Rebuttals and Qualifiers
• In argument, the claims are not always accepted as true.
• Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments or exceptions to the claim.
• The rebuttal refutes the opposing view or counterargument.
• Or it anticipates the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument.

Rebuttal
• Imagine a crowd of “prospective audience members” hovering over your shoulder asking hard questions.
• Imagine the skeptic, demanding, testy member who will question EVERYTHING!
• Imagining these audience members, can help you foresee the objections and reservations. Potential objections are counterclaims (aka. conditions of rebuttal, opposing views, counterpoints, reservations, etc.).
• Claim: I think video games lead to poor school performance.
• Evidence: Statistics show that students who play video games don’t do their homework.
• Reasoning: Homework is an important part of your grade and an important part of doing well in school.
• Counterclaim: Students need to find time for relaxation so they aren’t so stressed.
• Rebuttal: That’s true, but we shouldn’t spend 6 hours a night on relaxation.

Example
• **Claim:** Putting a limit on the number of immigrants coming into the country would help stop terrorism.

• **Evidence:** We do not have time to properly background check all immigrants.

• **Reasoning:** If we can’t background check the immigrants, then some might be terrorists and we wouldn’t know.

• **Counterclaim:** Running a background check on every immigrant would limit the number we could let in causing needless suffering and even death for those who cannot enter.

• **Rebuttal:** While that is unfortunate, we need to first worry about our own country.
Paper Outline Example

- Introduction
- Supporting point #1
- Supporting point #2
- Supporting point #3
- Supporting point #4
- Counter-argument
- Rebuttal
- Conclusion
• Counter-argument, which also serves as introduction
• Rebuttal, which would usually include the thesis statement
• Supporting point #1
• Supporting point #2
• Supporting point #3
• Supporting point #4
• Conclusion

Paper Outline Example 2
• Write a claim about one of the questions. Then, write the counter-claim and rebuttal. Clearly label each one.
• Be prepared to share with the class.
• Topic ideas
  • Does technology make us more or less alone?
  • Is Facebook the best social media website?
  • Should a boy be able to wear a skirt to school?
  • Do sports teams have a responsibility to hold players to a standard for their personal conduct?
1. Claim
2. Evidence
3. Reasoning
4. Rebuttal

5. Qualifier

Qualifiers
• Qualifiers verbalize the relative strength of an argument.
• They acknowledge the limits of a claim with words such as *most, usually, presumably, almost, in some cases, possibly, for the most part, few, routinely, always or sometimes.*
• Qualifiers and reservations are often used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip 'usually', 'virtually', 'unless' and so on into their claims. Just listen the little voice at the end of a commercial that rapidly covers the conditions and side effects of a new drug.
• **Example:**
If you were arguing that a certain film is one people would enjoy, you might say people “**will probably**” enjoy it since you cannot predict with certainty the subjective experience of others.
• Claim: I think video games lead to poor school performance.
• Evidence: Statistics show that students who play video games don’t do their homework.
• Reasoning: Homework is an important part of your grade and an important part of doing well in school.
• Counterclaim: Students need to find time for relaxation so they aren’t so stressed.
• Rebuttal: That’s true, but we shouldn’t spend 6 hours a night on relaxation.
• ***Qualifier: Video games MAY lead to poor school performance.

Example
• Look at the claim you wrote previously. Practice adding a qualifier to it.
  • Examples: may, might, could, rarely, many, few, often, probably, doubtful
• Rewrite the claim with the qualifier at the bottom of the front of the paper. Put a star ★ next to this sentence.
• Prepare to share with the class.
What rebuttals and qualifiers do you see here?
You Are Not Special

• David McCullough, Jr.
  – Wellesley High School Commencement Address
  – delivered 1 June 2012

• Make a T chart on the back of your paper

• Write **rebuttals** at the top of one column and **qualifiers** at the top of the other

• Write down **two** rebuttals and **three** qualifiers that you see in the following video
  – You Are Not Special Commencement Speech