

Counter-Argument

When you write a persuasive essay, you make an argument: you make a claim in your thesis and offer some reasoning, using evidence, that suggests why the thesis is true. When you counter-argue, you consider a possible argument *against* your thesis or some part of your reasoning and then state why your claim is still valid.

Countering the argument against your claim allows you to anticipate doubts and counter-objections that a reader might have; it presents you as the kind of person who weighs alternatives before arguing for one, who considers other points of view instead of sweeping them under the rug, and who is more interested in discovering the truth than winning a point.

Not every objection is worth countering, of course, and you should carefully consider what to argue against. Including at least one opposite view to your own claim should occur in your persuasive essay.

Counter-argument in an essay has two stages: you turn against your argument to challenge it and then you turn back to re-affirm it.

The Turn Against

This is where you introduce the opposing side's claim and a reason to support it. You acknowledge the other side's point-of-view in a respectful way, meaning you concede their is validity to the other side of the issue. You can use phrases like the following:

- Some critic argue/assert/contend/claim/state . . .
- Many believe that . . .
- It has been argued/asserted/contended/claimed/stated . . .
- Opponents argue/asset/contned/claim/state . . .
- It's true that . . .

After presenting the other sides claim and reason, you introduce one supporting piece of evidence, quoting an expert or identifying a source.

Now it is time turn back to your argument.

The Turn Back

This is where you refute or challenge the opposition's viewpoint and remind readers of your stance. You will begin by using a phrase such as the following:

- Nevertheless/nonetheless/however, . . .
- Though it is a valid point/argument, . . .
- Even though that is true, . . .
- Though he/she makes a good point, . . .

You then show why it is not a real problem by acknowledge its validity, but suggest why it's less important than what you propose, or agreeing to the opposing argument and then restating your thesis in a more exact, qualified way that takes into account the objection.

Do not use a counter-argument if it destroys your whole claim. Choose one that is easy to refute, thus strengthening your won claim.

Example

Many people believe that chocolate milk should not be served in school because they associate it with diabetes and health problems that are increasing each year. While it's true about the increase in problems, a closer look at the evidence shows that chocolate milk is actually not the cause. Nowadays, people are beginning to make chocolate milk with less calories, meaning that less than two percent of the calories in a child's diet come from chocolate milk.