Name: Section: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Using Counterarguments in Writing**

**Counterargument:**

A counterargument is an argument (point/reason/view/evidence) that your opponent would make

**Rebuttal:**

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

**Rebuttal Strategies**

There are many different ways that you can rebut someone’s argument. Take a look at the example below.

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
   1. 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
   1. 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
   1. 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)
   1. 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??

**Helpful Sentence Starters for Including Counterarguments in Writing**

* “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…”

**Example #1**

Many people argue 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.

**Example #2**

E-cigarettes are just as harmful to bystanders' health as regular cigarettes are. E-cigarette proponents claim that the electronic cigarettes are not toxic to others in the smokers' vicinity because it is just water vapor that is being expelled into the air. They emphasize the fact that there there is no tobacco or carbon monoxide being released. Even though this *is* true, what the proponents fail to mention is the other harmful elements that are in the smoke. Dr. Glantz, from *Prevention* magazine, states, "…there are several carcinogens that have been identified so far, and we haven't identified everything that's in these formulas." Not only does this prove that e-cigarettes expose toxic chemicals to others, but it also shows that e-cigarettes could be even more harmful than we know since not all of the carcinogens have been identified yet! Why risk the chance of harming others' health by allowing e-cigarettes in buildings? We should just ban all cigarettes, electronic or not, in order to ensure the safety of innocent bystanders.