

## Research Stage 4: Counter-argument / Refutation Paragraphs

### Counter-arguments: Your Opponent's Side

To show that you fully understand all sides of your argument, you should include some of your opponent's ideas in the final paper. Usually, these points will focus on different aspects of the issue than the ones you have already given. In other words, do NOT simply repeat a limitation to a solution that you have already written about.

Counterarguments usually are one of these types.

**A limitation to a solution:** Your opponent believes that your solution will not work. This should NOT be a limitation you have already discussed.

**Disagreement with a solution:** Your opponent believes that your solution is harmful or unfair in some way, whether it works or not.

**Disagreement about the problem:** Your opponent believes that the problem you describe is not a real problem, or that its effects are not serious.

### Refuting opposing arguments

When you refute the opponents' arguments, you might disagree with them completely. On the other hand, it is not necessary to prove that they are wrong. You can suggest that the arguments that they are focusing on are not as important as your points, or you can allow some concessions and suggest some compromises that would still allow your case to be the stronger of the two. In other words, if your opponents have some good points, state that fact! It will actually make your argument appear stronger.

It is crucial that your refutation directly connect to the Counterargument. For example:

Poor Connection between Counterargument and Refutation	
My opponents may say that my solution is too expensive.	However, my solution will help many individuals and families.

It is also important that your refutation be based on fact, not emotion.

Non-factual Refutation	
My opponents may say that my solution is too expensive.	Obviously, those people are greedy and cruel.

Here is a better refutation.

Non-factual Refutation	
My opponents may say that my solution is too expensive.	On the contrary, this solution will save money by avoiding costly medical treatments.

- ★ Include at least one CA and Refutation in the final draft of the paper
- ★ **Length:** Each paragraph can be short, but the total length should be 350 words minimum
- ★ Consider between one to three CA and Refutations
- ★ Match the refutation to the counter-argument
- ★ CA and Refutations may include quotations and paraphrases, but it is not required
- ★ Transition words and sentences are crucial
- ★ CA typically include Modal Verbs

### Transition Words and Sentences

however	while
on the contrary	actually
conversely	in spite of (this)
on the other hand	although
despite this (fact)	nevertheless

"On the other hand, not everyone agrees."  
 "Supporters of \_\_\_ might oppose my idea." "  
 "Despite this evidence, some do not agree."  
 "My opponents would disagree with me."  
 "Some groups might criticize this solution."  
 "In spite of this situation, some insist that no solution is needed."  
 "Some people may claim that my solution will not work."

### People:

proponents	opponents
supporters	detractors
defenders	sympathizers
advocates	critics
pro-	anti-

### Modal Verbs: may, might, could, can

#### Verbs:

believe	theorize	acknowledge	recognize
contend	fear	concede	realize
argue	estimate	admit	counter
claim	project	grant	disprove
assert	accept	rebut	advocate

### Nouns:

belief  
 contention  
 claim  
 argument  
 conclusion

### Adjectives:

inaccurate  
 incomplete  
 (in)valid  
 illogical  
 unproved

## Patterns of Counter-Argument & Refutation Paragraphs

You can organize your CA – Refutations in a Point-by-Point style.

1. Topic Sentence: *Not everyone agrees that GMO crops are dangerous.*

**Counter-argument:** *Biotechnology companies may claim that without GMOs, the earth cannot support the current population.*

**Partially agree:** *It's true that GMOs are cheaper to grow than organic plants.*

**Refutation:** *However, the real cost of GMOs is not measured only by dollars.*

**Supporting the refutation:** *More than 300 million pounds of herbicide was used in American agriculture last year (Main). This poisons birds, insects, and humans as well as plants.*

2. Topic Sentence: *However, critics of immigration may say that this solution is flawed.*

**Counter-argument:** *Some critics are afraid that typical "American" culture is in danger of disappearing when immigrants bring new languages, traditions and customs.*

**Partially agree:** *It's true that new residents will change the culture of their new home, and that change is uncomfortable at times.*

**Refutation:** *Despite their uncomfortable feelings, Americans should recognize that change equals life. Without new life, American traditions will die away.*

**Supporting the refutation:** *Immigrants can increase the population in small towns where only elderly people live today. Their taxes and their work can keep an older generation of Americans alive.*

You may also organize your CA – Refutations in a Block style.

3. Topic Sentence: *However, business interests disagree.*

**Counter-argument 1:** *Producers of canned foods might claim that without artificial colors, their products will look unattractive and not sell well.*

**Counter-argument 2:** *Farmers might tell us that artificial colors harmlessly improve the look of fruits and vegetables.*

**Counter-argument 3:** *Producers of candies and cereals, foods which children love, could insist that replacing their bright colors will destroy their profitable companies.*

4. Topic Sentence: *Nevertheless, some changes must be made.*

**Partially agree:** *It's true that these solutions will cost some money.*

**Refutation 1:** *Any food that must be dyed to look attractive must not be nutritious. The bad effects of these dyes is a risk that we should not take.*

**Refutation 2:** *Furthermore, dyes which are sprayed on the skins of fruits are harmful, even if consumers do not eat them. Those dyes affect workers in farms and in stores.*

**Refutation 3:** *Finally, the colors which attract children also harm them. There is no amount of money which can make up for serious illness in a child.*