimental Appeal:** uses emotion to distract from the facts.  
The thousand of baby seals killed in the Exxon Valdez oil spill have shown us that oil is not a reliable energy source.

**Red Herring:** uses misleading or unrelated evidence to support a conclusion.  
That painting is worthless because I don’t recognize the artist.

**Scare Tactic:** tries to frighten people into agreeing by threatening them or predicting unrealistically dire consequences.  
If you don’t support the party’s tax plan, you and your family will be reduced to poverty.

**Bandwagon Appeal:** encourages an audience to agree because everyone else is doing so.  
Paris Hilton carries a small dog in her purse, so you should buy a hairless Chihuahua and put it in your Louis Vuitton.

**Slippery Slope:** arguments suggest that one thing will lead to another, oftentimes with disastrous results.  
If you get a B in high school, you won’t get into the college of your choice, and therefore will never have a meaningful career.

**Either/Or Choice:** reduces complicated issues to only two courses of action.  
The patent office can either approve my generator design immediately or say goodbye forever to affordable energy.

**False Need:** arguments create an unnecessary desire for things.  
You need an expensive car or people won’t think you’re cool.

**ETHICAL FALLACIES**  
*Unreasonably advances the writer’s/speaker’s own authority or character*

**False Authority:** asks audiences to agree with the assertion of the writer/speaker based simply on his or her character or the authority of another person or institution who may not be fully qualified to offer that assertion.
My high school teacher said it, so it must be true.

**Using Authority Instead of Evidence:** occurs when someone offers personal authority as proof.

Trust me – my best friend wouldn’t do that.

**Guilt by Association:** calls someone’s character into question by examining the character of that person’s associates.

Sara’s friend Amy robbed a bank; therefore, Sara is a delinquent.

**Dogmatism:** shuts down discussion by asserting that the writer’s/speaker’s beliefs are the only acceptable ones.

I’m sorry, but I think penguins are sea creatures and that’s that.

**Moral Equivalence:** compares minor problems with much more serious crimes (or vice versa).

These mandatory seatbelt laws are fascist.

**Ad Hominem:** arguments attack a person’s character rather than that person’s reasoning.

Why should we think a candidate who recently divorced will keep her campaign promises?

**Strawperson:** arguments set up and often dismantle easily refutable arguments in order to misrepresent an opponent’s argument in order to defeat him or her.

A: We need to regulate access to handguns.

B: My opponent believes that we should ignore the rights guaranteed to us as citizens of the United States by the Constitution. Unlike my opponent, I am a firm believer in the Constitution, and a proponent of freedom.

**Logical Fallacies**

*Depends upon faulty logic*

**Hasty Generalization:** draws conclusions from scanty evidence.

I wouldn’t eat at that restaurant—the only time I ate there, my entree was undercooked.

**Faulty Causality** (or Post Hoc): arguments confuse chronology with causation: one event can occur after another without being caused by it.

A year after the release of the violent shoot-’em-up video game Annihilator, incidents of school violence tripled—surely not a coincidence.

**Non Sequitur:** (Latin for “It doesn’t follow”) is a statement that does not logically relate to what comes before it. An important logical step may be missing in such a claim.

If those protesters really loved their country, they wouldn’t question the government.

**Equivocation:** is a half-truth, or a statement that is partially correct but that purposefully obscures the entire truth.

“I did not have sexual relations with that woman.” – President Bill Clinton

**Begging the Question:** or circular argument, simply restates the claim in a different way.

His lies are evident from the untruthful nature of his statements.

**Faulty Analogy:** is an inaccurate, inappropriate or misleading comparison between two things.

Letting prisoners out on early release is like absolving them of their crimes.

**Stacked Evidence:** represents only one side of the issue, thus distorting the issue.

Cats are superior to dogs because they are cleaner, cuter, and more independent.

**Rhetorical Fallacies source:** uwc.utexas.edu/wp-content/handouts/Rhetorical-Fallacies.pdf

**Rhetorical Devices source:** http://csus.edu/indiv/n/nogalesp/CriticalThinking/CTWeek5RhetoricOverheads/RhetoricalDevicesDefinitions.doc

**Notes:** These are not complete list, just the main devices and fallacies used in rhetoric.