

Writing a Refutation Paragraph





The Essay So Far

- Hopefully your outline/working draft should look something like this:
 - Introduction - the problem, your solution.
 - Body PP1: Background of the problem
 - Body PP2: Who the problem affects:
 - Body PP3: Introduce your solution
 - Body PP4: Explain your solution
 - Body PP5: _____
 - Conclusion: Reinforce your argument
- So what goes in the blank, Body paragraph 5 spot?
 - This is where your refutation (or concession) should go



The Refutation or Concession Paragraph

- The refutation paragraph is where you acknowledge the other side of the issue.
 - While you want to spend a great deal of the essay supporting your argument, you still need to analyze what other arguments have to say.
 - Unless writers **acknowledge the valid points** of the opposing argument, they sound narrow-minded and thereby **less** effective.
- Be careful though, writers don't want the other side of the argument to sound better than his/her own.
 - One way of avoiding this is by answering or **countering** any of the points the other argument has.

What Goes in a Refutation Paragraph



- Ultimately, the refutation paragraph argues for the claim made in the essay's thesis while showing the flawed logic of others.
 - It should never present a different argument than the one in the thesis.
 - Just summarize the opposition's point, plainly and fairly, then show the flawed reasoning in it.
- The refutation paragraphs typically have:
 - Introduce the Opposing Argument
 - Acknowledge parts of the opposition that are valid
 - Counter the Argument
 - Introduce the Conclusion

Introduce the Opposing Argument



- The writer **summarizes the opposition's** viewpoint openly and honestly.
- Ignoring the opposition is futile, because the audience is aware of the opposing arguments.
 - They will doubt the credibility of a writer that chooses to ignore the opposition rather than deal with it.
 - Ways writers can begin:
 - "But _____ is not completely inaccurate.
 - "It is often argued that...
 - "It is true that...
 - "Opposing views claim...



Acknowledge Parts of the Opposition that are Valid

- The writer acknowledges that **some of the opposition's claims** may be valid, but the writer still shows that his **own claims are stronger**.
 - The strength of the writer's claims are more convincing than the opposing viewpoints.
- A writer might explain the opposition's weakest points, contrasting them with his argument's strongest points.
 - Ways writers can begin:
 - "Admittedly,
 - "Certainly,
 - "Of course,
 - "One cannot deny that...
 - "At the same time...



Counter the Argument

- Introduce the **rebuttal** of the concession argument.
- The writer **refutes the opposition's claims** showing they are incorrect or inconsequential--not a real problem.
 - Ways writers can begin:
 - “Nevertheless,
 - “However,
 - “On the other hand,
 - “But...



Introduce the Conclusion

- The conclusion should **summarize** why the counter argument is not a sufficient solution.
- This final sentence will also act as a transition into your conclusion paragraph.
 - Ways writers can begin:
 - “Thus,
 - “Therefore,
 - “As a result,
 - “Sometimes writers might just want to restate his/her position simply.

Example of a Refutation Paragraph



- “Over the years, many groups have argued that violent video games have desensitized teens to real life violence making them more likely to be involved in fights, school shootings and other criminal activity. While there has been instances of teens being desensitized, this stance fails to recognize an individual’s responsibility for their own behavior. In fact, when Grand Theft Auto IV, a notoriously violent video game, was released, it sold 3.6 million copies in its first day of sales but those sales were not met with a corresponding spike in the teen crime rate. Ultimately, there is a far bigger connection between socio-economic status and crime than there is between violent video games and crime.”
 - Introduce opposing argument
 - Acknowledge parts that are valid
 - Counter the argument
 - Introduce conclusion