Types of Arguments and Persuasive Devices

Certain techniques are commonly used to attempt to convince the reader of the validity of an argument. Be aware of some of these techniques when you are evaluating a source. **Being able to identify these techniques can help you recognize untruths and faulty reasoning and you will less likely be fooled by others**. The following types of arguments are discussed in What Science is and How it Works, by Gordon Derry.
http://www.nwabr.org/studentbiotech/resources/evaluating.html

Types of Arguments & Persuasive Devices	Explanation of Technique
1. Straw Man	Challenger attacks a weaker argument rather than the original statement or position which is harder to argue against.
2. Ad Hominem (to the man)	Challenger attacks the person, himself, rather than the person's position or argument.
3. False Dilemma	Challenger offers two choices. One is so weak that the other choice is more likely to be chosen. This focuses attention on the stronger of two choices and eliminates the reader from considering other choices that may have more merit.
4. Begging the Question (circular reasoning)	To **beg the question** means to assume the truth of the very point being raised without any logic to show why the statement is true in the first place. Example: I think he is unattractive because he is ugly. Unattractive and ugly mean about the same thing so no logic or reason is used. It is a restatement. "When did you stop hitting your brother," assumes it's true that you hit your brother.
5. Slippery Slope	Challenger attacks the possible result or affect of an idea rather than challenge the original position or argument.
6. Bandwagon	Challenger uses the desire of the reader to "fit in" to win his argument. Everyone else is doing it.
7. Slanted Words or Phrases	Challenger uses emotionally charged words or biased words to argue his point. Descriptors like old fogy rather than mature citizen might be used.
8. Scare Tactics	Challenger causes the reader to be frightened into agreeing with his position. Fear is used to evaluate the argument rather than logic and reason.