

Templates for Framing One's Own and Others' Positions

Starting Your Essay with What Others Are Saying

Templates 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_____.

You would think that_____.

Many people assume that_____.

Templates for Introducing Something Implied or Assumed

Although none of them have said 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_____.

Templates for Introducing an Ongoing Debate

In discussions of X, one controversial issues has been_____. On the 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_____.

Introducing Quotations or Summary

Verbs for Making a Claim

argue, assert, believe, claim, emphasize, insist, observe, remind us, report, suggest

Verbs for Expressing Agreement

acknowledge, admire, agree, celebrate the fact that, corroborate, do not deny, endorse, extol, praise, reaffirm, support, verify

**These templates and a discussion of their various uses can be found in Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein Graff, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006.

Verbs for Questioning or Disagreeing

complain, complicate, contend, contradict, deny, deplore the tendency to, disavow, question, refute, reject, renounce, repudiate

Verbs for Making Recommendations

advocate, call for, demand, encourage, exhort, implore, plead, recommend, urge, warn

Templates for Introducing Quotations

X states, “_____.”
 As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “_____.”
 According to X, “_____.”
 X himself writes, “_____.”
 In her book, _____, X maintains that “_____.”
 Writing in the journal *Commentary*, X complains that “_____.”
 In X’s view, “_____.”
 X agrees when she writes, “_____.”
 X complicates matters further when she writes “_____.”

Templates for 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_____.

“Yes/No/Okay, But”: Three Ways to Respond**Templates for 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_____.

Templates for Agreeing

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 that_____.

Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to_____.

Templates for Agreeing and then Disagreeing

Yes and no:_____.

Yes, but_____.

Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his conclusion that_____.

Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his conclusion_____.

Though I concede that_____, I still insist that_____.

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_____.

Whereas X provides ample evidence that_____, Y and Z's research on_____ and_____ convinces me that_____ instead.

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 this 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.

"And Yet": Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say

Templates for Signaling Who Is Saying What in Your Own Writing

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_____.

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_____.

"Skeptics May Object": Planting a Naysayer in Your Text

Templates for Entertaining Objections

Yet some readers may challenge my view that_____. After all, many believe_____. Indeed, my own argument that_____ seems to ignore_____ and_____.

Of course, some will likely disagree with the assertion that_____.

Here, many feminists may probably object that_____.

But social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that_____.

Biologists may wish to dispute my claim that_____.

Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably suggest otherwise and argue that_____.

Although not all Christians think alike, some will probably dispute my claim that_____.

Non-native English speakers are so diverse in their views that it's difficult to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _____.
"Impossible," you say?
Far from it. There are important counter arguments that bear our consideration.

Templates for Making Concessions, While Still Standing Your Ground

Although I will grant that_____, I still maintain that_____.
Proponents of X are quite correct to argue that_____. But they tend to exaggerate when they claim that_____.
While it is certainly true that_____, it does not necessarily follow that_____.
On the one hand, I agree with X that_____. But on the other hand, I still maintain that_____.

"So What? Who Cares?": Saying Why It Matters

Templates for Indicating Who Cares

_____ used to think_____. But recently_____ suggests that_____.
This interpretation challenges the work of those critics who have long assumed 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.

Templates for Establishing Why Your Claims Matter

X matters/is important because_____.
Although X may seem like a trivial distinction, it is in fact crucial in regards to the 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/preparing for us to address the larger matter of_____.
These conclusions will have significant applications in _____ as well as_____.
Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of_____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about_____.

"In Other Words": The Art of Metacommentary

Templates for Introducing Metacommentary

To Ward Off Potential Misunderstandings

Essentially, I am arguing that_____.
My point is not that we should_____, but that we should_____.
What_____ really means is_____.

To Alert Readers to an Elaboration of a Previous Idea

In essence _____.

In other words _____.

To put this another way _____.

To Provide Readers with a Roadmap to Your Text

Having just argued that _____, let us now turn our attention to _____.

With this distinction at hand, we can now go on to clarify _____.

First, a qualification _____.

A necessary concession is in order _____.

First, I will address _____, then I will go on to examine _____.

To Move from a General Claim to a Specific Example

For instance, _____.

For example, _____.

_____, for instance, demonstrates _____.

Consider _____, for example.

To take a case in point, _____.

To Indicate that a Claim Is Especially Important, or Less Important

Even more important, _____.

But above all, _____.

Incidentally, _____.

By the way _____.

To Help You Anticipate and Respond to Objections

Although some readers may object that _____, I would answer that _____.

Others are likely to find _____, but I would suggest _____.

To Guide Readers to Your Most General Point

In sum, then _____.

Let me conclude in the following way _____.

In short, _____.

Essentially, _____.