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 ________. 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/or does not deny that ________.
• X complaints that ________.
• X concedes that ________.
• X demonstrates that ________.
• X deplores the tendency to ________.
• X celebrates the fact that ________.
• X emphasizes 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.
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 ________.
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 _________, is 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 ________.