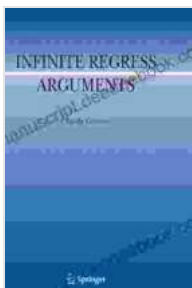


# Infinite Regress Arguments: A Comprehensive Guide

An infinite regress argument is a type of logical fallacy that occurs when a chain of reasoning or evidence is repeated endlessly, without ever reaching a . This can happen when one premise depends on another premise, which in turn depends on the first premise, and so on.

Infinite regress arguments are often used to try to prove a point that is actually unprovable. For example, someone might argue that God exists because the universe was created, and the universe was created by God, and so on. This argument is an infinite regress because it never actually proves that God exists; it simply restates the same claim over and over again.

There are two main types of infinite regress arguments:



## Infinite Regress Arguments (Argumentation Library

**Book 17)** by Claude Gratton

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- **Vertical infinite regress arguments** occur when a chain of reasoning depends on itself. For example, the following argument is a vertical infinite regress:

> 1. The Bible is the word of God. > 2. The Bible says that Jesus is the Son of God. > 3. Therefore, Jesus is the Son of God.

This argument is a vertical infinite regress because the first premise depends on the second premise, and the second premise depends on the first premise. This creates a circular loop of reasoning that never actually proves anything.

- **Horizontal infinite regress arguments** occur when a chain of reasoning depends on an infinite number of premises. For example, the following argument is a horizontal infinite regress:

> 1. The universe is made up of atoms. > 2. Atoms are made up of subatomic particles. > 3. Subatomic particles are made up of even smaller particles. > 4. And so on.

This argument is a horizontal infinite regress because it never actually reaches a . It simply keeps dividing things down into smaller and smaller pieces, without ever actually finding the smallest possible unit of matter.

Infinite regress arguments can be difficult to recognize, especially if they are presented in a sophisticated or technical way. However, there are a few key things to look for:

- **Circular reasoning:** Infinite regress arguments often use circular reasoning, in which one premise depends on another premise, which in turn depends on the first premise.
- **Lack of a :** Infinite regress arguments never actually reach a . They simply keep repeating the same claim over and over again, or they divide things down into smaller and smaller pieces without ever finding a stopping point.
- **Infinite number of premises:** Horizontal infinite regress arguments depend on an infinite number of premises. This can make them difficult to follow and to evaluate.

If someone makes an infinite regress argument, there are a few ways to respond:

- **Point out the circular reasoning.** Explain that the argument depends on itself, and that this makes it invalid.
- **Ask for a .** Ask the person making the argument to state their explicitly. If they cannot do this, then the argument is invalid.
- **Challenge the infinite number of premises.** If the argument is a horizontal infinite regress, challenge the person making the argument to provide all of the premises. This will often be impossible, and it will show that the argument is invalid.

Infinite regress arguments are a type of logical fallacy that can be difficult to recognize and to respond to. However, by understanding the different types of infinite regress arguments and by learning how to recognize them, you can avoid being fooled by them.



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