

What to do in a rebuttal

The goal of refutation is to answer your opponent's arguments. The steps of the refutation process include:

1. Identify the particular argument you are refuting.
2. Critically evaluate the argument and explain why it is wrong.
3. Supply additional evidence to support your claims.
4. Explain the implication of this particular argument for the larger issue in controversy.

Rebuttal speech pointers

1. Take the place of the judge/audience and speak in their language.
2. Synthesize the arguments for the judge.
 - a. You might have an itemized list: "there are several reasons why my opponents claims are wrong..."
 - b. You might meld arguments: "all of my arguments show that" or the "cumulative weight of my arguments points to"
3. Point out your opponent's omissions (arguments they didn't respond to) and explain why those omissions are important for how the debate should be evaluated.
4. Point out what is at stake in the controversy.
5. Provide decision criteria or decision rules or guideposts for how the audience ought to evaluate the debate. Examples include:

My evidence is superior...

My position makes the most sense ...

My argument incorporates your position.

Even if you don't agree with me on this particular issue, your unshakable faith in the first amendment must lead you to conclude in my favor.

What not to do:

1. Don't concede
2. Don't be overly ambitious
3. Don't drop or ignore important arguments
4. Don't spend too much time on your opponents arguments
5. Don't give another constructive