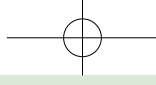


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2

UNIT

Should Parents Follow Tiger Mom's Example?



Setting Goals

In this unit, you will learn to:

1. define terms and interpret a proposition;
2. make a topicality argument; and
3. identify fallacies of distraction (false dilemma, argument from ignorance, slippery slope, and complex question).

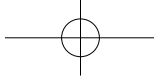
SECTION 1

Getting Started

Warm-Up

- I. How do your parents treat you? Check the statements that describe your experience. You may wish to contribute more such statements and share them with your partners.

1. My parents and I are more like friends and I don't keep any secrets from them.
 Yes No
2. My parents usually satisfy my wishes because they want me to be happy.
 Yes No
3. My parents believe that interest is the best teacher and they never force me to learn.
 Yes No
4. My parents would like me to excel at school but they don't blame me if I fail.
 Yes No
5. My parents usually support my choices but if I do things wrong they can be severe sometimes.
 Yes No
6. My parents give me a lot of help and guidance whenever I am in trouble.
 Yes No
7. My parents set a lot of rules for me and punish me if I disobey them.
 Yes No
8. My parents never listen to me and they always make choices for me.
 Yes No
9. My parents expect a lot of me and it's very hard for them to accept my failures.
 Yes No
10. My parents rarely talk with me and they don't really know what I am thinking.
 Yes No
11. My parents are busy with their lives and spend little time with me.
 Yes No
12. My parents give me a lot of money and presents but I doubt if they really care for me.
 Yes No



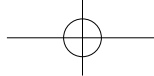
- II. In general, parenting styles can be divided into four categories: i. *permissive* (statements 1-3 in the above exercise, characterized by high warmth, low control and few demands), ii. *authoritative* (statements 4-6 in the above exercise, a combination of high responsiveness with the exercise of power that's open to negotiation), iii. *authoritarian* (statements 7-9 in the above exercise, a combination of coercion with less responsiveness, often leading to higher depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem), and iv. *negligent* (statements 10-12 in the above exercise, cold and undemanding). Decide which category your parents belong to and share with your partners examples of your encounters with your parents.

Background

In 2011, Amy Chua, a Yale Law School professor of Chinese ancestry, published *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, a book on her experience of raising two “stereotypically successful” daughters, Sophia and Lulu. Reacting to a modern American parenting culture she finds soft and forgiving of mediocrity, Chua set strict standards for her daughters. They weren't allowed to make grades lower than A's. They had to play piano or violin and practice hours a day, even on vacation, to ensure excellence. No sleepovers, play dates or TV.

Although Chua has stated that the book was not a “how-to” manual but a self-mocking memoir, many readers missed the supposed irony and self-deprecating humor and instead believed that Chua was advocating the “superiority” of a particular, very strict, ethnically defined approach to parenting. Actually Chua defines “Chinese mother” loosely to include parents of other ethnicities who practice traditional, strict child-rearing, while also acknowledging that “Western parents come in all varieties,” and not all ethnically Chinese parents practice strict child-rearing. Chua also reported that in one study of 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, the vast majority “said that they believe their children can be ‘the best’ students, that ‘academic achievement reflects successful parenting,’ and that if children did not excel at school then there was ‘a problem’ and parents ‘were not doing their job.’” Chua contrasts them with the view she labels “Western”—that a child's self-esteem is paramount.

In one extreme example, Chua mentioned that she had called one of her children “garbage,” a translation of a term her own father called her on occasion in her family's



native Hokkien dialect. In another case, she forced her younger daughter to play a difficult piano piece for hours without allowing the child to “get up, not for water, not even for bathroom breaks.”

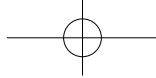
Chua’s story was highly and, perhaps, deliberately controversial. It instantly sparked a national, and very soon worldwide debate on parenting. For a lot of American parents, Chua’s strident defense of “Chinese parenting” touched a nerve. They deem her method too harsh and even abusive. Depriving children of the time to spend with their peers and the freedom to choose their extracurricular activities could very easily lead to depression, alienation and other psychological problems.

But some start to wonder if Chua’s highly disciplinarian child-rearing would be more damaging than the traditional Western “permissive” model: the laissez-faire indifference and babysitting-by-TV that too often passes for parenting these days. At the same time, parenting experts see some value in her approach—if not always in the way she carried it out. They find that forcing kids to tough out a challenge—even when kids “howl at the moon” and push back hard—makes sense. Parents want kids to build the psychological muscle to do things well when they don’t feel like it. That work ethic fosters success in school and work.

So for high-performing children, meeting lofty expectations can be empowering, but experts also warn that expectations need to be realistic and tailored to each child. Not every kid can be at the top of the class. Ideally, parents should aim for “optimal distress”—enough to build resilience but not interfere with growth.

» Activity 1 Independent Research

What characterizes Amy Chua’s parenting style? In what way is it different from the Western model of child-rearing? Make your research on the topic and see what you can find.



Case Study

Why Are Chinese Mothers Superior?

- 1 A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:
 - attend a sleepover
 - have a play date
 - be in a school play
 - complain about not being in a school play
 - watch TV or play computer games
 - choose their own extracurricular activities
 - get any grade less than an A
 - not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama
 - play any instrument other than the piano or violin
 - not play the piano or violin.
- 2 What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences.
- 3 Here's a story in favor of coercion, Chinese-style. Lulu was about 7, still playing two instruments, and working on a piano piece called "The Little White Donkey" by the French composer Jacques Ibert. The piece is really cute, but it's also incredibly difficult for young players because the two hands have to keep schizophrenically different rhythms.
- 4 Lulu couldn't do it. We worked on it non-stop for a week, drilling each of her hands separately, over and over. But whenever we tried putting the hands together, one always morphed into the other, and everything fell apart. Finally, the day before her lesson, Lulu announced in exasperation that she was giving up and stomped off.
- 5 "Get back to the piano now," I ordered.
- 6 "You can't make me."
- 7 "Oh yes, I can."

- ⁸ Back at the piano, Lulu made me pay. She punched, thrashed and kicked. She grabbed the music score and tore it to shreds. I taped the score back together and encased it in a plastic shield so that it could never be destroyed again. Then I hauled Lulu's dollhouse to the car and told her I'd donate it to the Salvation Army piece by piece if she didn't have "The Little White Donkey" perfect by the next day. When Lulu said, "I thought you were going to the Salvation Army, why are you still here?" I threatened her with no lunch, no dinner, no Christmas or Hanukkah presents, no birthday parties for two, three, four years. When she still kept playing it wrong, I told her she was purposely working herself into a frenzy because she was secretly afraid she couldn't do it. I told her to stop being lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic.
- ⁹ Jed took me aside. He told me to stop insulting Lulu—which I wasn't even doing, I was just motivating her—and that he didn't think threatening Lulu was helpful. Also, he said, maybe Lulu really just couldn't do the technique—perhaps she didn't have the coordination yet—had I considered that possibility?
- ¹⁰ "You just don't believe in her," I accused.
- ¹¹ "That's ridiculous," Jed said scornfully. "Of course I do."
- ¹² "Sophia could play the piece when she was this age."





Should Parents Follow Tiger Mom's Example?

- ¹³ "But Lulu and Sophia are different people," Jed pointed out.
- ¹⁴ "Oh no, not this," I said, rolling my eyes. "Everyone is special in their special own way," I mimicked sarcastically. "Even losers are special in their own special way. Well don't worry, you don't have to lift a finger. I'm willing to put in as long as it takes, and I'm happy to be the one hated. And you can be the one they adore because you make them pancakes and take them to Yankees games."
- ¹⁵ I rolled up my sleeves and went back to Lulu. I used every weapon and tactic I could think of. We worked right through dinner into the night, and I wouldn't let Lulu get up, not for water, not even to go to the bathroom. The house became a war zone, and I lost my voice yelling, but still there seemed to be only negative progress, and even I began to have doubts.
- ¹⁶ Then, out of the blue, Lulu did it. Her hands suddenly came together—her right and left hands each doing their own imperturbable thing—just like that.
- ¹⁷ Lulu realized it the same time I did. I held my breath. She tried it tentatively again. Then she played it more confidently and faster, and still the rhythm held. A moment later, she was beaming.
- ¹⁸ "Mommy, look—it's easy!" After that, she wanted to play the piece over and over and wouldn't leave the piano. That night, she came to sleep in my bed, and we snuggled and hugged, cracking each other up.
- ¹⁹ Even Jed gave me credit for that one. Western parents worry a lot about their children's self-esteem. But as a parent, one of the worst things you can do for your child's self-esteem is to let them give up. On the flip side, there's nothing better for building confidence than learning you can do something you thought you couldn't.

>> Activity 2 Group Discussion

Answer the following questions according to the above case.

1. Consider the items on Tiger Mom's list of not-to-dos. Which of them do you find reasonable or unreasonable? Why? When you become a parent, what kind of things would you ban your children from doing?
2. What do you think of the story about Chua forcing her daughter to practice a difficult piano piece? With whom do you more sympathize, the mother or the daughter? What is the message that the author draws from the story? Do you agree with it?
3. On what assumptions is Chua's tiger parenting built? Do they have anything in common with traditional Chinese concepts about parent-child relationship?

For & Against

Passage 1

Why Tiger Moms Are Great

- 1 It's time for some tiger cubs to approvingly roar for our strict parents, their domineering ways and their inflexibly high standards.
- 2 The current depiction of tiger parenting is decidedly negative. Kim Wong Keltner's book on "Tiger Babies Strike Back" and Su Yeong Kim's report "Does 'Tiger Parenting' Exist? Parenting Profiles of Chinese Americans and Adolescent Developmental Outcomes" suggest that strict Asian-style parenting produces an army of disengaged or emotionally stunted robots.
- 3 While I can't speak for everyone, my own experience suggests that such upbringing also gives us the smarts to recognize our emotional and social deficiencies and to address them.
- 4 My parents are immigrants from Taiwan. I was an only child, and I was expected to excel academically and extracurricularly. So, I delivered. I got straight A's. I played violin for hours. I did extra math, chemistry and physics problem sets under the eagle-eyed gaze of my mother.
- 5 Through it all, I cried and screamed. A lot. My mom yelled back. A lot. I told her I hated my life, my teachers, my school and all my activities. She yelled that I just had to get through it. Quitting was not an option. And of course she was right.
- 6 I owe everything I am and have accomplished to my parents. My family expected a lot from me only because they believed in me and wanted the best for me. They pushed me to excel because they valued me as an individual.
- 7 Tiger parents express their love through expectation of greatness, not in acceptance of mediocrity. Some people interpret such expectation as parental rejection of their worth as individuals. I always interpreted such crushing expectation as the ultimate belief in my self-worth. I knew that I was not being set up to fail.
- 8 My mother's reason for pushing me to excel was not that she prized my accomplishments more than my feelings. She listened to my feelings, but she also knew that my teenage feelings were volatile and irrational. She knew better than to let my future be derailed by such feelings.



Should Parents Follow Tiger Mom's Example?

2

Unit

- 9 My mother also knows that life has many obstacles, some external, many internal. She loved me too much to let me give up easily when confronted with those obstacles. For that I am eternally grateful.
- 10 I gained confidence and resilience from tackling my endless workload and from fighting through sleep deprivation. I knew that I was capable of getting through seemingly impossible situations. I knew that if I failed, then I just had to try harder. Failure was not a permanent state, but merely a temporary challenge that had to be tackled creatively.
- 11 The knock against tiger parenting style is that it does not foster emotional and social development.
- 12 Well, it partly comes down to expressing love and affection differently. Tiger parents may not often say “I love you,” but actions speak louder than words. My family never would have spent the time, money and effort—not to mention the emotional energy—on me if they did not love me. They never said this, of course. But I knew.
- 13 Sure, my mother viewed socializing with others as a waste of time. She wanted me to be valedictorian, not homecoming queen. I didn’t attend my homecoming. I was probably studying or working on my science project.
- 14 Now, I readily acknowledge that there is great value in socializing with others, and that my current social skills probably would be better if I had more time to hang out at the mall or at Denny’s.
- 15 But childhood hours are limited. Each child only has about 157,680 hours before he/she turns 18. The opportunity cost of being an accomplished child is that it takes away time from making friends and nurturing relationships.
- 16 For me, the tradeoff was worth it. There are skills that can only be learned in childhood. It is hard for a student to catch up academically if she is significantly behind in high school. But someone can become more self-aware, work on social skills and learn negotiating tactics later in life.
- 17 Without the skills and expertise that is a result of excelling, I would never have the chance to sit at the important tables to participate in the discussions, no matter how great my social skills.
- 18 I value my tiger cub upbringing mostly for the tools it gives me to make a difference in my community. I know plenty of grown up tiger cubs who tutor at-risk youth, advocate for the disadvantaged, and generally strive to improve the world. Our childhood accomplishments enable us to meaningfully contribute to our communities.

19 And isn't that where self-awareness and proper socialization lead us all?

Activity 3 Probing the Text

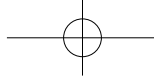
Probe into the text of the above essay and answer the following questions.

1. What is the main argument of this article?
2. What are the advantages of "tiger parenting" according to the author?
3. Which is more important, academic excellence or socializing skills, in the author's opinion? Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. This article cites Keltner's book and Kim's report. Try to find out their main arguments and see where they disagree.
5. Identify the weakest aspects of the position held by the article. How might they help you prepare counterarguments?
6. What additional points could you add to support this position?

Passage 2

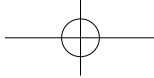
Maternity and Tyranny: Should American Mothers Emulate the Chinese Tiger Mom?

- 1 Professor Amy Chua's idea of parenting is, to put it very mildly indeed, at odds with current American notions of wise parenting. Determined "not to raise a soft, entitled child," she makes her daughters' childhood sound like Marine Corps boot camp minus the rest breaks. This, she argues, with some supporting statistics, is the Chinese way. "Western parents are concerned about their children's psyches. Chinese parents aren't. They assume strength, not fragility, and as a result they behave very differently."
- 2 Professor Chua's article was a bracing rebuttal to the sappy-clappy "we're all special" sentimentality that is too prevalent in American child-raising. Her methods worked, too, at least in meeting her own goals: Her daughters are straight-A students, and one has played piano at Carnegie Hall. Probably we American parents should practice more tough love with our kids and fuss less about their self-esteem. Few of us would disagree with her observation: "Nothing is fun until you're good at



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- it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work.”
- ³ There are, however, things to be noted. One is that the Chua kids are very smart, as the offspring of two Ivy League professors are likely to be. (Professor Chua's husband, Jed Rubenfeld, is also a Yale law professor. Her father was a professor of computer science at Berkeley.) Most features of personality, including intelligence and conscientiousness, are considerably heritable. They appear very early in life and are stable thereafter. That is probably why Chua's discipline worked for her children in the first place.
 - ⁴ It is also worth noting that there are severe logical problems inherent in the idea of a school full of children whose tiger moms demand they be the No. 1 student in all academic subjects, and that the intense parental investment displayed by Professor Chua is problematic in families larger than hers. Even the most determined tiger mom might find her zeal flagging at child No. 3 or No. 4.
 - ⁵ Furthermore, most people are not very academically inclined. If a child's natural bent is towards some other kind of excellence—social, mechanical, athletic, creative—Chua-style parenting will only misdirect him. Children need some nagging and supervision, but they also need freedom to explore, to discover their own interests and aptitudes. We may, in our current child-raising practices, have over-emphasized self-esteem and self-discovery, but that does not make these notions nugatory. Children are entitled to a childhood, with frequent spells of play, idleness, and freedom from hovering adults.
 - ⁶ Last but not least, tiger parenting doesn't necessarily produce superior outcomes in kids. Actually a recent study that has followed more than 300 Asian-American families for a decade shows that children of “tiger” parents have lower academic achievement and attainment, and greater psychological maladjustment and family alienation, than the kids of parents characterized as “supportive” or “easygoing.” According to Su Yeong Kim, associate professor of human development and family sciences at the University of Texas, “Our data shows tiger parenting produces the opposite effect. Not just Asian-American parents but the general public have adopted this idea that if I'm a tiger parent, my kids will be whizzes like Chua's kids. Unfortunately, tiger children's GPAs and depressive symptoms are similar to those whose parents who are irresponsible and negligent.”



» Activity 4 Probing the Text

Probe into the text of the above essay and answer the following questions.

1. What are the main arguments against “tiger parenting”? Which of them do you consider most convincing?
2. What do you think are the logical problems in the idea of a school full of children whose tiger moms demand they be the No. 1 student in all academic subjects (Para. 4)?
3. The author argues that Amy Chua’s model of success will not work for all children. Do you agree? How would you define “success”?
4. Identify the weakest aspects of the position outlined by the author. How might they help you prepare counterarguments?
5. What additional points could you add to support this position?



SECTION 2

Debating Skills

Defining Terms

When the proposition of the debate is decided, we must analyze it in order to find reasons for and against it. First, we must know the meaning of the proposition. It usually involves finding possible definitions of the key terms in the proposition. Second, we must break down the complicated topic into several smaller issues in order to understand the nature of the proposition.

Sometimes debate propositions are very specific in meaning as in “Capital punishment should be abolished.” In these cases, we can immediately tell what the affirmative team should propose in debate.

It is often the case, however, that debate propositions are more broadly worded so that they allow different interpretations. For example, in a proposition “The Chinese government should take measures to slow the increase of family cars,” there will be more than one interpretation of the words *take measures*, *slow* and *family cars*.

In the beginning of the analysis, it is often a good idea for debaters to explore different meanings of the words in the proposition in order to find different interpretations of the proposition. It is also advisable to prepare good standard definitions of the key words in the proposition because they may be necessary in debate when the opponent team introduces non-standard definitions.

In academic debate the affirmative team has the obligation and the privilege to interpret the proposition. It must define any ambiguous words so that the meaning of the proposition may be clear. Affirmative debaters do not need to define every single word in a proposition. Usually they need only define a few content words which are relevant to the subject of the debate. They must also define words which have more than one meaning. The affirmative team has a right to choose the most reasonable out of all the possible interpretations. If the negative team finds that the affirmative team’s interpretation is unreasonable, it can challenge it.

There are a number of ways to define words and phrases. For example, you can give examples to clarify the meaning of a term. Suppose you will debate the proposition “Smoking should be prohibited in public places.” You want to define the words “smoking” and “public places,” and you may define them as:

“Smoking” in this debate means smoking cigarettes and cigars.

“Public places” mean places like parks, stations, department stores, schools, and other similar places.

If the number of examples is small and such a list covers most of the intended items as in “smoking” above, this method is easy to understand and more or less accurate. But as in the case of “public places,” if the list of examples covers only a small part of the intended items, the definition is not necessarily accurate. Different people will think of different ranges of meaning.

You can use a comprehensive language dictionary such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*. You can also use encyclopedias such as *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encyclopedia Americana*. For information about things related to China, you may want to refer to *Encyclopedia of China*.

Some of the technical terms may be best defined by referring to the definitions found in introductory books (textbooks) of the relevant fields.

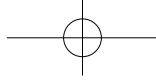
You may also find specialized definitions in more theoretical works. For example, if you have a proposition “China should legalize euthanasia,” you will find definitions of “euthanasia” in medical textbooks much more detailed and accurate than those in ordinary dictionaries.

The Topicality Argument

When you debate a proposition of policy, the affirmative team often defines the meaning of the proposition by giving a specific plan of action. The negative team could argue that the plan is fine, but it doesn’t support the resolution, and therefore, the affirmative plan is “NOT TOPICAL.” This kind of argument can be even more powerful than a disadvantage.

Of course, most affirmative plans seem fairly topical at first. However, if you research different definitions of the words in the resolution, it is easy to find definitions that contradict what the affirmative plan does. For example, if the resolution says we should increase aid to African nations, the affirmative might offer a plan to increase aid to Egypt. Is Egypt an African nation? Many people might say “yes,” since Egypt is on the continent of Africa. Many experts might say “no,” however, because Egyptian culture might be considered “Middle Eastern” instead of “African.” There is no right or wrong answer for what a word means, but it is possible to make arguments about which definition is better. An explanation of why the affirmative plan is not an example of the kind of action described by the resolution answers the question “Why does the plan violate the negative definition(s)?”

Remember: To win topicality, the negative must prove that the negative definition(s) is/are superior and that the affirmative plan does not meet those definitions.



>> Activity 4 Identify Words to Be Defined

Decide which words in each topic need to be defined and provide as many definitions as possible.

TOPIC 1

Kids should be taught that learning is fun.

Words to be defined

Definitions

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

TOPIC 2

Strict parents contribute to their children's academic success and later success in life.

Words to be defined

Definitions

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

TOPIC 3

Though the children of Asian mothers do exemplify higher grades and academic success, this success is not completely beneficial to a child's growing up.

Words to be defined

Definitions

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Activity 6 Make a Topicality Argument

Choose one topic from Activity 5, and divide the class into two teams: the affirmative makes a proposition and suggest a plan of action, and the negative makes a topicality argument based on the affirmative's plan.

Fallacies of Distraction

One skill of good debating is being able to construct, and to understand, a reasoned argument and—especially important—to recognize a fallacious or fraudulent argument. The question is not whether we like the conclusion that emerges out of a train of reasoning, but whether the conclusion follows from the premise or starting point and whether that premise is true.

In a debate, logic is a useful tool. A fallacy is an error in reasoning. Logical fallacies can be made full use of to help us win a debate. We should not only be able to point out the logical fallacies committed by the opposing team but sometimes commit them ourselves or find ways to transform fallacious arguments into perfectly good ones. When you think a fallacious argument can slide by and persuade the judge to vote for you, you could make it. The trick is not getting caught.

It is not enough simply to point out a logical fallacy and move on; there is an art to pointing out logical fallacies in your opposition's arguments. Here are a few strategies you can use:

- State the name of the logical fallacy and make sure you use the phrase “logical fallacy.” Why? Because it is important to impress on everyone that this is no mere counterargument you are making, nor are you just labeling the opposition's viewpoint as “fallacious” for rhetorical effect.
- Tell everybody what the fallacy means and why it is wrong. But be careful—you have to do this without sounding pedantic. You should state the fallacy's meaning as though you are reiterating what you assume your intelligent judges already know.
- Give a really obvious example of why the fallacy is incorrect. Preferably, the example should also be an unfavorable analogy for the opposition's proposal.
- Finally, point out why the logical fallacy matters to the debate round. “This fallacious argument should be thrown out of the debate. And that means that the opposition's only remaining argument for X is...”

In general, it's a good idea to avoid logical fallacies if at all possible, because a good debater will almost always catch you. But sometimes, a logical fallacy—or at least an unjustified logical leap—is unavoidable. And there are some types of argument listed as logical fallacies in logic textbooks, but perfectly acceptable in the context of the rules of debate. The most important guideline for committing such fallacies yourself is to *know*

when you are doing it, and to be prepared to justify yourself later if the opposition tries to call you down for it.

Here is a list of some fallacies commonly used in debates.

False Dilemma

A limited number of options (usually two) are given, while in reality there are more options. A false dilemma is an illegitimate use of the “or” operator.

Example: You're either for me or against me.

Explanations: Identify the options given and show (with an example) that there is an additional option.

Argument from Ignorance

Arguments of this form assume that since something has not been proven false, it is therefore true. Conversely, such an argument may assume that since something has not been proven true, it is therefore false. This is a special case of a false dilemma, since it assumes that all propositions must either be known to be true or known to be false.

Example: Since you cannot prove that ghosts do not exist, they must exist.

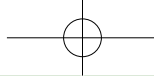
Whether or not an argument from ignorance is really fallacious depends crucially upon the burden of proof. In an American courtroom, where the burden of proof rests with the prosecution, it would be fallacious for the prosecution to argue “The defendant has no alibi; therefore he must have committed the crime.” But it would be perfectly valid for the defense to argue “The prosecution has not proven the defendant committed the crime; therefore you should declare him not guilty.” Both statements have the form of an argument from ignorance; the difference is the burden of proof.

In debate, the proposing team in a debate round is usually (but not always) assumed to have the burden of proof, which means that if the team fails to prove the proposition to the satisfaction of the judge, the opposition wins. In a sense, the opposition team's case is assumed true until proven false. Only the opposition is in a position to make an accusation of argument from ignorance with respect to proving the proposition.

Explanations: Identify the proposition in question. Argue that it may be true even though we don't know whether it is or isn't.

Slippery Slope

A slippery slope argument is not always a fallacy. A slippery slope fallacy is an argument that says adopting one policy or taking one action will lead to a series of other policies



or actions also being taken, *without showing a causal connection between the advocated policy and the consequent policies.*

Example: If we legalize marijuana, the next thing you know, we'll legalize heroin, LSD, and crack cocaine. Thus, we should not legalize marijuana.

It is fallacious because no reason has been provided for why legalization of one thing leads to legalization of another.

There are a variety of ways to turn a slippery slope fallacy into a valid (or at least plausible) argument. All you need to do is to provide some reason why the adoption of one policy will lead to the adoption of another. For example, you could argue that legalizing marijuana would cause more people to consider the use of mind-altering drugs acceptable, and those people will support more permissive drug policies across the board. An alternative to the slippery slope argument is simply to point out that the principles espoused by your opposition imply the acceptability of certain other policies, so if we don't like those other policies, we should question whether we really buy into those principles. For instance, if the proposing team argued for legalizing marijuana by saying "Individuals should be able to do whatever they want with their own bodies," the opposition could point out that that principle would also justify legalizing a variety of other drugs—so if we don't support legalizing other drugs, then maybe we don't really believe in that principle.

Explanations: Identify the proposition being refuted and identify the final event in the series of events. Then show that this final event need not occur as a consequence of the proposition.

Complex Question

Two otherwise unrelated points are put together and treated as a single proposition. The reader is expected to accept or reject both together, when in reality one is acceptable while the other is not. A complex question is an illegitimate use of the "and" operator.

Example: You should support plastic surgery and people's right to make themselves more beautiful.

A complex question is also a question that implicitly assumes something to be true by its construction.

Example: Have you stopped beating your wife?

A question like this is fallacious only if the thing presumed true (in this case, that you beat your wife) has not been established.

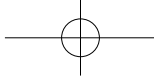
Complex questions are a well-established and time-honored practice in debate, although they are rarely so bald-faced as the example just given. Complex questions usually appear in cross-examination or points of information when the questioner wants the questionee to inadvertently admit something that he/she might not admit if asked directly. For instance, one might say, “Inasmuch as the majority of black Americans live in poverty, do you really think that self-help within the black community is sufficient to address their problems?” Of course, the introductory clause about the majority of black Americans living in poverty may not be true (in fact, it is false), but an unwary debater might not think quickly enough to notice that the stowaway statement is questionable. This is a sneaky tactic, but debate is sometimes a sneaky business. You wouldn’t want to put a question like that in your master’s thesis, but it might work in a debate. But be careful—if you try to pull a fast one on someone who is alert enough to catch you, you’ll look stupid. “The assumption behind your question is simply false. The majority of blacks do not live in poverty. Get your facts straight before you interrupt me again!”

Explanations: Identify the two propositions illegitimately conjoined and show that believing one does not mean that you have to believe the other.

» Activity 7 Fallacy Identification

Examine each of the examples and identify the fallacies.

1. You should support strict parenting and people’s right to raise their children according to their own beliefs.
2. Strict parenting produces feelings of parental warmth and provides health benefits for children.
3. If we encourage strict parenting, it won’t be long before many children will be stifled.
4. If you can’t prove strict parenting is harmful to children, it is probably good for children after all.
5. Global warming is certainly occurring because nobody has demonstrated conclusively that it is not.
6. You should never gamble. Once you start gambling you’ll find it hard to stop. Soon you will be spending all your money on gambling, and eventually you will turn to crime.
7. If I make an exception for you, then I have to make an exception for everyone.
8. Do you support freedom and the right to bear arms?



Should Parents Follow Tiger Mom's Example?

2

Unit

9. Have you stopped using illegal sales practices?
10. How much longer are you going to waste your time in school when you might be doing a man's work in the world, and contributing to society? If you had any sense of social responsibility, you would leave immediately.
11. You say we ought to discuss our new car purchase. Which should we get, a Ford or a Chevy?
12. No scandal has ever touched the senator. Therefore, he must be incorruptible.
13. There is no proof that the secretary "leaked" the news to the papers, so she couldn't have done it.
14. Poll question: Do you favor more money for welfare programs, or do you feel we should let people starve on the streets?
15. All experiments in genetic therapy must be stopped. They will inevitably lead to positive eugenics.

SECTION 4

Time to Debate

» Activity 8 In-Class Debate

Debate the topic “Tiger Parenting Is Good for Children” in class, following the suggested 3 steps.

STEP 1

Before the debate, break the class into groups of 12. Within each group, four are on the affirmative team, four on the negative team, four are judges, and the teacher is the timekeeper.

STEP 2

During the debate, everyone should take notes in the following flowsheet. The judges should also fill out the debate evaluation form and then decide which team wins.

Affirmative Construction	Negative Construction	Free Debate	Negative Rebuttal & Summary	Affirmative Rebuttal & Summary


 Debate Evaluation Form

Debate Topic							
Affirmative Team	Opening Statement or Argument (0-10)	Content (0-10)	Style or Rhetoric (0-5)	Closing Statement or Rebuttal (0-10)	Teamwork (0-5)	Overall (0-10)	Total (50)
Score							
Negative Team	Opening Statement or Argument (0-10)	Content (0-10)	Style or Rhetoric (0-5)	Closing Statement or Rebuttal (0-10)	Teamwork (0-5)	Overall (0-10)	Total (50)
Score							

STEP 3

After the debate, choose one of the following two tasks to reflect upon what you have debated.

- Discuss the following questions on the debate.
 - Which team won the debate? Why?
 - Which of your arguments were successful or unsuccessful? How would you have argued differently if you could debate on the same topic again?
 - What do you think is the proper attitude toward tiger parenting? How should we deal with the advantages and disadvantages of it?
- Write a reflective essay about the debate.
Think about what you've learned from your research and debates, and write a short, reflective essay (1-2 pages) that takes a position on the topic. Make sure that you support your opinion with arguments, including evidence. Be specific about your reaction to the topic. Do you agree with a particular side? If so, why? Which arguments were most persuasive to you? Sometimes, you will not know which side you agree with. This is okay too. You may choose to write about why you're still undecided.

» Activity 9 After-Class Debate

A 2015 BBC documentary “Chinese School,” in which five Chinese teachers were invited to teach a group of British teenagers using Chinese teaching methods, caused a stir in China and in the UK. What can Chinese and British educators learn from each other? Engage in a free debate with your classmates on the topic. The following are some random points for your reference.



The Chinese language requires rote learning. It seems boring but it trains the mind to focus on what is important and develop concentration and good study habits. These habits benefit people even at a later age. More could be done to encourage children to express opinions about the things they encounter.



China needs to restructure her education system. The purpose of education is not to mold individuals to take information and process it to regurgitate in written form during examination for excellence, but rather the ability to apply knowledge gained on their own two feet to achieve better outcomes than their predecessors.



British kids should learn discipline and respect from their Chinese counterparts. We hear so much about the UK’s teenage drinking problems and teenage pregnancies. Maybe this experiment might do some good. The intelligent kids won’t need this, while the delinquents on the other hand have to understand school is for study. Just going through this process might be good for them.



There is a big difference between being a good student and being someone who innovates and creates. The Chinese system is structured to produce followers. They will learn a skill well. However, rarely do we see true innovators emerge from China. Why is that? Looking at a country that has a long history and a vast population, you would think today’s innovations would be continuously streaming from there. Instead, the Chinese just capitalize on technologies already developed elsewhere. I’m sure the Chinese system will improve with time but for now that is the true difference between the two systems. The Western system does a better job creating independent thinkers.