

Respond to a Counterargument

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Respond to a counterargument by representing it accurately, acknowledging why it matters, and offering a related reason, practical change, qualification, or limit. You may support or oppose either position. Explain the other view fairly and give reasons for your reply.

Represent the other view fairly

A counterargument gives a reason someone might disagree with a claim. To respond well, first state that reason in a way its speaker could recognize. Do not add an extreme motive, leave out its strongest point, or answer a weaker version. Then acknowledge why the concern matters and respond with a related reason, evidence from the scenario, a practical change, or a limit on the claim. A response may accept part of the concern, qualify the claim, or offer a bounded plan. Check whether your reply addresses the concern rather than merely repeating your original claim. You may support or oppose either position. Focus on fair representation and clear reasoning.

Model exchange: A book recommendation display

Original fictional instructional scenario; the people and events are invented.

Maya: The school should display student book recommendations near the library so readers can learn about books classmates enjoy.

Andre: A display would use limited wall space and take time to update. If a recommended title is not available, readers might be disappointed. A small shelf guide that someone checks could be more useful.

Maya: That is a fair concern: space is limited, and an out-of-date recommendation could frustrate a reader. Andre's small checked shelf guide may use less wall space, so the school could compare it with one small, dated display for four weeks. The display would list only titles currently available and remove a title when no copies remain. If no one can check it regularly, the display should pause. A trial could show whether the display can be kept current; it would not show that every reader uses it or that it works better than the shelf guide.

Modeled exchange

Read the exchange. Identify Maya's claim, Andre's counterargument and alternative, and Maya's response. Notice how Maya names the actual concerns, acknowledges why they matter, suggests a bounded plan, and states what a short trial could not show.

Claim: display student recommendations near the library. Counterargument: limited wall space, time needed to update, and unavailable titles may disappoint readers. Alternative: a checked small shelf guide. Maya states those points fairly and acknowledges why they matter. She recognizes that the shelf guide may use less wall space, then proposes comparing it with a small dated display that lists available titles and pauses if no one can check it. A short trial could show whether the display can be kept current, but not whether every reader uses it or whether it is better than the shelf guide. A learner may prefer the guide or no display; score the reasoning, not the choice.

Guided response: The class book cart

Original fictional instructional scenario; the people and events are invented.

In a fictional Grade 6 classroom, students propose moving the class book cart beside the reading rug so classmates can choose books quickly.

Lee: Putting the cart beside the rug could narrow the walking path or block access to nearby shelves. Readers who need a clear route might have trouble passing. Keeping the cart along the wall would leave more room, though choosing a book might take a little longer.

Guided response

Mark the students' claim and Lee's counterargument. Underline Lee's reason and alternative. Then write a short reply that fairly restates the concern, acknowledges why it matters, gives a related reason or practical check, and names one unresolved point. Adapt this frame: "One concern is ____ because _____. This concern matters because _____. One response is _____. This addresses the concern by _____. It may still not solve _____." Do not assume the cart fits; make any move conditional on checking the route. You may instead support leaving it by the wall if you explain why.

Draft your reply (use the frame above; 6 lines)

Independent response: A library recommendation board

Original fictional instructional scenario; the people and events are invented.

In a fictional school, students propose a recommendation board near the library entrance so readers can discover books classmates enjoy.

Sam: Wall space is limited, and keeping a weekly board current would take time. A student might see a recommended title but find no copy available. A small rotating shelf display updated less often could be another option.

Independent response

Write 4–6 sentences responding to Sam. Choose at least one of Sam’s main concerns to answer. State that concern and Sam’s alternative fairly, in a way Sam could recognize. You do not need to include every concern for full credit. Acknowledge why the concern matters, then answer it with a connected reason, practical plan, qualification, or limit. Use or adapt the writing frame from the guided response, then check your work with the four-part rubric below. You may support the board, suggest a smaller or less frequent display, or argue for Sam’s shelf option. Name one concern your answer does not solve. Do not add an extreme motive or score the argument by whether you agree with the original proposal.

Four-part response rubric

Fair representation — 2: Accurately states at least one main concern and Sam’s alternative. Other concerns may be omitted. 1: Identifies a main concern but omits the alternative or partly misstates the concern or alternative. 0: Does not identify a relevant concern or substantially changes Sam’s view.

Acknowledgment and connection — 2: Explains why the selected concern matters and makes a clear link between the reply and that concern. 1: Does one of those two things clearly, but not both. 0: Does neither clearly.

Reasoned response and limit — 2: Gives a related reason, plan, agreement, or qualification and names a remaining limit. 1: Gives a related response or a limit, but not both. 0: Gives neither.

Clear reasoning — 2: The reasoning is easy to follow. 1: The main idea is partly clear. 0: The reasoning is not yet clear. Your score does not depend on which option you support. Total: 0–8 points.

Independent response planner

Use Sam's exchange to plan a fair response. You may support either option. Name the concern accurately, acknowledge why it matters, connect your response to it, and note what remains unresolved.

Sam's concern and alternative, stated fairly

Why does the concern matter?

My connected reason, plan, qualification, or agreement

How does my response address Sam's concern?

What might my response still not solve?

Draft a 4–6 sentence reply
