



## Opposition and Counterargument

Considering others' opinions can help students develop their thinking, both in the thesis statement and in the essay itself. Students can try to envision opposition arguments in writing or in conversation.

### Change Perspective

Ask students to imagine opposition arguments. If students feel too set in their opinions to envision opposition, pair them and ask the partner to anticipate opposition, which can help the writer recognize and fill potential gaps in his argument. As the partner lists ideas, the writer can jot them down to keep track of them.

This activity also works well in larger groups, where multiple students can brainstorm. This method is more time-consuming in the classroom, but it can also take place on a shared doc outside of class. If every student envisions two or three potential opposition arguments, students get lots of feedback while practicing this skill for themselves.

### Counterargument

Once students have a list of potential opposition arguments, they should develop counterarguments: how can they address each point, enabling to expand their writing while filling in logical gaps.

### Why It Works

These exercises help students evaluate their ideas from multiple angles and anticipate – before receiving written feedback from you – ways to rethink their arguments. Recognizing that every reasonable argument has opposition – some that requires changing the thesis and some that simply requires addressing – encourages students to avoid binary or oversimplified reasoning. These activities also lessen the pressure on you by strengthening the argument before responding becomes your responsibility.