

Some tips for your refutation...

I. Focus on ONE specific opposing viewpoint. Consider what arguments you might make if you had been assigned a different group of characters for this project. Pick ONE.

II. When thinking about the organization of your refutation paragraph, think of using a “They Say”/ “I Say” structure:

A. “They Say”: State the specific point that someone from an opposing view might make.

1. Example of language to introduce the opposing viewpoint:

a) *Some may argue that GROUP X wields the most power in Salem because _____.*

B. “I Say”: You are not attempting to just contradict the opposing viewpoint, that would be boring. Instead, you need to refute this opposing viewpoint by giving reasons that support what you say.

1. Does the opposing viewpoint fail to take important facts or information into account?

2. Is the opposing viewpoint based on faulty or incomplete evidence?

3. Does the opposing viewpoint rest on questionable or limited assumptions?

4. Does the opposing viewpoint overlook the real issues at hand?

C. Some sentence frames for moving into your refutation:

1. X is mistaken because _____.

2. X’s claim that _____ is limited because _____.

3. Although X does hold some power, Y wields more because _____.

EXAMPLE:

The young accusers are often seen as holding the most responsibility for the hysteria that ensues in Salem. They do, after all, instigate and perpetuate the witch-hunt through their accusations. While the girls do play a role in the spreading fear and suspicion in the village, ultimately it is the irrational and hasty reactions of the adults that carry more responsibility for the spread of panic. For example, Reverend Parris makes the hasty decision to call Hale in from Beverly “as a precaution” (Miller 13). Already a foreboding setting, Parris’ calling of Hale further exacerbates tensions in Salem by causing the residents to question and turn on their neighbors. Similarly, the Putnams, blinded by grief and greed, irrationally and forcefully lead the young accusers and Tituba to name citizens like Goody Goode and Goody. Because the adults, the members of society who are supposed to be rational, do not take the time to evaluate the situation in Salem using reason and logic, they ultimately carry the most blame for the events that occur.