

IMAGINING OTHERS' THOUGHTS

**HOW TO INCLUDE “WHY IT MATTERS” AND
NAYSAYERS IN YOUR ESSAY**



WHY SAY WHY IT MATTERS? WHY ADDRESS THE OPPOSITION?

- **If you don't make the case for why your essay's claims matter, your reader is unlikely to care much about the topic.**
- **Including ideas that come from someone who disagrees with you—and treating their claims completely and fairly—helps strengthen your argument. You anticipate objections, moderate your own argument, and win over readers.**

Both of these skills require imagining what someone else might think or say about your ideas.

WHY IT MATTERS: “WHO CARES?”: IDENTIFYING WHO’S TALKING ABOUT THE ISSUE

- A clue as to “who cares” comes from identifying who is already part of the conversation—women in leadership roles at big businesses; feminists; college students (who Sandberg addresses).
- **Templates:**
 - _____ used to think _____. But recently _[someone else]_ suggests that _____.
 - At first glance _[some group of people]_ might think that _____. However, on closer inspection, _____.
 - [Make a claim.] This idea challenges the idea that _____, which _[some of group of people]_ have long believed.

WHY IT MATTERS: “SO WHAT?”: IDENTIFYING WHY WE SHOULD CARE

The “so what” question requires you to link your claim to some bigger question that your audience already cares about—some issue or problem that is likely already touching your reader’s life (for instance, the increasingly tight labor market, finding a job in a lucrative field, supporting a family, making sure employment discrimination ends, etc.).

Templates:

- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.
- Although X may seem of concern only to a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.
- X is important because _____.

WRITE WHY IT MATTERS

Templates:

- _____ used to think _____. But recent work by _[someone else]_ suggests that _____.
- At first glance _[some group of people]_ might think that _____. However, on closer inspection, _____.
- [Make a claim.] This idea challenges the idea that _____, which _[some of group of people]_ have long believed.

Templates:

- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.
- Although X may seem of concern only to a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.
- X is important because _____.

PLANTING A NAYSAYER

- **As your essay develops, you will need to predict and discuss possible objections—what *TS/S* calls “planting a naysayer.”**
- **Paradoxically, including your doubters will make your essay stronger.**
- **Give them at least a few sentences, and make them reasonable (don’t mock, don’t oversimplify).**
- **Answer their objections. You may make a concession and still stand your ground.**

WHO MIGHT OBJECT? WHY?

- **Let's brainstorm some doubters:**
 - My sister, whose daughter loves dolls and son loves building towers, might argue that ____.
 - When I first read X's essay, I thought _____. But now I understand that _____.
 - Readers of X's essays might think that _____. In fact, however, she means that _____.
 - Some in the generation that grew up in the 50s and 60s would argue that _____.
 - My mother, who was born in _____, would disagree with _____.
 - More.

WRITE A NAYSAYER

Introducing an objection:

- Yet some readers may challenge my view by insisting that ____.
- Of course, many will probably disagree on the grounds that ____.

Naming your naysayer:

- Here many ____ would probably object that ____.
- Some ____, may question whether ____.
- Although not all ____ think alike, some of them will dispute my claim that ____.

Informally objecting:

- Yet is it necessarily true that ____? Is it always the case that, as I have suggested, that ____?
- **Put it in the naysayer's own words:** “____,” some will say. “__[Your claim fails for some reason]__.”

Making a concession:

- Although I grant that __[x is true]__, I still maintain that ____.
- While it is true that ____, it does not necessarily follow that ____.