

# COUNTER ARGUMENTS

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## Examining Counter Arguments

**Addressing alternative viewpoints can help build a convincing argument.** This can **demonstrate a deeper understanding** of the material and show that you have looked at multiple perspectives. This shows that you have come to an **informed decision, demonstrating your credibility.**

*An example of a counter argument is the debate about the origins of the Universe. Scientists show that the world was created billions of years ago, although this is debated amongst followers of religion who claim it is merely thousands of years old.*

## Offering Counter Arguments

**Counter arguments may be found in various locations** throughout your essay. You may choose to:

- **Build points as a contrast** to oppositional claims.
- **Offer a counter argument after you have articulated your main claims.**
- **You can also reject the counter argument and explain why it was mistaken.**

### **TOP TIP**

It is important to remember to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments. You can concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept the validity of your argument.

## How to Present Counter Arguments

**It is usually better to consider only 1-2 serious counter arguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list** of many different counter arguments and replies. Ensure that the counter arguments you include **link and are consistent with your original argument. If discussing a counter argument changes your position, go back and reconsider your original argument**, revise it accordingly.

## TOP TIP

Including a counter argument shows that you have thought things through, and allows you to dispose of some of the reasons your audience might have for not accepting your argument.

**Conceding to some of your opposition's concerns can demonstrate respect for their opinions. When doing this, it is important to remain tactful, yet firm.** When summarising opposing arguments **present a fair and objective review.** You want to show that **you have seriously considered all sides** of the issue and that you are not simply attacking your opponents.

## Useful links

- Harvard College Writing Center, 'Counterargument', Available at: <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/counter-argument>
- University of Sussex, Skills Hub, 'Counter-arguments', Available at: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/?id=395&site=normal>
- George Mason University, The Writing Centre, 'All about Counterarguments', Available at: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/all-about-counterarguments>

## Other Relevant Online PDFs

- How to Write an Essay
- Paragraph Structure
- Critical Reading
- Critical Thinking
- Evidence & Incorporating Research
- How to Build an Academic Argument