**Counterargument**

Counterargument in an essay has two stages: 1) **Introducing the opposing view,** and 2) **refuting the opposing view**, 3)alternatively, you can **concede and then refute**, but you still must refute.

* In the first stage—**introducing a counterargument--** you turn against your argument to challenge it. The following is a listing of ways to approach introducing counterarguments and templates for structuring them:

1. Imagine a skeptical reader
   * + “Yet some readers may challenge the view that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
     + “After all, many believe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
     + “Indeed, my own argument that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ seems to ignore \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
     + “Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
2. Cite an actual source, critic, or group of critics, who might resist your argument

* “Here many feminists would probably object that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* “But social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* “Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. Look at your arguments themselves for possible:

* problems with your conclusion
  + “Others, however, may conclude \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* disadvantages to what you propose
  + “This proposed solution does have some disadvantages \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* explanations that make more sense.
  + “Alternatively, this issue could be viewed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* After introducing your counterargument, you state the case against yourself as briefly but as clearly and forcefully as you can, pointing to evidence where possible.
* In the second stage-- **refuting a counterargument**--you turn back to re-affirm your argument. You may consider the following refutation tactics and models for structuring them:

1. Quote acknowledged experts that support your position

* “While many may see this argument as flawed, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_John Smith, an expert in his field, also finds\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. Redefine the criteria of “known” concepts

* “Although I grant that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, couldn’t it also be possible that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. Find agreement and show how your new idea supports a shared idea

* “I agree with X that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* “Furthermore, this idea actually supports my point because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

4) Pointing out faulty assumptions in your critic’s arguments where

* the facts are wrong.
  + “Proponents of X are right to argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. But they exaggerate when they claim that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* the analysis is incorrect
* “While it is true that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* the values it is based on are not acceptable
  + - “It is dangerous to believe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Following the introduction of your refutation, you must then go on to suggest why the opposing argument is relatively less important or less likely than what you propose, and thus, doesn’t overturn it.
* Concession
  + The “yes, but” concession
    - “There is some validity to their points; however, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
    - “Although I agree with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ up to a point, I cannot accept the assumption \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
    - “Though I concede that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I still insist that ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
  + The “I’m of two minds” concession
* “I’m of two minds about X’s claim that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. On the one hand, I agree that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, I’m not sure if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X’s position that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but I find Y’s argument about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be equally persuasive.”

(Templates adapted from Graff & Birkenstein 79-85).

Exercise: Using the templates above, introduce and rebut the counter-argument in paragraph form below:

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| In favor of civics being taught in high school |
| Against civics being taught in high school |
| For voting even if you are not excited about the candidate |
| Apathy to voting if you are not excited about the candidate |