



# EASY WAYS TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE COUNTER-ARGUMENT

The saying “**The best defense is a good offense**” has been around since the 18<sup>th</sup> century; according to “The Facts on File: Dictionary of Proverbs,” it was first recorded as a quote by George Washington in 1799! However, it still holds true today: if you want to win an argument, you must be prepared to defend yourself from the accusation and opinions of your opponents. In English this is called a **counter-argument**, and many teachers consider it the most important part of persuasive writing.

All of the examples in this tutorial are for an essay against teenagers owning cellphones.

## STEP 1: Choose an appropriate sentence starter

Consider beginning your counter-argument with one of these sentence starters, or make one of your own

**SOME MAY SAY THAT...**

**ONE POSSIBLE CONCERN IS...**

**A COMMON ARGUMENT IS...**

**THOSE WHO BELIEVE \_\_\_\_\_ MAY THINK....**

**ONE MISUNDERSTANDING PEOPLE HAVE IS...**

## STEP 2: State your opponent’s strongest argument against you

Don’t deliberately choose an argument that is weak and easy to overcome. This will make you seem uncertain of yourself. Picture it like a street fight: to show your confidence, go after the strongest one first!

**SOME MAY SAY THAT** students need cellphones for school work...

**ONE POSSIBLE CONCERN IS** that children might need a cellphone in case of emergency...

**A COMMON ARGUMENT IS** that cellphones will teach children responsibility at a young age...

## STEP 3: Pick a CONTRADICTION word or phrase

Here are some common words you can use after stating your opponent’s argument.

**BUT**

**HOWEVER**

**ON THE OTHER HAND**

**NEVERTHELESS**

**AND YET...**

## STEP 4: Use evidence or common sense to counter their point and win the argument!

Note how each example ends with the reader agreeing with you again. Don’t shake their confidence in you!

**SOME MAY SAY THAT** students need cellphones for school work, **BUT** according to the California Education Code, schools must provide students with any materials needed, by law!

**ONE POSSIBLE CONCERN IS** that children might need a cellphone in case of emergency. **HOWEVER**, young people lived perfectly safe lives long before cellphones were invented, and if anything, carrying an expensive device on their person only makes them a more likely target for theft or other similar crimes.

**A COMMON ARGUMENT IS** that cellphones will teach children responsibility at a young age, **AND YET** nearly every time I go to the movies there is at least one kid somewhere in the dark theatre texting and ruining the mood for everyone around. Do you honestly feel like cellphones are teaching kids how to be mature?

