Charitability

Being charitable is incredibly important in philosophical writing. You want to be charitable when outlining the view of another philosopher (especially if it's someone that you are going to be objecting to) in order to show the reader that you are actually engaging with the text. To misrepresent the view of an author and then attack it is known as a "**straw man,**" as it's much easier to knock down a straw man in "battle" than a real person. For example:

Someone makes a guide on how to write a philosophy paper and you say "this guide wants us all to write in exactly the same way and discourages creativity in writers." Maybe you believe this! But is this really a charitable, and accurate, account of what this guide is trying to accomplish? Obviously not. It's hard to take the rest of a paper seriously after seeing that the opposing argument was not even given a fair chance; it's like a bad argument was made up just to make the objection seem more plausible.

Similarly, you want to be charitable in your objection. When the reader finishes that section of your paper, he or she should be thinking "wow! That seems like a reasonable objection. It looks like the author has some work to do if they want to defend their initial viewpoint." It just seems academically disingenuous and somewhat superficial to devote half a sentence to an objection that you easily brush aside; for starters, someone else's argument has been unfairly misrepresented for the sake of making your own point and the resulting paper isn't as academically rigorous as it could have been.