

Grade 6 English Language Arts
Week of December 14 – December 18

Lesson 5: Persuasive Letter – Counterarguments

There will always be people who take the other side or see things differently than you do on a topic. Someone may totally disagree and even hate what you are saying!

You need to be ready for this possibility.

Put yourself in the shoes of someone who wants to poke holes in your reasoning. See where your writing or speaking is the weakest and do some research to make your argument stronger. If there are any questions they might ask, be ready with answers. If writing, having it right in your essay will ideally leave them speechless. If speaking, you will be hard to argue against!

Not all persuasive text features a counterargument. But going through the process of being your own opposition will improve your writing (and your success in being persuasive).



Here is a look at why you should include a counterargument in your persuasive text:

<https://youtu.be/P31fwp1setM>

Counterargument Example 1

Imagine you would like to get a cat. Your parent's counter with, "But your brother is allergic to cats." What will you say?

A rebuttal is when you respond directly to your opponent's argument/point to explain/show how/why they are wrong. Clever writer's even do this in their letters. Here are some rebuttal strategies you could use:

1. Point out the weakness in the counterargument.
E.g. Well, I heard you say that my brother is allergic but he was at Lisa's house where there is a cat and he was fine.
2. Agree with the counterargument but give them a new point/fact that contradicts their argument.
E.g. I agree that my brother is allergic to cats, but there are some breeds of cats that are more hypo-allergenic and won't cause people's allergies to act up.
3. Agree with the other side's support but twist the facts to suit your argument.
E.g.. I know that you said he is allergic, but couldn't owning a pet also build up his tolerance?
4. Make an emotional plea that outweighs their argument (This should be your LAST resort)
E.g. Well, you said that we can't have a pet, but are my brother's allergies really more important when it comes to rescuing a poor cat from a shelter who's trapped in a cage and will be killed if he doesn't find someone to adopt him?

Counterargument Example 2

Topic: I am arguing in my essay that students should have access to more music in elementary schools.

Counterargument: Someone could argue it is too expensive to do this. Schools are already on tight budgets.

Rebuttal:

Some people will say schools are already strapped for cash. How are they going to afford a music program? If the community sees how important music is to the lives, minds, health, and education of children, then how could we say no? By finding the funding now to enrich children's lives, we are making a positive investment. We are spending our money wisely on a better future.

Now complete Counterarguments on the next page.

5. Counterarguments

Directions: Finish the opposing argument for each question. It should be a convincing reason. Next, provide the counter attack. Give evidence and reasons to address the opposing side's concerns.

1. My Position: Kids should be able to play video games whenever they want.

Counterargument: Playing video games all the time is a bad idea because...

My Rebuttal:

2. My position: Dogs make better pets than cats.

Counterargument: Cats actually make better pets because...

My Rebuttal: