



A Selection of Templates from *They Say, I Say*

by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein

Introducing X (Who said it)

In their guide for college writers, *They Say I Say*, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, professor of English and Education and lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago, respectively, use X to symbolize the author of the text a writer is introducing:

X agrees that _____.

Bellevue College Professor George Muckitup agrees that **it is important to study**.

It's important that the first time you introduce X, you provide information about who X is in the academic community. Why is this particular person's writing of interest to the academic community? Is this person a professor? Is this person a researcher? If so, where? Does this person have a Ph.D.? Is this person affiliated with a university? Is this person famous in academia for other reasons?

The *first time* you introduce X in your own text, let your reader know *who* X is.

X argues that being clear about the authority of the text's author is important.

- Harvard professor of linguistics Josie Pussycat argues that being clear about the authority of the text's author is important.
- *New York Times* journalist Kady Mistletoe argues that being clear about the authority of the text's author is important.
- Internationally renowned novelist Chimera Glossenstein argues that being clear about the authority of the text's author is important.
- University of Washington obstetrician Cholanda Bunnoven argues that being clear about the authority of the text's author is important.

Introducing Quotations

- X states, “_____.”
- As the prominent philosopher/researcher/businessman X puts it, “_____.”
- According to X, “_____.”
- Writing in the journal *Commentary*, X complains that “_____.”
- In X’s view, “_____.”
- X agrees/disagrees when she writes, “_____.”
- X complicates matters further when he writes, “_____.”

Introducing Challenges to X’s view

- A number of literary scholars 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 literary analysis.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for _____.

Introducing Standard Views

- Americans today tend to believe that _____
- University students today tend to believe that _____
- Millennials 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 _____

Introducing Something Implied or Assumed

- Although none of them have ever said 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 ____, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, X argues _____. On the other hand, Y 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 _____.

Verbs that describe an author's intent/action

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • X acknowledges that _____ | • X celebrates the fact that _____ |
| • X agrees that _____ | • X emphasizes that _____ |
| • X argues that _____ | • X insists that _____ |
| • X believes that _____ | • X observes that _____ |
| • X denies / does not deny that _____ | • X questions whether _____ |
| • X claims that _____ | • X refutes the claim that _____ |
| • X complains that _____ | • X reminds us that _____ |
| • X conceded that _____ | • X suggests that _____ |
| • X demonstrates that _____ | • X urges us to _____ |
| • X deplores the tendency to _____ | |

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 _____

Recommended Reading

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Berkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed., W. W. Norton, 2014.