

Templates for Writing about Ideas and Research

One of the more difficult aspects of writing an argument based on research is establishing your position in the ongoing conversation about the topic. The templates below are meant to help you make standard moves that all researchers use to present, discuss, critique and argue about ideas. You should feel free to adapt any template to your own style once you are comfortable with using it--such adaptation should happen naturally, anyway.

I. Introducing What “They Say”

- A number of critics have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems.
- It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to the field of Y.
- In their recent work, X and Y have harsh critiques of Z for _____.

II. Introducing “Standard Views”

- Americans today tend to believe that _____.
- According to conventional wisdom _____.
- Common sense seems to dictate that _____.
- The standard way of thinking about [topic X] has it that _____.
- It is often said that _____.
- Many people assume that _____.

III. Introducing Something Implied or Assumed

- One implication of X’s treatment of _____ is that _____.
- While they rarely admit as much, _____ often take for granted that _____.
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that _____.

IV. Introducing an Ongoing Debate

- In discussions of X, one controversial issue 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 _____.
- In conclusion, then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of _____ cannot have it both ways. Their assertion that _____ is contradicted by their claim that _____.

V. Capturing Authorial Action

- X acknowledges that _____.
- X agrees that _____.
- X argues that _____.
- X denies/does not deny that _____.
- X claims that _____.
- X complains that _____.
- X concedes that _____.
- X demonstrates that _____.
- X deplores the tendency to _____.
- X emphasizes that _____.
- 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 _____.

VI. Introducing Quotations

- X states, “_____” (citation).
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “_____” (cit)
- According to X, “_____” (cit)
- X himself writes, “_____” (cit)
- In her [book/article], _____, X maintains that “_____” (cit)
- Writing in the journal [*Title*], X complains that “_____” (cit)
- In X’s view, “_____” (cit)
- X agrees when she writes, “_____” (cit)
- X disagrees when he writes, “_____” (cit)
- X complicates matters for the future when he writes, “_____” (cit)

VII. Explaining Quotations

- Briefly, X is saying _____.
- In other words, X thinks _____.
- In making this comment, X argues that _____.
- X is insisting that _____.
- X's point is that _____.
- The essence of X's argument is that _____.

VIII. 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/cannot 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 do not need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _____ has long known that _____.
- _____ is just not the case because _____.

IX. Agreeing—with a Difference

- I agree that _____ because my experience _____ confirms it.
- X surely is 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 is fundamentally _____.
- If group X is right that _____, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that _____.

X. 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 that _____, 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 _____.

XI. Signaling Who Is Saying What

- X argues _____.
- According to both X and Y, _____.
- Politicians _____, X argues, should _____.
- But _____ are real and, arguably, the most significant factor in _____.
- But X is wrong that _____.
- It is, however, 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 _____.
- Nevertheless, new research shows _____.
- Anyone familiar with _____ should see that _____.

XII. 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 _____.

XIII. Entertaining Objections

- 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 _____.

XIV. Naming Your Naysayers

- Here many *Rationalists* would probably object that _____.
- But *Pragmatists* would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.
- *Biologists*, of course, may want to dispute my claim that _____.
- Nevertheless, both followers and critics of 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 is hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _____.

XV. 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 _____.

XVI. 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 Renaissance England, _____, assumed in _____, her seminal work on the social construction of gender, that women _____. As _____ herself put it, “_____” (page #). Another leading scholar, _____, argued that women “_____” (page #). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of gender, the basic assumption was that _____.

But a new body of research shows that the process of gendering was far more complex and that _____.

- If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes _____. New research shows, however, that _____.
- These findings challenge dieters' common assumptions that _____.
- At first glance, teenagers appear to _____. But on closer inspection _____.

XVII. Establishing Why Claims Matter

- 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 _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.