

Improving your skills to detect logical flaws: Spot the weak points and the logical inconsistencies in these excerpts taken from comments written by YOU. ANALYSIS

1. The system in America is rigged [...]. The middle class is getting diminished, and they know that. It's basically a principle of capitalism: Only the rich get richer and all the other are struggling or will struggle at some point. The government is the only thing that can counter this process, I guess, but I'm actually really uninformed [...] when it comes to the topic economy.

*ANALYSIS: Capitalism is often criticized in this rather harsh way, but it is a little too easy to make such a sweeping claim, providing no specifics (details) or evidence. The way a country, or more specifically, an economy functions can of course be criticized, and that includes one system that is on the basis of the economic policies in the so-called "West". However, each reader will be aware of the fact that there are hardly any countries that apply radical capitalism that is not in some way tamed with some kind of welfare programs. This looks like a **hasty generalization** without the necessary nuance or authority to provide some credibility. If the author of this statement wants to criticize such a complex issue, she or he can of course do it, but given the self-proclaimed ignorance, the author should really do some homework first – in the form of some research. You don't have to own a PHD in economy to criticize capitalism, but even admitting that you know nothing about it renders the statement hollow and daring. In the case of a (political?) purpose behind this statement (which is not case here – just analyzing) it could also be interpreted as intentionally manipulative (**appeal to suspicion/conspiracy**). Also the statement that "the middle class is getting diminished, and they know that" lacks evidence or at least some (even superficial) source. How can you be sure all middle-class people "know that"? Capitalism gets a definition that is – we can use the same adjective as the author uses in the first sentence – rigged. The definition is rigged because it is reductive, which can be seen as a **straw man fallacy**. The role of the government is indeed to tame extreme capitalism ("predatory capitalism") through regulations and wealth redistribution, but adding "I guess" is not very helpful. Admitting that you don't know can be seen as honesty, but it is really frustrating for the reader.*

What should a student do? When an issue is really complex you can still be critical, but you really need some authoritative sources, or you could also stay very vague ("I have seen lots of TikTok reels that make these claims"), though, if you do that, the value and credibility of your statement will naturally suffer ... a lot. So, don't do that.

2. It should be mentioned that those unemployed people still have time for their loved ones, and those who work don't. I think a big problem with this is that those people know exactly that they do not have to work, because it works that way, and so nothing changes. Many people take advantage of such unemployment, and that is not fair at all for those who really can't work.

*ANALYSIS: **Vagueness, hasty generalization, false dichotomy** (restricting the issue to only two contrasting aspects – the employed vs the unemployed), **lack of nuance, appeal to fairness** (which is, strictly logically speaking, a fallacy when it simulates or substitutes causation), **mind-reading fallacy** (assumes unemployed people's thoughts). some points that are raised bear some significance and may have some intrinsic ethical value, and also some rhetorical effect, but the statement comes across as*

stemming from frustration and moral indignation – which is an issue that is often discussed nowadays. Google "indignation" and "moral finger-pointing" – give it a try.

3. The government is built for the rich, because the rich ones can give them money, so why care for the others?

*ANALYSIS: **Oversimplification, reductionism, generalization**. The criticism may stem from a feeling of lack of justice which may be valid, but you really need to go more into detail, otherwise there is not much value left.*

4. If the state does not increase salaries, alternatives should be set up for poorer people, such as food stations.

*ANALYSIS: **False premise** (the state does not have control over all salaries), **vagueness, false dichotomy** (food stations as an alternative to the lack of salaries), **lack of nuance** (what about all the other forms of welfare?)*

4. The worst thing about the whole situation is that you realize that politics and economics is all about principles and not about logical thinking, and this realization takes away people's hope that they will be happy. I get the idea that there must be children in politics.

*ANALYSIS: **Hasty generalization**, a lot of nuances are simply ignored, it's an astounding **oversimplification**. "This realization takes away people's hope that they will be happy" sounds like a logical consequence, but it is only a possible consequence. It's a weak cause (**non sequitur**). "there must be children in politics": **ad hominem, appeal to emotions**.*

5. Since the inflation of 2021 the costs have risen on average by 30% on everything. "We're paying 100 dollars for the same 40 dollars' worth of groceries in 2021.

*ANALYSIS: **Wrong calculation** (150% is the accurate percentage)..., possible **anecdotal fallacy** (one incident is not a cause for a broader phenomenon)*

6. Trump was the last time in 4 years that the economy in the USA was actually good. That's not only me saying that – everywhere in the media you see people you see people explaining why they are going to vote for Trump.

*ANALYSIS: **Oversimplification, exaggeration, generalization**. Economic performance is complex (GDP growth, unemployment, wages, inflation, stock markets, etc.). One person's "good" may differ from another's. you could quote an expert who claims this, but you lack the expertise to make it. **Appeal to popularity / bandwagon fallacy**: "Everywhere in the media you see people explaining why they are going to vote for Trump" implies that because many people vote for him, his economic policies must have been good. Popular opinion is not proof of economic performance.*

7. You should have the right to get help in bad situations. In other countries, families, and also poor families, have or can have as many babies as they want. In the USA you can have it, but it costs a lot of money.

*ANALYSIS: **Vague premise / ambiguity**: "You should have the right to get help in bad situations" is a general moral claim, but it's unspecified. What kind of help? Medical, financial, social services?*

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This vagueness makes it hard to evaluate logically.

Oversimplification: "In other countries families, and also poor families, have or can have as many babies as they want". The comparison between the USA and other countries (which countries?) is too simple.

8. In order to survive in the USA, you need 80,000 – 100,000 dollars a year [...]. In Europe you only need around 20,000 dollars.

ANALYSIS: Oversimplification, reductionism, generalization, false equivalence (Europe is not one country with uniform salaries and costs: Compare Norway with Bulgaria, for example...). The quoted sums are really just an estimate with no provided source. It is a potential exaggeration to claim that "you need 80,000 – 100,000 dollars a year"...

9. It's not fair that the electricity and the groceries went up by 25%.

ANALYSIS: Appeal to fairness... Which ethical rules have not been observed? Saying that something "is not fair" implies that someone is responsible for the inflation: Who is that? Inflation is not something that someone initiates, it is a highly complex process that has no single agent. See "indignation" in the analysis of the second statement.

10. It can't be that families have to give up the dream of having children because of many problems. I never imagined living in times like these. Actually, it can't be that someone is feeling worse. The people pay taxes for immigrants. And for what? So that they can move into the country and sit on the people's money and do well. That's not the right way.

ANALYSIS: Appeal to emotion. Straw man and prejudice: Immigrants are treated as one large group of individuals who all act the same way. **Oversimplification (false cause, non sequitur):** All families have to give up the dream of having children because of all the immigrants... it's more complex. **Appeal to fairness, and moral judgement.** The statement strives for a rhetorical effect, but is logically very weak and ... yes, unfair!

11. Even when you go to the petrol station you notice how much prices have increased. Inflation affects us all, and if it doesn't stop, we will all struggle. It is also essential to find a solution for the distribution of money.

ANALYSIS: Just ... wrong: The price of petrol was higher, at times, in the past decade or so ... you can check online. The price of petrol has not increased. What is "the distribution of money"? Very vague!

12. The goal of the system is to make people poorer and poorer, and they are doing their job successfully. That's why the system is broken and rigged.

ANALYSIS: Come on... this should be super easy... ask ChatGpt to evaluate it for logical consistency...

13. Money problem in the USA is a big problem, because you have to pay for a lot of things.

ANALYSIS: The culmination of vagueness... the problem is a problem because it is a problem... this statement is not worth analyzing, as it is meaningless. It is a TRUISM, or a PLATITUDE. Please look up these terms and avoid falling into that trap!

14. I think the government isn't gonna change this system any time soon because most of the unemployed people have to take up loans because of students' loans or to buy an apartment, a car or something else, and due to interest, the government is making a lot of money from the working class. They are also keeping them under control because the people are dependent on the government because they could take away their home if they do something against the government.

This time I'll leave the job to ChatGpt (which is, IMHO, too harsh):

Hasty generalization

Claims "most of the unemployed people have to take up loans" and "the government is making a lot of money from the working class."

These are sweeping claims **without evidence**. Many unemployed people do not have loans; governments do not directly profit from individual interest payments in the way implied.

Conspiracy / appeal to suspicion:

"They are also keeping them under control...because they could take away their home if they do something against the government."

Suggests a deliberate, coordinated scheme by the government to **oppress and manipulate the populace**.

This is a **classic conspiracy fallacy**: assuming intent and coordination without evidence.

False cause / oversimplified causation:

Implies: loans → government profits → social control → inability to change the system.

This is **extremely simplistic**; it ignores economic realities, policies, social programs, and legal protections.

Vagueness / ambiguity:

Phrases like "or something else", "making a lot of money", "taking away their home" are imprecise.

The statement does not define which loans, interest rates, or laws are being referenced.

Circular reasoning / tautology (implicit):

"The government isn't gonna change this system...because they profit and keep people under control."

Assumes that because the system exists and is not changed, the government must be intentionally maintaining it for profit — which is **circular logic**.

Fear-mongering / emotional manipulation:

Suggests that the government is actively threatening citizens' homes to control them.

This is **emotionally charged rhetoric** without factual support.