“They say, I say” Templates

Adapted with changes from: Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say/ I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing. New York: Norton, 2010

The following templates and transitions, adapted from Graff and Birkenstein, will help you present your thesis, supporting evidence as well as opposing evidence in a clear, straightforward manner. Remember to cite all of your sources, both in-text and in your works cited/bibliography page at the end of your paper. These templates can help you structure your sentences and help you get your ideas and evidence across to your reader.

When Introducing Standard Views:

- Many psychologists think that ____________.
- The status quo has it that ____________.
- Many people assume that ____________.

When Introducing Quotations:

- X claims “__________.” (in-text citation)
- According to X “__________.” (in-text citation)
- X states “__________.” (in-text citation)

When Explaining Quotations:

- In essence, X is saying ____________.
- What X means is that ____________.
- In saying ____________, X urges us to ____________.

When Signaling Who is Saying What:

- According to both X and Y ____________.
- X argues that students should ____________.
- My own view, however, is that ____________.

When Capturing Authorial Action (e.g. in summary):

- X agrees that ____________.
- X concedes that ____________.
- X observes that ____________.
- X claims that ____________.
- X argues that ____________.
- X demonstrates that ____________.
- X reminds us that ____________.

When Adding Metacommentary:

- What this means is ____________.
- In sum ____________.
- Put in another way ____________.
- X’s point is not ____________, but rather ____________.
- Article X explores ____________, while Article Y considers ____________.

When Disagreeing, with Reasons:

- I disagree with X, because I think he/she/they overlooks ____________.
- X’s belief about ____________ rests on the faulty assumption that ____________. Furthermore, research shows ____________.

• Here, X contradicts him/them/herself. On the one hand he/she/they state(s) ___________. While on the other hand he/she/they say(s) __________. 

When Agreeing with a Difference:
• X’s research on _______ is important, as it sheds insight on why ___________.
• I agree that ________________, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people believe ___________.
• If group X is right that __________, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that ___________.

When Agreeing and Disagreeing Simultaneously:
• Although I agree with X to a point about ___________, I cannot accept his/her/their overall conclusion that __________.
• X is right that __________, but he/she/they seem(s) on more dubious ground when he/she/they claim(s) that __________.
• 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.

When Embedding Voice Markers:
• X overlooks an important point about __________ when he/she/they say(s) __________. In fact __________.
• I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls ____________.
• These conclusions, which X discusses in ____________, add weight to the argument that ___________.

When making Concessions While Still Standing Your Ground:
• Although I grant that ____________, I still maintain 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 _____________.

When Indicating Who Cares:
• ______ used to think ______, but recently, __________ suggests that __________.
• At first glance, college students appear to __________, but on closer inspection ____________.
• Researchers have long assumed that ___________. For instance, one eminent psychologist X long argued that ___________. However, new research on the topic shows that ________.

When Establishing Why Your Claims Matter:
• X matters/is important because _____________.
• These conclusion/ This discovery will have significant application 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 ____________.

When Comparing Two or More Studies/Findings:

- By demonstrating __________, X’s work extends the findings of Y.
- The results of X contradict Y’s conclusion that __________.
- X’s findings call into question the widely accepted theory that __________.

When Explaining an Experimental Result:

- One explanation for X’s finding of __________ is that __________. An alternative explanation is __________.
- The difference between ________ and _________ is probably due to __________.

When Introducing Gaps in the Existing Research:

- Studies of X have indicated __________. It is not clear, however, that this conclusion applies to __________.
- __________ often take for granted that __________. Few have investigated this assumption however.
- X’s work tells us a great deal about __________. Can this work be generalized to __________?

| Commonly Used Transitions                      |
| --------------------------------------------- |-----------------------------------------------|
| **Cause and Effect**                          | **Conclusion**                                | **Comparison**                                  | **Contrast**                                  |
| “accordingly”                                 | “to sum up”                                   | “along the same lines”                          | “despite”                                     |
| “as a result”                                 | “in conclusion, then”                          | “in the same way”                               | “although”                                     |
| “since”                                       | “consequently”                                 | “likewise”                                      | “nevertheless”                                 |
| “therefore”                                   | “hence”                                        | “similarly”                                     | “on the other hand”                            |
| “thus”                                        | “it follows, then”                             |                                                 | “on the contrary”                              |
| **Addition**                                  | **Concession**                                | **Example**                                     | **Elaboration**                               |
| “also”                                        | “granted”                                      | “for instance”                                  | “in other words”                               |
| “moreover”                                    | “admittedly”                                   | “consider”                                      | “to put it in another way”                     |
| “furthermore”                                 | “I concede that”                               | “for example”                                   | “in short”                                     |
| “so too”                                      | “although it is true that”                     | “to take a case in point”                       | “by extension”                                 |
| “besides”                                     | “of course”                                    | “as an illustration”                            | “to put it bluntly”                            |

Always try and write in your own words if able. These templates are simply to help you transition your thoughts or explain certain points in your writing. When writing your papers, you want to sound genuine and true to yourself and your own writing.


*Adapted with changes from: Kurt R. Schmeller Library, The Research Process Guidebook 2015-2016*