

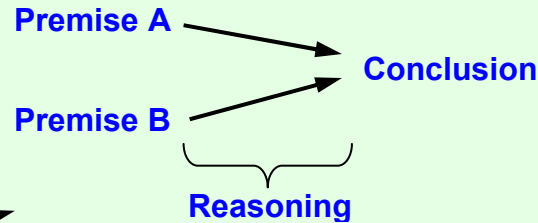
The Truth Test

The **Truth Test** is a simple test designed to tell whether a political statement is true, false, or just plain nonsense. This allows voters to tell reality from illusion and political benevolence from oppression. They can then answer the question every democracy depends on: Is this truth or deception?

The test consists of these four questions:

1. What is the argument?
2. Are any common patterns of deception present?
3. Are the premises true, complete, and relevant?
4. Does each conclusion follow from its premises?

The Three Parts of an Argument



The first step is **What is the argument?** All arguments have three parts: premises, a conclusion, and the reasoning used to reach the conclusion. If a political appeal lacks any of these, it's not an argument. It's nonsense. For example, "Vote for me in November" is just a conclusion. There is no supporting premise.

Do more statements make an argument better? Not if it's still not an argument, such as "Our country is a great place. It takes courage to win a war. I was a war hero. Vote for me in November." There's no clear reasoning relating the three premises to the conclusion. It's not a clear argument but a soggy hodgepodge of related snippets, designed to worm their way into your brain and entice you into voting for the candidate in November.

Elective democracy was originally conceived as a political system where the wise choices of the electorate lead to sound leadership. But if reasonably correct choices cannot be made this foundation breaks down, along with the system.

This has led to the critical problem we face today: **Political deception is the norm in politics.** Voters are besieged with deceptive ads and speeches, clever sound bites, wedge issues, biased news, etc. This has worked so well that voters too often elect and support politicians who do not work for the common good of most voters. Instead, they work for the uncommon good of special interests. This has led, for example, to the string of disasters during the second Bush administration in the U. S. These grew steadily worse, culminating in the financial meltdown of 2008.

Political deception is not confined to any one political system. It is an age old, universal problem. This will continue until voters become truth literate, with something like the Truth Test.

Truth literacy is the ability to tell truth from deception. Universal truth literacy is just as important to the health of democracy as reading literacy, because if people cannot "read" the truth they are blind to what the truth really is. They are easily controlled by any politician who uses deception to hoodwink the masses into supporting him and his positions.

The first step eliminates about 10% of the false political arguments you are likely to encounter. They are nonsense.

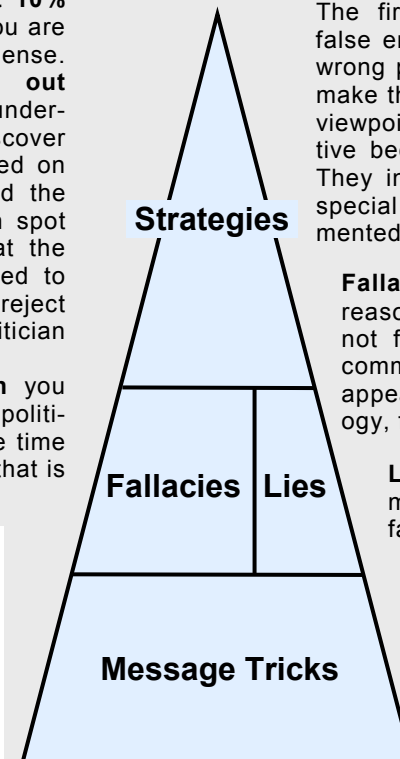
The second step knocks out about another 70%. Once you understand the pyramid you will discover that most false appeals are based on the five deception strategies and the six common fallacies. If you can spot these then you can assume that the rest of the pyramid is being used to carry them out. If so, you should reject the argument and the related politician or policy positions.

By using **pattern recognition** you can determine the truth of most political appeals in little more than the time it takes to hear or read them. All that is required is to learn the patterns.

For steps 3 and 4, as well as further material on truth literacy and the Truth Test, see:

TruthTest.org
...are you fool proof?

The Pyramid of Political Deception



The first four **strategies** are false promises, false enemies, pushing the fear hot button, and wrong priorities. A fifth type, secrecy, is used to make the others possible and stronger. From the viewpoint of a healthy democracy all are deceptive because none optimize the common good. They instead maximize the uncommon good of special interests. The strategies are implemented with fallacies and lies.

Fallacies are always false because using the reasoning of the fallacy, the conclusion does not follow from the premises. The six most common fallacies are the *ad hominem* attack, appeal to emotion, biased sample, false analogy, false dilemma, and straw man.

Lies are either false facts or false arguments whose logic is sound but due to false premises the conclusion is false.

These are the thousands of **message tricks** used to maximize the success of implementing the upper layers, like ambiguous wording, emotional trigger words, biased framing, eye candy (powerful visuals), subliminal mood music and repetition.