

Week 7 Lesson 3

Can I use counterarguments?

Fast Five

Which of these use the correct prefix?

1. improper
2. disbalanced
3. deheard
4. misinterpret
5. misactivate
6. deactivate
7. reconstruct

Fast Five

Which of these use the correct prefix?

1. Improper - **correct**
2. disbalanced - **incorrect**
3. deheard - **incorrect** (misheard)
4. misinterpret -**correct**
5. misactivate - **incorrect** (deactivate)
6. deactivate - **correct**
7. reconstruct - **correct**

What is a counterargument?

As a verb, counter means "to oppose" or "to go against."

So a **counterargument** is an argument that goes against your main argument.

counterarguments

Argument	counter argument
Sweets are fantastic for children because they are so tasty.	They have a lot of sugar, which will rot their teeth.
Young people love the freedom that driving gives them.	Young people have more accidents than any other age group.
Big cars are the best because I feel safest in them.	Their petrol consumption is very high. They cause more damage to the environment.

Counterarguments – you have a go.

Argument	Counterargument
Dancing is the best form of exercise.	
The tax on tobacco raises millions of pounds each year for the government.	
School holidays should be longer to have a break from school.	

Counterarguments

Argument	Counterargument
Dancing is the best form of exercise.	Many people don't like to dance.
We should lower the rate of tax on tobacco as it already raises millions of pounds each year for the government.	Tobacco causes many illnesses, which put people's health at risk.
School holidays should be longer to have a break from school.	Children's need an education.

Why use counterarguments? It doesn't make sense. Does it....?

- You make your argument stronger, because you show that you understand and respect another person's point of view.
- You have considered their argument before coming to your position.
- It shows that you have thought carefully about your position and you understand the reasons why someone might disagree with you.
- counterarguemnts show that you have come to your point of view fairly and thoughtfully.

Let's go through an example.

Schools should set homework

Arguments for homework	Arguments against homework
Increases teaching and learning time	Children need a break from school
Enhances learning at home	Children need downtime for recreation
Increases knowledge and understanding of topics	Children need exercise

Let's look at an example. **Schools should set homework.**

Homework is an essential part of school life; almost like an extension of the lesson. If the teacher cannot fit everything that is needed to be taught into the lesson, then being able to set homework is essential. This way, pupils can continue the learning at home, which helps their understanding and knowledge of the subject.

In fact, recent research shows a positive link between the amount children do for homework and their achievement levels.

We've given very strong reasons for homework.

counterargument

Some people say aren't children entitled to a break from learning. After spending all day at school, a few hours 'downtime' spent watching television, playing computer games or exercising outside is essential. The government's own health guidelines recommend people aged between 5-18 should exercise for *at least* 60 minutes a day. Where are children going to fit that in if they are busy doing homework every evening?

This shows that we've considered the other side of the argument and that some people think homework should be banned.

(Can you spot the rhetorical question included here?)

The reader might now be in two minds about whether homework is a good idea or not. It is up to the writer to now squash the counterargument case.

However, while it is true that children need a break from learning and they do need exercise, they are only at school for just over six hours each day. If they sleep for ten to eleven hours that still gives them approximately seven hours to do their homework and any other activities. The advantages of children doing homework are just too important to ignore.

Useful phrases

- Some people might say...
- While...
- However...
- On the other hand...
- Whereas...

Let's have a go at this one

Break times are essential in schools

We are trying to argue that schools should keep break times.

But we must acknowledge that some people might disagree.

We have to persuade them and reason against the arguments they might put forward.

Think of arguments for and against break times.

Break times are essential in schools.

Break times are essential	Break times should be banned counterargument
Give children a rest from being in a classroom	Wastes work time
Help develop social skills	Causes arguments
Give opportunity for physical activity	Teachers get cold
Enable children to concentrate more in class	
Enable children to learn how to play safely	Too dangerous

This is the counterargument. We should consider this viewpoint, but how can we downplay* it?

The most important reason for banning playtimes is that they waste work time. The children need to spend more time on their English or Maths work. Children are at school to be educated.

In addition to this, playtimes are too dangerous. Most injuries to children at school happen during playtime. Very few injuries happen in the classroom.

Finally, playtimes are bad for teachers. Many teachers are too old to run around and so they get too cold outside. Also, they have to miss out on having a cup of tea and a chat with other teachers.

*to ‘downplay’ something means to make something appear less important than it really is.

We can downplay this counterargument.

- The most important reason for banning playtimes is that they waste work time. The children need to spend more time on their English or Maths work. Children are at school to be educated.
- Some people might say that break times waste learning time and that children should be focusing on English and Maths. However, despite spending less time in class by having break times children will focus more in class. The break allows them the opportunity to release stress and tension. Children will actually learn more in class after a short break.

We can downplay this counterargument.

In addition to this, playtimes are too dangerous. Most injuries to children at school happen during playtime. Very few injuries happen in the classroom.

It can be true that more accidents happen in the playground at break than in class, the playgrounds are supervised and so serious accidents are very rare. In addition, break times allow children to learn how to play safely and how to interact with others that: a skill they would not learn in a classroom.

We can downplay this counterargument.

- Finally, playtimes are bad for teachers. Many teachers are too old to run around and so they get too cold outside. Also, they have to miss out on having a cup of tea and a chat with other teachers.
- While teachers don't run around and can get cold, break times benefit them too as it allows them to get some fresh air after being in a classroom.

- We have looked at how you can counter argue each point, the work set requires you to respond to a number of different arguments.