

They Say/I Say Templates

Why Templates?

Academic writing requires presenting your sources and your ideas effectively to readers. According to Graff and Birkenstein, the first element in the process involves “entering a conversation about ideas” between you—the writer—and your sources to reflect your critical thinking (ix). The templates allow you, the writer, to organize your ideas in relationship to your thesis, supporting evidence, opposing evidence, and the conclusion of the argument.

The Most Important Templates:

On the one hand, _____. On the other hand, _____.

Author X contradicts herself. At the same time that she argues _____, she also implies _____.

I agree that _____.

She argues _____, and I agree because _____.

Her argument that _____ is supported by new research showing that _____.

In recent discussions of _____, a controversial issue has been whether _____. On the one hand, some argue that _____. On the other hand, however, others argue that _____.

Introducing Standard Views:

Americans today tend to believe that _____.

Conventional wisdom has it that _____.

My whole life I have heard it said that _____.

Making those Views Something You Say:

I have always believed that _____.

When I was a child, I used to think that _____.

Writing a Summary:

She demonstrates that _____.

In fact, they celebrate the fact that _____.

Introducing a Quote:

X insists, “_____.”

As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “_____.”

According to X, “_____.”

In her book, *Book Title*, X maintains that _____.

X complicates matters further when she writes that _____.

Disagreeing:

I think that X is mistaken because she overlooks _____.

_____.

I disagree with X’s view that _____ because, as recent research has shown, _____.

Introducing Your Point of View:

X overlooks what I consider an important point about _____.

_____.

I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls _____.

My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _____.

These conclusions will have significant applications in _____ as well as in _____.

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006.

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