Name _____ Date _____

# Counterclaims and Concessions: How an Argument Answers Its Critics

**Directions:** Read the essay, then answer questions about how its parts work together to answer the people who disagree.

**Turn the Elm Street Lot into a Park**

Every town has a place that everyone passes and no one notices. In Alder Bend, it is the gravel parking lot on Elm Street, wedged between the bakery and the hardware store. For years it has seemed like a sensible use of the land: shoppers need somewhere to park, and the lot provides a few dozen spaces within easy walking distance of the downtown businesses. I used to see it that way too, but after a year of walking past it twice a day, I now believe the town should convert the lot into a small public park.

The strongest reason is that downtown offers nowhere comfortable to sit, so a parent pushing a stroller, an employee on a lunch break and a teenager waiting for a ride all end up perched on curbs or leaning against storefront windows. A park with shade trees and a few benches would give them a reason to linger, and people who linger tend to wander into neighboring shops. A lot full of gravel gives them a reason to leave.

Opponents raise three serious objections, and each deserves a fair answer.

The first is that downtown businesses need the parking. It is true that some customers would have to walk a little farther; for a shopper carrying paint cans out of the hardware store, an extra block matters. But the town's own count, conducted last summer, found the lot less than a third full on most weekdays, and the public garage two blocks north rarely fills. The spaces would not disappear so much as move around the corner.

The second objection concerns money. Building even a modest park would cost the town something, and I will not pretend that a tight municipal budget can absorb any expense without strain. Yet the lot already costs money: it has to be regraded after every heavy rain, and its potholes generate complaints each spring. Once that maintenance is counted, the difference between keeping the lot and building the park shrinks considerably.

The third objection looks furthest ahead: the town might someday want to sell the property for apartments or offices. I agree that downtown land is valuable and that the town should keep its options open. Still, a park is far easier to undo than a building: benches can be relocated and young trees replanted, while a sale is permanent.

None of this means every empty corner should become a park. The bakery's delivery truck still needs a place to unload, and hardware customers still need somewhere to pull up for heavy orders. My proposal is deliberately narrower: convert the Elm Street lot, preserve a short loading zone along its edge, and evaluate the results after one year.

A downtown exists to bring people together, and a lot that sends them back to their cars is working against that purpose, however practical it looks on a map.

1. The essay begins by saying the lot "has seemed like a sensible use of the land" and that the writer "used to see it that way too." Why does the writer open this way?
   A. To argue that shoppers in Alder Bend no longer need anywhere to park downtown
   B. To explain how the town first decided to put a gravel lot on Elm Street
   C. To show that the writer still believes the lot is the best use of the land
   D. To acknowledge a view many readers likely share before arguing against it

**2.** Which sentence from the essay about the Elm Street lot presents a view the writer argues against rather than the writer's own view?

A. "The first is that downtown businesses need the parking."

B. "Every town has a place that everyone passes and no one notices."

C. "The spaces would not disappear so much as move around the corner."

D. "A lot full of gravel gives them a reason to leave."

**3.** After giving the main reason for a park, how does the writer organize the next four paragraphs?

A. The writer tells the history of the lot in the order that events happened, from its opening to today.

B. The writer compares the Elm Street lot with the parks that several nearby towns have built in recent years.

C. The writer announces three objections and takes them one at a time, granting part of each before answering.

D. The writer lists all three objections first and then answers them together in one closing paragraph.

**4.** Which two sentences from the Elm Street essay concede a point to the park's opponents?

☐ A. "Yet the lot already costs money: it has to be regraded after every heavy rain, and its potholes generate complaints each spring."

☐ B. "I agree that downtown land is valuable and that the town should keep its options open."

☐ C. "Still, a park is far easier to undo than a building: benches can be relocated and young trees replanted, while a sale is permanent."

☐ D. "A park with shade trees and a few benches would give them a reason to linger, and people who linger tend to wander into neighboring shops."

☐ E. "Building even a modest park would cost the town something, and I will not pretend that a tight municipal budget can absorb any expense without strain."

**5.** In the paragraph about money, the writer admits that a park would cost something before arguing that the real difference is smaller than it seems. How does this order help the rebuttal?

A. It moves the discussion from money to the question of what the land might be worth later.

B. Granting the cost first shows the writer is not hiding it, so the reply seems fair.

C. It shows that the opponents' worry about cost is false and can safely be ignored.

D. It proves that building the park would save the town money over the long run.

**6.** How does the writer's answer to the third objection, about selling the land someday, differ from the answers to the first two?

A. It argues that downtown land is not especially valuable to the town or its businesses.

B. It rests on reasoning about which choice can be undone rather than on counts or costs.

C. It relies on the town's count of how full the lot was on most weekdays last summer.

D. It is the only answer that grants part of the objection before replying to it.

**7.** How does the paragraph that begins "None of this means every empty corner should become a park" shape the writer's claim?

A. It narrows the proposal to a single lot with a one-year review, so the claim seems less extreme.

B. It withdraws the writer's support for turning the Elm Street lot into a park after all.

C. It argues that the bakery and the hardware store should give up their loading space entirely.

D. It presents new evidence from the town's count of how many cars park there on weekdays.

**8.** What does the closing paragraph, which ends "however practical it looks on a map," contribute to the essay's structure?

A. It answers a fourth objection, about delivery trucks and customers with heavy orders.

B. It concedes that the gravel lot is the most practical use of the downtown land after all.

C. It sums up what the town's count of parked cars found on weekdays last summer.

D. It recalls the opening's view of the lot as sensible and judges it by what a downtown is for.