They Say, I Say: *TEMPLATES FOR WRITING ABOUT RESEARCH*

*They Say, I Say* (Graff, Birkenstein, and Durst, 2012) shows students that “writing well means entering a conversation, summarizing others (they say) to set up one’s own argument (I say)” (xx). To help students accomplish this goal, they offer the following templates:

**INTRODUCING WHAT “THEY SAY”**

- In discussions of __________, a controversial issue is whether __________. While some argue that __________, others contend that __________. This is not to say that __________.
- As a result of my study, __________.
- 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 __________, but this is not to say that __________.
- Her argument that __________ is supported by new research showing that __________.
- A number of scholars have recently suggested that __________.
- It has become common today to dismiss __________.
- In their recent work, X and Y have offered harsh critiques of __________ for __________.

**INTRODUCING STANDARD VIEWS**

- Americans have always believed that __________.
- Many Americans assume that __________.
- Most scholars in the field believe __________.
- Conventional wisdom has it that __________.
- Common sense seems to dictate that __________.
- The standard way of thinking about __________ has it that __________.
- You would think that __________.
- I have always believed that __________.
- I used to think that __________.
- Anyone familiar with __________ should agree that __________.
INTRODUCING ASSUMPTIONS

- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that ________.
- X has often given me the impression that ________.
- One implication of X’s treatment of ________ is that ________.
- X apparently assumes that ________.
- While they rarely admit as such, ________ often take for granted 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 ________.
- X tells us a great deal about ________ But can this work be generalized to ________?

INTRODUCING ONGOING DEBATE

- In discussions of ________, one controversial issue has been ________. On the one hand, ________ argues _________. On the other hand, ________ contends _________. Others even maintain _________. My own view is _________.
- In addressing the issue of ________, experts have considered several explanations for _________. X argues that _________. According to Y and Z, another plausible explanation 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 SUMMARIES AND QUOTATIONS

- She advocates _________.
- They celebrate the fact that _________.
- He admits _________.
- As the prominent ________ X puts it, “_________.”
- According to X, “_________.”
- In her book ________, X maintains that “_________.”
- Writing in the journal ________, X complains that _________.

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In X’s view, “__________.”
X disagrees when he writes, “__________.”
X complicates matters further when she writes, “__________.”
Basically, X is warning that __________.
In other words, X believes __________.
In making this comment, X urges us to __________.
X is corroborating the age-old adage that __________.
X’s point is that __________.
The essence of X’s argument is that __________.
What is the effect of __________ on __________? Previous work on __________ by X, Y, and Z supports __________.

WAYS OF RESPONDING: AGREEMENT

She argues __________, and I agree because __________.
I sympathize with __________, because __________.
X tells a story about __________ to make the point that __________. My own experience with __________ yields a point that is similar.
What I take away from my experience with __________ is __________. As a result, I conclude __________.
I agree that __________ because my experience at __________ confirms it.
I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls __________.
These conclusions, which X discusses in __________, add weight to the argument that __________.
X is right about __________ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that __________.
X’s theory of __________ is useful because it sheds light on the difficult problem of __________.
Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to __________.
I agree that __________, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people still believe __________.
If group X is right that __________, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that __________.
WAYS OF RESPONDING: DISAGREEMENT

- He says __________, and I disagree because __________.
- 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 __________. On the other hand, she also says __________.
- X’s assertion that __________ doesn’t fit the facts.
- X overlooks what I consider an important point about __________.
- My own view is that what X insists is a __________ is in fact a __________.
- By focusing on __________, X overlooks the deeper problem of __________.
- I agree that __________, but that’s precisely why I oppose __________.
- Of course some might object that __________. Although I concede that __________, I still maintain that __________.
- X tells a story about __________ to make the point that __________. My own experience with __________ yields a point that is different. What I take away from my experience with __________ is __________. As a result, I conclude __________.
- Although some readers might think that this text is about __________, it is in fact about __________.
- My view, however, contrary to what X has argued, is that __________.

WAYS OF RESPONDING: QUALIFIED AGREEMENT WITH A DIFFERENCE

- He claims that __________, and I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, I agree that __________. On the other hand, I still insist that __________.
- Adding to X’s argument, I would point out that __________.
- In recent discussions of __________, a controversial issue has been whether __________. On the one hand, some argue that __________. From this perspective, __________. On the other hand, however, others argue that __________. In the words of __________, one of this view’s main proponents, “__________.” According to this view, __________. In sum, then, the issue is whether __________ or __________. My own view is that __________. Though I concede that __________, I still maintain that __________. For example, __________. Although some might object that __________, I would reply that __________. The issue is important because __________.
X tells a story about __________ to make the point that __________. My own experience with __________ yields a point that is both similar and different. What I take away from my experience with __________ is __________. As a result, I conclude __________.

Although I agree with X that __________, I cannot accept his conclusion that __________.

Although I agree with X that __________, I cannot accept his overriding assumption that __________.

Although I disagree with X’s claim that __________, I fully endorse his final conclusion that __________.

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.

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 about __________ to be equally persuasive.

Experts studying __________ have argued that it is caused by __________. While __________ contributes to the problem, __________ is also an important factor.

Studies of __________ have indicated __________. It is not clear, however, that this conclusion applies to __________.

ENTERTAINING OBJECTIONS

At this point I would like to raise some possible objections; first, I could be accused of ignoring __________.

Some readers may challenge my views by insisting that __________.

Of course, many will probably disagree on the grounds that __________.

Here many __________ would probably object that __________.

Supporters of __________ would certainly take issue with the argument that __________.

Experts in __________ may want to question whether __________.

Followers/critics will probably suggest otherwise and argue that __________.

Although not all __________ think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that __________.

Participants in __________ are so diverse in their views that it’s hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that __________.

Yet is it necessarily true that __________? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that __________?
However, does the evidence I’ve cited prove conclusively that __________?

Some might say that I am reading the research selectively in concluding that __________.

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 __________.

__________ might object that __________.

Is my claim realistic? I have argued that __________, but readers may question __________.

My explanation accounts for __________ but does not explain __________. This is because __________.

**“SO WHAT” ARGUMENT: WHY IT MATTERS**

__________ used to think __________. But recently, experts suggest that __________.

This distinction is important because __________.

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.

These findings challenge the assumption that __________.

At first glance, you might assume __________. But on closer inspection, __________.

__________ is important because __________.

Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of the concern over __________.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is __________.

These findings have important implications for the broader domain of __________.

The finding that __________ should be of interest to __________ because __________.

If we are right about __________, then major consequences follow for __________.

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

Although __________ may seem of concern to only a small group of __________, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about __________.
METACOMMENTARY: THE BIG PICTURE

- What __________ really means is __________.
- My point is not __________ but __________.
- Ultimately, then, my goal is to demonstrate that __________.
- Essentially, I am arguing not that __________ but that __________.
- This is not to say __________, but rather __________.
- X is concerned less with __________ than with __________.
- Having just argued that __________, I now want to complicate the point by __________.
- In sum, then, __________.
- My conclusion, then, is that __________.
- I believe __________. But let me back up and explain how I arrived at that conclusion: __________. In this way, I came to believe that __________.
- So far we have been talking about __________. But the real issue is __________.
Other tips…

Say more than “Say”: vary your verbs!

- **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
- **Verbs for questioning or disagreeing**: complain, complicate, contend, contradict, deny, deplore the tendency to, qualify, question, refute, reject, renounce, repudiate
- **Verbs for making recommendations**: advocate, call for, demand, encourage, exhort, implore, plead, recommend, urge, warn

Connect the dots: use transitions effectively!

- **Addition**: also, and, besides, furthermore, in addition, indeed, in fact, moreover, so too
- **Example**: after all, as an illustration, for example, for instance, specifically, to take a case in point, consider
- **Elaboration**: actually, by extension, in short, that is, in other words, to put it another way, to put it bluntly, to put it succinctly, ultimately
- **Comparison**: along the same lines, in the same way, likewise, similarly
- **Contrast**: although, but, by contrast, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, whereas, while, yet
- **Cause and Effect**: accordingly, as a result, consequently, hence, since, so, then, therefore, thus
- **Concession**: admittedly, although it’s true, granted, naturally, of course, to be sure
- **Conclusion**: as a result, consequently, hence, in conclusion, in short, in sum, therefore, thus, to sum up, to summarize