

The Counter-Argument & Rebuttal Paragraph

A counter-argument or counter-claim is the argument (or one of the arguments) opposing your thesis statement. In your thesis paragraph, you make it clear to the reader exactly what you plan on proving and how you plan to go about proving it. The counter-argument and rebuttal paragraph is where you show the reader, early on, that you have considered the opposing side's viewpoint and find it to be weak or invalid. A counter-argument and rebuttal paragraph, if done well, gives you a chance to respond to the reader's potential arguments before they are done reading. It also shows that you have considered both sides of the debate, which strengthens your position.

Here is an example of a simplified counter-argument and rebuttal paragraph's topic sentence:

X = your argument

Y = the claim of the opposing side of your argument

Skeptics of X _____ claim Y _____ ; however, these arguments are weak because X_____.

Those who oppose X _____ say that Y _____, yet they are incorrect because X_____.

So, the point of this paragraph is to expose the counter-argument to the reader and then promptly explain why it is weaker than yours or why it is just completely incorrect or invalid.

Here are two possible strategies that you can use to refute the counter-argument.

1.) Point out any obvious flaw in the counter-argument

Example:

Many people argue that bullying is a natural part of our humanity and that preventative measures are ineffective against this element of the human condition; however, they fail to understand that bullying is a cycle that has been perpetuated for centuries and that all cycles can be broken.

2.) Agree with the counter-argument, but provide new evidence that perhaps contradicts or weakens their argument

Example:

Advocates of the use of E-cigarettes claim that these electronic cigarettes are not toxic to others in the smoker's vicinity because it is just water vapor that is expelled into the air; they emphasize that there is no tobacco or carbon monoxide released. While this is true, what these proponents fail to mention are the other harmful elements that are in the released vapor.

After this, you can then provide evidence in support of the counter-argument, but you MUST STRONGLY REFUTE IT! Your rebuttal can't just be a sentence saying: "This is weak evidence." You must clearly SHOW how their evidence is weak with strong analysis.

Here are some more counter-argument/ rebuttal paragraph resources.

[The Counterargument According to Harvard](#)