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Yes, But Argument

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**Introduction**

For as long as humans have been able to communicate with each other, they would argue. Although arguing typically has a negative connotation in today society, that does not mean it is a terrible thing to do. Arguing has many forms. Whether it is to correct a person, challenge a person’s idea, or to shut them down, people arguing end goal is to come to a consensus. A *Yes, but* is one of the many strategies to use in an argument. It has its strengths, but it also has flaws that should be acknowledged within an ongoing conversation being had. At the same time, not having any flaws in writing.

**Explanation of the Yes, But Argument**

The *Yes, but* argument is a strategy used when debating. It allows the person using the *Yes, but* to show that they acknowledge the other person’s point of view, and still be able to supply a counterpoint. An example would be someone saying, “The Saints might be good this year if they keep playing like they are in this game.” Then someone else could say “Yes, but they are playing against a wild card team.” In this example the person arguing the statement, “The Saints might be good this year...,” has acknowledged that the Saints are doing good, but its then followed by a counter argument of they are playing against a wild card team is the explanation as to why they are doing good.

**Main Idea**

As mentioned previously, using the *Yes, but* strategy allows a person arguing to show the other person that their point has been taken into consideration or even agreed partially upon, but then counter as to why the argument is wrong entirely, or why a part of it is wrong. Although this is a strength of the *Yes, but*, it can also be its weakness at the same time. Using the same example, the person using the *Yes, but* has shut down any form of discussion. It also no longer becomes trying to show that they are wrong and to supply more discussion on the subject, but to show that the person using *Yes, but* is smarter and has more power. While being used in a conversation, the *Yes, but* can have a negative effect on a topic, but within writing, such as a paper debating a topic, it does not have that ability to shut down a discussion. In argumentative writing, the Y*es, but* can be a useful tool. Within an argumentative paper, you are already acknowledging counterpoints to your main argument, so after acknowledging those counterpoints, using the Y*es, but* allows you to use more context and information to counter those counterpoints without negatively affecting an ongoing discussion.

**Putting it into Practice**

Using the *Yes, but* in a conversation, you can easily shut down a discussion and have the person you are conversing with think negatively upon you, which will then lower the effectiveness of them taking your argument into consideration. According to Marvin G. Knittel, a professor at the University of Nebraska where he has taught psychodrama, counseling theories, counseling methods, group counseling, and practicum, in his article for *Psychology Today* titled "How a Yabut Can Kill a Conversation,” says “By adding the word “but” Yabuts discount everything leading up to it.... Essentially, (adding) the “but” discounts what was said before it. The “but” keeps him (the person) in control.” Although I do agree with Professor Marvin Knittel that using *Yes, but* can kill a conversation, it has happened to me many times. I would propose that there is a way to use *Yes, but* within a conversation that will not negatively affect the discussion. Following the *Yes, but*, which is acknowledging the point and then the rebuttal, adding more information to turn the discussion back to the original person who started the discussion. Using the example earlier, instead of stopping with, “... they are playing against a wild card team,” you can add on,” this wild card team had gotten pretty far in the playoffs last year.” In this example, adding that extra information after the *Yes, but* encourages the other person to explain more as to why they think as they do.

In an active conversation, there is no pressure to follow up with information as to why you think the other side is wrong. But in argumentative writing, there is no issue of ending an active discussion with someone using the *Yes, but* because you are not actively speaking to them. When stating a counterpoint to your argument in argumentative writing, you are acknowledging the point someone as made, the Yes in a *Yes, but*, then saying they are wrong, the but. Then, followed by, an explanation and information as to why the counterpoint is wrong. An example of this would be someone drafting a paper proposing the stop encouragement of scalping products. Stating that buying from scalpers creates a demand for their wrongful pricing. Using the counterpoint, “If scalpers are the only one supplying the product, buying it from them is the only way to receive the product.” The author of this paper will acknowledge that scalpers may be the only ones with the product, then followed with why that counterpoint is wrong and backed up with an explanation and information, such as saying, “not buying from someone scalping lowers the demand for the product which will then encourage the scalpers to lower the prices of the products.... etc.” In argumentative writing, not following up with explanation and backing up with information as to why you think the counterpoint to your argument is wrong lowers your impact on the point you are trying to make.

**Closing**

In conclusion, using the *Yes, but* argument can be useful in explaining why you think a point being made is wrong if used correctly. In an active conversation, using it incorrectly would be to stop after you say why the person is wrong. But using it correctly would be, after the explanation, leading the other person to explain more by giving a partial counterpoint. This encourages the discussion to continue to not fall short, and not having the person to receive a negative impression of you which would then lower the impact of your point. At the same time, using *Yes, but* does not have this weakness in argumentative writing. Because when drafting a paper, there is not the same type of pressure one receives when authoring a paper like there is in an active conversation, and they are already prepared to counter a counterpoint with information from sources and an explanation in a non-insulting way.