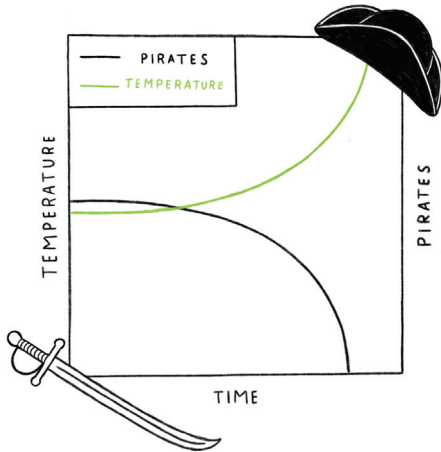


FALSE CAUSALITY



To falsely assume when two events occur together that one must have caused the other.



Global temperatures have steadily risen over the past 150 years and the number of pirates has declined at a comparable rate. No one would reasonably claim that the reduction in pirates caused global warming or that more pirates would reverse it. But it's not usually this clear-cut. Often correlations between two things tempt us to believe that one caused the other. However, it's often a coincidence or there's a third factor causing both effects that you're seeing. In our pirates and global warming example, the cause of both is industrialization. Never assume causation because of correlation alone – always gather more evidence.

