

Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

Lesson 13: Counter-Arguments and Refutation

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Why does this writer include the opposing view?

Some argue that later start times would disrupt family routines. That concern is reasonable, and it deserves an answer.

1. A **counter-argument** is the strongest objection to your own position.
2. Including it makes you appear fair and informed rather than one-sided.
3. It also lets you answer the objection before the reader raises it themselves.
4. Acknowledging it honestly, rather than choosing a weak version, is what makes this work.

It shows the writer is fair, and it lets them answer the objection before the reader can raise it.

Worked Example 2

Refute the counter-argument above.

1. **Refutation** means answering the objection, not dismissing it.
2. Concede what is true first: many families do build routines around the current times.
3. Then limit its force: the change would be a shift of one hour, not a restructure.
4. Then outweigh it: the benefit to student learning is larger than the inconvenience.

Model: Families would need to adjust, but a one-hour shift is a smaller cost than a generation of students sitting their hardest lessons half asleep.

Remember: Acknowledge the **strongest** objection, not the weakest. Then refute it: **concede** what is true, **limit** its force, and **outweigh** it. Never simply dismiss it.



Question 1: Write whether each is a **strong** or **weak** refutation.

1. Opponents say the plan is too expensive. However, the cost would be recovered within two years.

2. Opponents say the plan is too expensive. They are wrong.

3. Critics argue the change is unnecessary. Admittedly, the current system works for most students. But it fails the ones who need help most.

4. Some people just do not want anything to change.

5. It is true that the trial was small. A larger study is now under way.

6. Anyone who disagrees has not read the report.

7. Sceptics point to the 2019 result. That trial, however, used a different method.

8. Nobody sensible could object to this.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

Some will argue that removing hot food from the canteen would leave students without a warm meal in winter. A small number of students do rely on it, and that matters. The school already knows who they are. A subsidised breakfast program would meet the same need at a fraction of the cost, and would reach students earlier in the day.

1. What counter-argument does the writer acknowledge?

2. What does the writer concede?

3. How does the writer limit the force of the objection?

4. How does the writer outweigh it?

5. Why is this more persuasive than ignoring the objection?



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write a counter-argument to the claim that homework should be abolished.

2. Write a refutation of your counter-argument using concede, limit, outweigh.

3. Explain why choosing a weak counter-argument damages your own case.

4. Why is attacking the person rather than the argument a poor strategy?





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Answers and Model Responses: Counter-Arguments and Refutation**Question 1**

1. Strong refutation
2. Weak refutation
3. Strong refutation
4. Weak refutation
5. Strong refutation
6. Weak refutation
7. Strong refutation
8. Weak refutation

Question 2

1. That removing the canteen's hot food would leave some students without a warm meal.
2. That a small number of students rely on it, and that this matters.
3. By showing the number affected is small and already known to the school.
4. By offering an alternative that meets the same need at lower cost.
5. Ignoring it would leave the reader's strongest objection unanswered, and a reader who spots an obvious gap stops trusting the rest of the argument.

Question 3

1. Model response: Some argue that abolishing homework would leave students unprepared for the independent study expected in senior years.
2. Model response: It is true that senior study requires independence, and that is a fair concern. But independence is built by teaching students how to plan and revise, not by setting worksheets that many complete in five minutes. A structured study skills program would develop the same habit more reliably than homework does.
3. A reader who can immediately think of a stronger objection realises you have avoided it, which makes the whole argument look dishonest rather than thorough.
4. It does not address the argument at all, so the objection still stands, and it makes the writer appear unable to answer it.

