

ANSWERS

Instructions: The following tirade against pacifism commits a number of informal fallacies. There are ten separate arguments within the passage. One is valid.

- square bracket [] each argument
- underline the conclusion to each argument
- round bracket () each premise
- indicate the fallacy committed by nine of the ten arguments

Pacifism is a silly position to maintain. There are numerous considerations which show that we should not take pacifism seriously. Let's look at the facts for a moment.

[First of all, human beings are just one species among the many that inhabit this earth. (Each of these species, and that includes us, can be viewed as part of a single lineage which runs from lowly one-celled plants and animals to complex and enigmatic human beings.) (We have no hesitancy about killing an amoeba, and none about killing a carrot or, for that matter, killing complex mammals.) Singling out human beings for special treatment in this regard is to ignore our essential unity with all of life, and represents the height of inconsistency.]

→ slippery slope

[Secondly, (it is a part of human nature to be a warring and aggressive species.) Thus pacifists, who wish to persuade us to become mild mannered creatures who will never make war on each other, are just banging their heads against a stone wall.]

→ appeal to nature OR begging the question

[Thirdly, war can be a good thing for many of the countries of the world, since (open conflict at the level of nation states can be conducive to international well-being.)]

→ begging the question

[The pacifist's refusal to accept the grim realities of this world are really only a thinly disguised form of hypocrisy. After all, look at the case of (George Muller - he refused to fight for his country in Vietnam,) and now (he's in prison for beating his wife to death.) Pacifism my eye!]

→ hasty generalization

[All that talk about the sacred value of human life and the need to end conflict forever is just a smoke screen hiding the self-interest of pacifists. (Do you think they'd be so vocal now if not for the fact that we are on the brink of war?) They only want to save their own skins.] The refusal to kill on the grounds that human life is too valuable to destroy is hard to accept. On the present market, (the chemicals constituting a human being are only worth about eight dollars.) (I'd hardly call that valuable.)]

→ appeal to circumstance

→ ambiguous OR hasty generalization

[(Pacifists are often vegetarians) who don't get enough red meat to think clearly.] (They object to taking lives) then (they stop eating meat,) and the next thing you know they'll start whining every time I butcher a carrot from my garden.]

→ appeal to abuse

→ slippery slope

[(At the present time there are more than forty-six wars being fought on this planet.) (There has never been a time when there was complete peace on earth.) Don't you think we'd be a little silly to refuse to go to war once these facts are taken into account?]

→ appeal to consensus

[(A true pacifist is someone who would refuse to use violence even for the purpose of defending against violence.) So, a true pacifist wouldn't even attempt to save his neighbour from a violent attacker, even if he could easily do so, so long as the only way he could save his neighbour was to use a little violence.] I certainly wouldn't want to have pacifists as neighbours!

→ valid!