

How To Write the Counterargument Paragraph

- Counterargument: the other side of an argument

Format of the counterargument:

1. **Topic Sentence:** Introduce the opposing side's arguments (this is like an antithesis). You are acknowledging the other point of view. You will use phrases such as the following:
 - Some critics (or readers) argue/assert/contend/claim/state . . .
 - Many believe that . . .
 - It has been argued/asserted/contended/claimed/stated . . .
 - Opponents argue/assert/contend/claim/state . . .
2. **Explanation sentence:** It explains the controlling idea, the topic sentence.
3. **Counter-Argument Evidence:** This sentence backs up the counter-arg. with a quotation or paraphrase of evidence from an expert (or text). It can include the name of the author/source, the title of the article or web site, and, if necessary, the expertise of the source to show the validity of the evidence.

For example: In "When Patients Request Assistance with Suicide," Dr. Michael Maskin, an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, argues that in many cases, dying patients' thinking is simply occupied by negative reactions to their condition (2).
4. **Explanation Sentence:** This sentence begins with a transition (therefore, thus, to explain, as a result, to elaborate, in other words, etc.) and explains the evidence.
5. **The Turn Back:** Your return to your own argument is called the turn back. You announce the turn back with a *but, yet, however, nevertheless or still*---must likewise involve careful reasoning. In reasoning about the proposed counter-argument, you may
 - show why it is not a real problem
 - acknowledge its validity, but suggest why it's less important than what you propose
 - say which side is the better argument and why
6. **Explain the distinction and why it's important to understand.**

Example

A number of critics have suggested that Homer Barron, Miss Emily's suitor, is gay. Certainly, there is some evidence in the story to support this interpretation. For example, the narrator points out that Homer "liked the company of men" (Faulkner 000) and that he was not "a marrying man" (Faulkner 000). In addition, the narrator describes Homer as wearing yellow gloves when he took Emily for drives. According to the critic William Greenslade, in the 1890s yellow was associated with homosexuality (24). This evidence, however, does not establish that Homer is gay. During the nineteenth century, many men preferred the company of other men (as many do today). This, in itself, did not mean they were gay. Neither does the fact that Homer wore yellow gloves. According to the narrator, Homer was a man who liked to dress well. It is certainly possible that he wore these gloves to impress Miss Emily, a woman he was trying to attract. Regardless, Homer's importance to the story lies not in his sexuality, but in what he represents to Miss Emily.