

Useful Templates

Need help getting started on a paper and/or making certain rhetorical moves in your paper? These templates might help!

INTRODUCING WHAT "THEY SAY"

- A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X's work has several fundamental problems.
- It has become common today to dismiss X's contribution to this field of sociology.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for _____.

INTRODUCING "STANDARD VIEWS"

- Americans today tend to believe that _____.
- Conventional wisdom has it that _____.
- Common sense seems to dictate that _____.
- The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that _____.
- It is often said that _____.
- My whole life I have heard it said that _____.
- You would think that _____.
- Many people assumed that _____.

MAKING WHAT "THEY SAY" SOMETHING YOU SAY

- I've always believed that _____.
- When I was a child, I used to think that _____.
- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that _____.
- At the same time that I believe _____, I also believe _____.

INTRODUCING SOMETHING IMPLIED OR ASSUMED

- Although none of them have ever said it so directly, my teachers have often given me the impression that _____.
- One implication of X's treatment of _____ is that _____.
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that _____.
- While they rarely admit as much, _____ often take for granted that _____.

INTRODUCING AN ONGOING DEBATE

- In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____. My own view is _____.
- When it comes to the topic of _____, most of us will readily agree that _____. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _____. Whereas some are convinced that _____, others maintain that _____.
- In conclusion then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of _____ can't have it both ways. Their assertion that _____ is contradicted by their claim that _____.

CAPTURING AUTHORIAL ACTION

- X acknowledges that _____.
- X agrees that _____.
- X argues that _____.
- X believes that _____.
- X denies/does not deny that _____.
- X complains that _____.
- X concedes that _____.
- X demonstrates that _____.
- X deplores the tendency to _____.
- X celebrates the fact that _____.
- X emphasizes that _____.

CAPTURING AUTHORIAL ACTION cont.

- X insists that _____.
- X observes that _____.
- X questions whether _____.
- X refutes the claim that _____.
- X reminds us that _____.
- X reports that _____.
- X suggests that _____.
- X urges us to _____.

INTRODUCING QUOTATIONS

- X states, "_____."
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, "_____."
- According to X, "_____."
- X himself writes, "_____."
- In her book, _____, X maintains that "_____."
- Writing the journal *Commentary*, X complains that, "_____."
- In X's view, "_____."
- X agrees when she writes, "_____."
- X disagrees when he writes, "_____."
- X complicates matters further when he writes, "_____."

EXPLAINING QUOTATIONS

- Basically, X is saying _____.
- In other words, X believes _____.
- In making this comment, X argues that _____.
- X is insisting that _____.
- X's point is that _____.
- The essence of X's argument is that _____.

DISAGREEING, WITH REASONS

- I think X is mistaken because she overlooks _____.
- X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____.
- I disagree with X's view that _____ because, as recent research has shown, _____.
- X contradicts herself/can't have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues _____. But on the other hand, she also says _____.
- By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____.
- X claims _____, but we don't need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _____ has long known that _____.

AGREEING—WITH A DIFFERENCE

- I agree that _____ because my experience _____ confirms it.
- X is surely right about _____ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that _____.
- X's theory of _____ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of _____.
- I agree that _____, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people believe _____.
- Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to _____.
- If group X is right that _____, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that _____.

EMBEDDING VOICE MARKERS

- X overlooks what I consider an important point about _____.
- My own view is that what X insists is a _____ is in fact a _____.
- I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls _____.
- These conclusions, which X discusses in _____, add weight to the argument that _____.

Courtesy the Odegaard Writing & Research Center (<http://www.depts.washington.edu/owrc>)
 Adapted from Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter In Academic Writing*.
 New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

AGREEING AND DISAGREEING SIMULTANEOUSLY

- Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that _____.
- Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that _____.
- Though I concede _____, I still insist that _____.
- Whereas X provides ample evidence that _____, Y and Z's research on _____ and _____ convinces me that _____ instead.
- X is right that _____, but she seems on more dubious ground when she claims that _____.
- While X is probably wrong when she claims that _____, she is right that _____.
- I'm of two minds about X's claim that _____. On the one hand, I agree that _____. On the other hand, I'm not sure if _____.
- My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X's position that _____, but I find Y's argument about _____ and Z's research on _____ to be equally persuasive.

SIGNAL WHO IS SAYING WHAT

- X argues _____.
- According to both X and Y, _____.
- Politicians _____, X argues, should _____.
- Most athletes will tell you that _____.
- My own view, however, is that _____.
- I agree, as X may not realize, that _____.
- But _____ are real, and arguably, the most significant factor in _____.
- But X is wrong that _____.
- However, it is simply not true that _____.
- Indeed, it is highly likely that _____.
- But the view that _____ does not fit all the facts.
- X is right that _____.
- X is wrong that _____.
- X is both right and wrong that _____.
- Yet a sober analysis of the matter reveals _____.
- Nevertheless, new research shows _____.
- Anyone familiar with _____ should see that _____.

ENTERTAINING OBJECTIONS

- At this point I would like to raise some objections that have been inspired by the skeptic in me. She feels that I have been ignoring _____. "_____, " she says to me, "_____."
- Yet some readers may challenge the view that _____. After all, many believe _____. Indeed, my own argument that _____ seems to ignore _____ and _____.
- Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that _____.

NAMING YOUR NAYSAYERS

- Here many *feminists* would probably object that _____.
- But *social Darwinists* would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.
- *Biologists*, of course, may want to dispute my claim that _____.
- Nevertheless, both *followers and critics of Malcolm X* will probably argue that _____.
- Although not all *Christians* think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that _____.
- *Non-native English speakers* are so diverse in their views that it's hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _____.

INTRODUCING OBJECTIONS INFORMALLY

- But is my proposal realistic? What are the chances of its actually being adopted?
- Yet is it always true that _____? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that _____?
- However, does the evidence I've cited prove conclusively that _____?
- "Impossible," you say. "Your evidence must be skewed."

MAKING CONCESSIONS WHILE STILL STANDING YOUR GROUND

- Although I grant that _____, I still maintain that _____.
- Proponents of X are right to argue that _____. But they exaggerate when they claim that _____.
- While it is true that _____, it does not necessarily follow that _____.
- On the one hand, I agree with X that _____. But on the other hand, I still insist that _____.

INDICATING WHO CARES

- _____ used to think _____. But recently [or within the past few decades] _____ suggests that _____.
- What this new research does, then, is correct the mistaken impression, held by many earlier researchers, that _____.
- These findings challenge the work of earlier researchers, who tended to assume that _____.
- Recent studies like these shed new light on _____, which previous studies had not addressed.
- Researchers have long assumed that _____. For instance, one eminent scholar of cell biology, _____, assumed in _____, her seminal work on cell structures and functions that fat cells _____. As _____ herself put it, "_____" (200). Another leading scientist, _____, argued that fat cells "_____" (200). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of fat, the basic assumption was that _____.
- If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes _____. However, new research shows _____.
- These findings challenge dieter's common assumptions that _____.
- At first glance, teenagers appear to _____. But on closer inspection _____.

ESTABLISHING WHY YOUR CLAIM MATTERS

- X matters/is important because _____.
- Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concern over _____.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.
- These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of _____.
- My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _____.
- These conclusions/This discovery will have significant applications in _____ as well as in _____.
- Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.

ADDING METACOMMENTARY

- In other words,
- What _____ really means by this is
- Essentially, I am arguing that
- My point is not that we should _____, but that we should _____.
- What _____ really means is _____.
- In other words, _____.
- To put it another way, _____.
- In sum, then, _____.
- My conclusion, then, is that, _____.
- In short, _____.
- What is more important, _____.
- Incidentally, _____.
- By the way, _____.
- Chapter 2 explores, _____, while Chapter 3 examines _____.
- Having just argued that _____, let us now turn our attention to _____.
- Although some readers may object that _____, I would answer that _____.