

“Set it up and knock it down” – Making a Counter-Argument OR Refuting an Opposing Belief

Key Question: In “The Cat and the Coffee Drinkers,” what is one lesson Miss Effie teaches her students that you think is *appropriate and beneficial* for her students, even though *other readers* might oppose it and find this lesson to be *inappropriate or even harmful*?

Writing Assignment: In a fully-developed paragraph, anticipate the opposing argument that readers might make who *disagree* with you about this lesson, and then refute this argument (or prove it false) by making a stronger counter-argument in which you explain why Miss Effie’s lesson is *actually appropriate and beneficial* for her students.

Example & Structure: Follow the example below (about a *different* short story), and smoothly incorporate at least two significant quotations into your paragraph to illustrate your ideas.

Section of Paragraph	Sentence Frames / Examples
1. Topic Sentence - <u>Identify</u> (or “set up”) <u>the opposing opinion or argument</u> that you are going to disprove.	Some people who read “The Griffin and the Minor Canon” by Frank R. Stockton <u>believe that the Griffin is a force of evil, and they agree with the townspeople’s negative, fearful view of the Griffin.</u>
2. Briefly <u>explain the reasoning or argument</u> of people who hold this <i>opposing opinion</i> .	These readers see the Griffin negatively because of its physical appearance, which is “not a pleasant one to look at” due to its “large head, with enormous open mouth and savage teeth” (1). Furthermore, since the town’s people talk of the Griffin as a “monster” and assume that the Griffin “will devour all [their] children” (9), these readers often take the town’s people’s concerns seriously.
3. Use a <u>contrasting transition</u> (such as <i>however</i> ,) to introduce <u>your counter-argument</u> .	<u>However,</u> <u>this view of the Griffin is flawed and based on ignorance because the Griffin actually does the opposite of evil acts; he sacrifices his own well-being in order to bring morality and compassion to the town.</u>
4. Fully explain and illustrate your counter-argument with evidence/at least one specific example. (Also, <u>use appropriate transitions</u> to link your main ideas and supporting details smoothly.)	<u>To begin,</u> the narrator tells us early in the story that “Whenever the people wanted something difficult done for them, they always went to the Minor Canon” (3). These selfish townspeople use the Minor Canon and take advantage of him without showing any gratitude or any regard for his well-being. <u>Moreover,</u> when they force the Minor Canon to leave the town, the Griffin takes over the young man’s thankless duties because he decides that “it [is] a shame that everything should suffer on account of the young man’s absence” (11). By following the Minor Canon’s example, this “monster” actually learns to take care of <u>others’ needs</u> , rather than just his own needs. <u>Finally,</u> the Griffin sacrifices his own life so that the Minor Canon can experience kindness, and when the Minor Canon returns to the town, “everyone [is] anxious to do all that [can] be done for his health and comfort” for the rest of his life (17).
5. End with a strong statement to remember or a call-to-action.	<u>For all these reasons,</u> even though the Griffin may <u>look like</u> an evil monster, he <u>becomes</u> the opposite—an angel of goodness who helps people learn to treat one another with kindness, respect, and compassion.

Notice how transitions are highlighted in turquoise. These words and phrases *help the reader follow* your main ideas and supporting details smoothly.