

EFFECTIVE REBUTTAL STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

- In order to effectively evaluate the weakness in any given argument, you need to understand what a good argument looks like.
- Each part of a well constructed argument is open for rebuttal, but certainly some attacks are more effective than others.
- In this presentation, we shall analyze together what is the most effective shot that can pull down an argument.

PARTS OF AN ARGUMENT.

- Part 1
 - IDEA/ASSERTION/CLAIM/POINT
- PART 2
 - EXPLANATION/ BODY/ ANALYSIS
- PART 3
 - EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES

ATTACKING THE EVIDENCE

- The argument chain is weakest at link three i.e the evidence since its always easy to dispute evidence presented by your opposition.
- For example by criticising isolated examples perhaps citing that they are isolated cases and the counter examples out weigh the exception.

NB: Attacking the argument here is a poor strategy because your opposition can repair the chain by providing more evidence or by simply rebutting your criticisms.

ATTACKING THE ANALYSIS OR EXPLANATION

- This is more difficult but also more effective. If you can demonstrate that the analysis is illogical or based on assumptions that are false or unlikely to be true, there you destroy the credibility of the argument.
- However, its not usually a fatal blow because a clever opposition can rebuild the chain by giving other reasons, or explaining logical links in a different way, which weakens your rebuttal.

ATTACKING THE IDEA/CLAIM/ASSERTION

- This is usually very difficult to attack since its usually a reasonable idea. But sometimes, you can attack the idea and if you can do it, it's a fatal blow to the argument.
- You can use the even if to blow off any idea. e.g. even if argument A is true, its not the point of today's debate.
- As difficult as it is, if you think the idea is vulnerable, you should attack it, because its effective and efficient.

GOOD LUCK!