

How To Write the Counterargument Paragraph

Terminology:

- Concession: acknowledgement of the other side
- Refutation or Rebuttal: an answer that challenges a specific claim or charge
- Counterargument: the other side of an argument

Format of the counterargument:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Introduce the opposing side's arguments. You are acknowledging the other point of view. You will use phrases such as the following:
 - Some critics argue/assert/contend/claim/state . . .
 - Many believe that . . .
 - It has been argued/asserted/contended/claimed/stated . . .
 - Opponents argue/assert/contend/claim/state . . .
2. **Expert Source that supports the counterargument:** This sentence backs up the sentence with a quotation or paraphrase of evidence from an expert. It includes the name of the author/source, the title of the article or web site, and, if necessary, the expertise of the source to show the validity of the evidence.
3. **Explanation sentence:** This sentence begins with a transition (therefore, thus, to explain, as a result, to elaborate, in other words, etc.) and explains the evidence and/or *provides an example of what it is saying*.
4. **Concession sentence:** Concede (acknowledge) the other side's validity in a respectful way. You might begin with phrases such as the following:
 - For this reason, opponents believe/argue/claim/contend/stress etc.
 - As a result of _____, many believe/argue etc.
 - It is understandable why the opposition believes/argues etc.
 - Critics have a valid point about . . .
5. **Refutation/Rebuttal sentence:** This is where you refute or challenge the opposition's viewpoint and remind readers of your stance. You will begin by using a phrase such as the following:
 - Nevertheless/nonetheless/however + your argument
 - Though it is a valid point/argument + your argument
 - Even though (one part of the argument) is true, it still does not . . .
 - Though he/she/they make a good point, + your argument

Make sure that you complete the rebuttal by refuting the actual counterargument that you are using in this paragraph. Do not argue against a different

counterargument, as there are usually several. Stick to the one counterargument throughout the entire paragraph. If you want to address more than one counterargument, then you will need to do so in separate paragraphs. Obviously, it helps to pick counterarguments that you can refute easily.

*adapted with revisions from *Sourcework*, by Heinle & Heinle, 2006.