**REBUTTALS**

A **counterargument** is an argument (point/reason/view/evidence) that your opponent would make. For example, if your thesis is that *the sky is blue*, a counter argument could argue that the sky isn’t blue.

A **rebuttal** is when you respond directly to your opponent’s argument/ point to explain/ show how/why they are wrong.

**TWO PRINCIPLES OF REBUTTAL**

**Principal no1:** In debate training, it is required that a debater begin by rebutting the previous speech; the objective is to finish your speech with your own arguments so that the listener will remember them.

**Principal no 2:** Identify the argument that you want to rebut, by listening you are already doing some of the work leading to a rebuttal.

**4 REBUTTAL STRATEGIES**

If your argument was: “We should get a cat.”

And your parents’ counterargument was: “But your sister Susie is allergic to cats.”

Here are some rebuttal strategies you could use:

1. **Point out the flaws** [errors] in the counterargument

Ex. Well, I heard you say that Susie is allergic, but there’s actually a problem with that because Lisa was around a dog yesterday and she was fine.

2. Agree with the counterargument but **give them a new point/fact** that contradicts their argument

Ex. I agree that’s Lisa’s allergic to cats, but there are some breed of cats that are hypo-allergenic and won’t cause people’s allergies to act up.

3. Agree with the other side’s support but **twist the facts** to suit your argument

Ex. I know that you said Lisa is allergic, but couldn’t owning a pet also build up her tolerance?

4. **Make an emotional plea** that outweighs their argument (This should be your LAST resort)

Ex. Well you said that we can’t have a pet because of Lisa, but are Lisa’s allergies really as important as rescuing that cat at the shelter who’s trapped in the cage and will be killed if he doesn’t find someone to adopt him??

**REBUTTAL SCAFFOLD**

**The first speaker of the affirmative team has tried to tell you** *(During the debate you will write down on your rebuttal card what your opposition has said.)*

**This is wrong because** *(During the debate you will write a reason why that point is wrong.)*

**S/he also said that** *(Write down another point that was made onto your rebuttal ard.)*

**This is wrong because** *(During the debate write down a reason why that point is wrong.)*

**REBUTTAL SENTENCE STEMS**

*Use the following sentence starters in order to incorporate counterarguments and rebuttals in your writing:*

* *Although...*
* *Even though...*
* *While it may be true that..., ...*
* *In spite of the fact that..., ...*
* *Some people may argue...but...*
* *A possible concern is...*
* *A common counterpoint is...*
* *For example, they [proponents/opponents] contend that...*
* *Those who believe...claim that...*
* *That is an understandable concern, however...*
* *This argument is wrong because...*
* *Although some people think/believe...others understand...*
* *The evidence, however, supports/disproves the argument that...because...*

**EXAMPLE REBUTTAL**

**The second speaker for the Negative told you that** bullying is a natural part of society and that the only way to prevent the more serious effects of bullying is to punish those who do it and help the victims. **But I believe that** this is only doing something after the fact, when we should be working toward prevention. Once bullying has started to the point that it has been brought to adults’ attention, a cycle is in place that is hard to get out of. The bully feels in power and sometimes also ashamed. Sometimes there are others involved, spectators that keep the bullying going by laughing or joining in. And often the victim has internalized some of the messages they have gotten, and feels that no one can help them.