**11AP Lang. & Comp.**

**Logos**

Speaker s appeal to logos, or reason, by offering clear, rational ideas. Appealing to logos (Greek for “embodied thought”) means thinking logically – having a clear main idea and using specific details, examples, facts, statistics, or expert testimony to back it up. Creating a logical argument often involves defining the terms of the argument and identifying connections such as causality (cause and effect). It can also require considerable research. Evidence from expert sources and authorities, facts, and quantitative data can be very persuasive if selected carefully and presented accurately. Sometimes, writers and speakers add charts and graphs as a way to present such information, but often they weave this information into their argument.

Although on first reading or hearing, Lou Gehrig’s farewell speech may seem largely emotional, it is actually based on irrefutable logic. He starts with the thesis that he is “the luckiest man on the face of the earth” and supports it with two points: (1) the love and kindness he’s received in his seventeen years of playing baseball, and (2) a list of great people who have been his friends, family, and teammates in that time.

**Conceding and Refuting**

One way to appeal to logos is to acknowledge a **counterargument** – that is, to anticipate objections or opposing views. While you might worry that raising an opposing view might poke a hole in your argument, you’ll be vulnerable if you ignore ideas that run counter to your own. In acknowledging a counterargument, you agree (concede) that an opposing argument may be true or reasonable, but then you deny (refute) the validity of all or part of the argument. This combination of **concession** and **refutation** actually strengthens your own argument; it appeals to logos by demonstrating that you understand a viewpoint other than your own, you’ve thought through other evidence, and you stand by your view.

In longer, more complex texts, the writer may address the argument in greater depth, but Lou Gehrig simply concedes what some of his listeners may think – that his bad break is a cause for discouragement or despair. Gehrig refutes this by saying that he has “an awful lot to live for.” Granted, he implies his concession rather than stating it outright; but in addressing it at all, he acknowledges a contrasting view of his situation – that is, a counterargument.

**Activity**

In her article *Slow Food Nation*, Alice Waters, a famous chef, food activist, and author argues for acknowledgement of the full consequences of what she calls “our national diet.” Please carefully read an excerpt from this text below and answer the questions that follow.

**From *Slow Food Nation***

**ALICE WATERS**

﻿ It’s no wonder our national attention span is so short: We get hammered with the message that everything in our lives should be fast, cheap and easy–especially food. So conditioned are we to believe that food should be almost free that even the rich, who pay a tinier fraction of their incomes for food than has ever been paid before in human history, grumble at the price of an organic peach–a peach grown for flavor and picked, perfectly ripe, by a local farmer who is taking care of the land and paying his workers a fair wage! And yet, as the writer and farmer David Mas Masumoto recently pointed out, pound for pound, peaches that good still cost less than Twinkies. When we claim that eating well is an elitist preoccupation, we create a smokescreen that obscures the fundamental role our food decisions have in shaping the world. The reason that eating well in this country costs more than eating poorly is that we have a set of agricultural policies that subsidize fast food and make fresh, wholesome foods, which receive no government support, seem expensive. Organic foods seem elitist only because industrial food is artificially cheap, with its real costs being charged to the public purse, the public health and the environment.

Questions:

1. What primary argument does Waters make in this excerpt? Secondary?

2. Describe one example of a counterargument that she refutes in this piece. HOW does she do this?

3. Underline or highlight sections of text where Waters appeals to reason.