



Creative Refutation

- Generate a single set of objective, measurable criteria to evaluate the two sides of an argument
- Highlight the most critical contrast(s) between competing positions and then defend your choice
- Use your opponents' evidence to make your case
- Exploit their contradictions and inconsistencies
- Accept your opponents' core values or criteria when you can use them for your own purposes – thereby avoiding the comparison of apples and oranges
- Agree on ends, but focus the argument on means
- Question the (long-term?) “goodness” of the effects your opponents aspire to achieve
- Transform your opponents' disadvantages into advantages by switching perspectives
- Leave inessential arguments unrefuted – or even concede them – to save time and energy for the crucial issue(s)
- Refute the following potential weak points of your opponents' argument:
 - Its relevance
 - The logic it's based on
 - The evidence to support it
 - The link between evidence and argument
 - The principle behind it

(with thanks to Robert Branham, *Debate and Critical Analysis*)