

## SOME “THEY SAY/ I SAY” TEMPLATES FOR ARGUMENTATION

In *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein claim that “Academic writing in particular calls upon writers not simply to express their own ideas, but to do so as a response to what others have said” (ix). In other words, think of your argument in terms of what the authorities or conventional wisdom maintains about a given topic (*They say*) and how what *you* think differs or diverges (*I say*).

Here are some templates to get you started on incorporating and integrating these two parts.

### Introducing “standard views”

1. Americans today tend to believe that \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Many people assume that \_\_\_\_\_.

### Introducing something implied or assumed

1. One implication of X’s treatment of \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Although X does not say so directly/explicitly, she apparently assumes that \_\_\_\_\_.

### Disagreeing, with reasons

1. I think X is mistaken because she overlooks \_\_\_\_\_.
2. X’s claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I disagree with X’s view that \_\_\_\_\_ because, as recent research has shown, \_\_\_\_\_.

### Establishing why your claims matter

1. Although X seems trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today’s concern over \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of \_\_\_\_\_, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about \_\_\_\_\_.

### Entertaining objections

1. Of course, many will probably disagree with this claim that \_\_\_\_\_. (Note: When possible, try to provide more information about whom “many” refers to. Does it refer to many people in general? Most Westerners? Most men? Many white people? Many feminists? Most bourgeois apologists?)
2. Yet is it always true that \_\_\_\_\_? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Some readers might challenge my view that \_\_\_\_\_. After all, many believe that \_\_\_\_\_. Indeed, my own argument that \_\_\_\_\_ seems to ignore \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Making concessions while still standing your ground

1. Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Although I disagree with much of what X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that \_\_\_\_\_.
3. X is right that \_\_\_\_\_, but she seems to be on more dubious ground when she claims that \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Whereas X provides ample evidence that \_\_\_\_\_, Y and Z’s research on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ convinces me that \_\_\_\_\_ instead.
5. Proponents of X are right to argue that \_\_\_\_\_. But they exaggerate when they claim that \_\_\_\_\_.
6. While it is true that \_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow that \_\_\_\_\_.