

Writing a Refutation Paragraph

What's a refutation paragraph anyway? Many students have never heard of a refutation paragraph, much less written one. Even though the vocabulary may seem intimidating, a refutation paragraph boils down to a simple idea: responding to arguments that disagree with your thesis statement. If you are writing a paper in favor of universal health care, then your refutation paragraphs would need to address arguments against universal health care. If you are writing a paper in favor of the death penalty, then your refutation paragraphs would need to address arguments in favor of the death penalty. Basically, the refutation paragraphs need to address arguments that are opposite of what you are arguing in your paper.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

1. Conduct research to find opposing viewpoints.
2. Determine what counterargument you will address.
3. Accurately summarize that counterargument with reliable sources and concede to some degree.
4. Explain why the opposing argument does not defeat your thesis statement

HOW SHOULD I DO IT?

Topic Sentence: state your counter argument claim as the first sentence of the paragraph.

Supporting Details: offer evidence to support the counter claim.

Validation: give a statement(s) that acknowledge the importance or value of the opposing viewpoint.

Refutation: disprove their argument and explain why your argument is more valid.

Concluding Sentence: end the paragraph by restating your overall claim or providing a solution.

ARGUMENTATIVE ELEMENTS

- **Main Claim (THESIS):** Universal health care should be implemented because it is more beneficial to the people than a single payer system.
- **Sub-Claim:** A universal healthcare system will provide lower cost for services.
- **Counter Claim:** Implementing universal health care will create a situation where people will abuse the system and cause an overuse of resources.
- **Counter Evidence:** A study published in *Science* found that of 10,000 uninsured Portland, Oregon residents who gained access to Medicaid, 40% made more visits to emergency rooms.
- **Source Citation In-text:** (Taubman, et al).
- **Refutation:**

Although universal health care will decrease cost for medical services, it will create abuse and overuse of the system. A study published in *Science* magazine reports, "Medicaid coverage significantly increases overall emergency use by 0.41 visits per person, or 40% relative to an average of 1.02 visits per person" (Taubman, et. al). Placed on a national scale, these numbers will likely affect the US budget and cause diminish in resources. This in and of itself is definitely a concern. However, the flip side of those numbers show 60% having access to healthcare which is necessary for a healthy lifestyle. It seems that finding ways to regulate overuse is more logical of a solution than denying it all together.

DRAFTING STEPS

1. Begin with looking at databases on the OCCC library website.
 - a. Look in *EBCSO Host* first.
 - b. After, look into *Opposing Viewpoints*.
2. Narrow down articles that you plan to use for your paper.
 - a. Find more articles than you actually plan to use.
 - b. Go through them and find the top 2-3 to use in your paper.
3. Pick out the strongest counterarguments you can find.
 - a. Read through the articles multiple times.
 - b. Highlight and take notes on the author's thesis and main lines of evidence.
4. Paraphrase the main point of the article in a couple of sentences.
 - a. Putting the article into your own words will help deepen your understanding.
 - b. Paraphrasing also helps begin the writing process.
5. Look for weaknesses in the article.
 - a. Identify fallacies.
 - b. Identify ambiguous words
 - c. Identify weak evidence
6. In a couple of sentences, write down the major weakness(s) of each article.
 - a. Be specific with what is wrong.
 - b. Focus on the biggest weakness, not small errors.
 - c. Follow the examples in this handout to further develop the refutation.