

Sentence Templates + Transitions

Derived from Graff and Birkenstein's crazy-helpful *They Say, I Say*

Remember: the templates below are meant to “be direct with [you] about the key rhetorical moves that [critical thinking] comprises” (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010). Think of them as moves in a video game or a sport--the better we get at the game or sport, the more comfortable we get with knowing when and how to use a move best.

With that said, play around with these, notice how they are used in the writings of others, and determine that you will grow as an arguer this year.

And remember this, too: argument is hard, and hard means we get to grow rapidly if we dare to go all in.

Introducing What an Author Says

- X acknowledges that _____.
- X agrees that _____.
- X argues that _____.
- X believes that _____.
- X denies/does not deny that _____.
- X claims that _____.
- X complains that _____.
- X concedes that _____.
- X demonstrates that _____.
- X celebrates the fact that _____.
- X insists that _____.
- X questions whether _____.
- X reminds us that _____.
- X reports that _____.
- X suggests that _____.

Introducing “Standard Views”

- Americans today tend to believe that _____.
- Common sense seems to say that _____.
- It is often said that _____.
- Many people assume that _____.

Introducing an Ongoing Debate

- In discussions of _____, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ opposes _____. Others even believe _____. 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 _____. While some are convinced that _____, others believe that _____.

Using a Quotation (i.e., Backing up your argument with proof)

- X states, "_____" ().
 - **Example:** Standage states, "Some [drinks] have served to highlight the power and status of the elite" (2).
- According to X, "_____" ().
 - According to Standage, "Wine was the lifeblood of [Greece]" (3).
- X himself writes, "_____" ().
 - Standage himself writes, "Six beverages... chart the flow of world history" (2).
 - Odysseus himself says, "I longed for sweet Penelope" (9.21).
- In his book, _____, X maintains that "_____" ().
 - In his book, *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, Standage maintains that "Greek and Roman knowledge... had been safeguarded and extended by scholars in the Arab world" (4).
- Writing in the magazine _____, X complains that "_____" ().
 - Writing in the online magazine *Salon*, Weitz complains that "reality television is little more than gladiatorial combat" (3).
- X agrees when she writes, "_____" ().
 - I believe wine was the most influential drink in history. Standage agrees when he writes, "Wine was the lifeblood of [Greece]" (4).

Explaining a Quotation (i.e., Showing that you understand what the quote says)

- Basically, X is saying _____.
- In other words, X believes _____.
- In making this comment, X urges us to _____.
 - In making this comment, Cepeda urges us to look consider whether we do, actually, like hard work.
- X's point is that _____.
- The essence of X's argument is that _____.

Naming Your Naysayers or Opponents (i.e., Introducing your rebuttal)

- Here many _____ would probably object that _____.
 - Here many proponents of choice reading would probably object that complex texts destroy the enjoyment of reading.
- Of course, _____s would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.
 - Of course, antiglobalization activists would certainly take issue with the argument that globalization helps out developing countries.
- _____s, of course, may want to question whether _____.
 - Patriots, of course, may want to question whether the United States is acting out of selfish motives in its wars overseas.
- Nevertheless, critics of _____ will probably argue that _____.

- Nevertheless, critics of student-chosen reading will probably argue that reading complex texts is the only way to increase reading levels.
- Although not all _____s think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that _____.
- Although not all globalization fans think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that globalized companies are destroying developing countries.

Making a Concession (i.e., They have a point, BUT...)

- Admittedly, _____.
- Proponents of X are right to argue that _____. But they are exaggerating when they claim that _____.
- Proponents of complex texts are right to argue that reading such material is essential for post-secondary success. But they are exaggerating when they claim that Standage's book is the only possible complex text for world history students to read.
- While it is true that _____, it does not necessary follow that _____.
- On the one hand, X is right to say _____. On the other hand, it is still true that _____.

Disagreeing, with Reasons (i.e., They are just wrong)

- X is mistaken because she overlooks _____.
- X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____.
- X can't have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues _____. On the other hand, she also says _____.
- By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____.

Establishing Why Your Claims Matter (i.e., Why should I care about this argument?)

This is great clincher material

- X matters because _____.
- High school matters because it either opens or closes doors into the rest of my life.
- Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concern over _____.
- Although doing homework may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of succeeding in high school and developing my brain.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is my lifelong flourishing; being lazy now means being unhappy for decades.
- Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____.
- Although high school may seem of concern to only a small group of nerdy students, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about having an enjoyable life.

Transitions

For ADDING IDEAS:

also *another* *in fact* *equally important* *moreover*
furthermore *additionally* *indeed* *in addition*

For MAKING A CONTRAST:

however *nevertheless* *although* *conversely*
on the contrary *notwithstanding* *even though* *all the same*
on the other hand *by contrast* *nonetheless*

For COMPARING:

likewise *equally* *along the same lines*
similarly *in comparison* *in the same way*

For CITING AN EXAMPLE:

for example *in other words* *in fact*
for instance *specifically* *after all*
as an illustration *consider*

For SHOWING RESULTS:

accordingly *hence* *consequently*
as a result *thus* *therefore*

For REINFORCING AN IDEA:

especially important *above all* *most noteworthy*
especially relevant *a significant factor* *most of all*

For ELABORATING (expanding upon a point):

actually *by extension* *to put it another way*
to put it bluntly *in short* *to put it succinctly*
in other words *ultimately* *basically*

For CONCEDED A POINT:

admittedly *of course* *although it is true that*
naturally *granted* *to be sure*

For CONCLUDING:

clearly *hence* *consequently*
obviously *therefore* *thus*
in short *all in all*