Argumentation is not arguing: Introduction to Argumentation

LADY BRACKNELL: I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest
The Argument Sketch

From "Monty Python's Previous Record" and "Monty Python's Instant Record Collection"
Originally transcribed by Dan Kay (dan@reed.uucp)

The Cast (in order of appearance.)
M= Man looking for an argument; R= Receptionist; Q= Abuser; A= Arguer (John Cleese)

M: Ah. I'd like to have an argument, please.
R: Certainly sir. Have you been here before?
M: No, I haven't, this is my first time.
R: I see. Well, do you want to have just one argument, or were you thinking of taking a course?
M: Well, what is the cost?
R: Well, it's one pound for a five minute argument, but only eight pounds for a course of ten.
M: Well, I think it would be best if I perhaps started off with just the one and then see how it goes.
R: Fine. Well, I'll see who's free at the moment.

Pause
R: Mr. DeBakey's free, but he's a little bit conciliatory. Ahh, yes, Try Mr. Barnard; room 12.
M: Thank you.  (Walks down the hall.  Opens door.)

Q: WHAT DO YOU WANT?
M: Well, I was told outside that...
Q: Don't give me that, you snotty-faced heap of parrot droppings!
M: What?
Q: Shut your festering gob, you twit! Your type really makes me puke, you vacuous, coffee-nosed, malodorous, pervert!!!
M: Look, I CAME HERE FOR AN ARGUMENT, I'm not going to just stand...!!
Q: OH, oh I'm sorry, but this is abuse.
M: Oh, I see, well, that explains it.
Q: Ah yes, you want room 12A, just along the corridor.
M: Oh, Thank you very much. Sorry.
Q: Not at all.
M: Thank You.  (Under his breath) Stupid git!!  (Walks down the corridor)
M: (Knock)
A: Come in.
M: Ah, Is this the right room for an argument?
A: I told you once.
M: No you haven't.
A: Yes I have.
M: When?
A: Just now.
M: No you didn't.
A: Yes I did.
M: You didn't
A: I did!
M: You didn't!
A: I'm telling you I did!
M: You did not!!
A: Oh, I'm sorry, just one moment. Is this a five minute argument or the full half hour?
M: Oh, just the five minutes.
A: Ah, thank you. Anyway, I did.
M: You most certainly did not.
A: Look, let's get this thing clear; I quite definitely told you.
M: No you did not.
A: Yes I did.
M: No you didn't.
A: Yes I did.
M: No you didn't.
A: Yes I did.
M: You didn't.
A: Did.
M: Oh look, this isn't an argument.
A: Yes it is.
M: No it isn't. It's just contradiction.
A: No it isn't.
M: It is!
A: It is not.
M: Look, you just contradicted me.
A: I did not.
M: Oh you did!!
A: No, no, no.
M: You did just then.
A: Nonsense!
M: Oh, this is futile!
A: No it isn't.
M: I came here for a good argument.
A: No you didn't; no, you came here for an argument.
M: An argument isn't just contradiction.
A: It can be.
M: No it can't. An argument is a connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition.
A: No it isn't.
M: Yes it is! It's not just contradiction.
A: Look, if I argue with you, I must take up a contrary position.
M: Yes, but that's not just saying 'No it isn't.'
A: Yes it is!
M: No it isn’t!
A: Yes it is!
M: Argument is an intellectual process. Contradiction is just the automatic gainsaying of any statement the other person makes. *(short pause)*
A: No it isn’t.
M: It is.
A: Not at all.
M: Now look.
A: *(Rings bell)* Good Morning.
M: What?
A: That’s it. Good morning.
M: I was just getting interested.
A: Sorry, the five minutes is up.
M: That was never five minutes!
A: I’m afraid it was.
M: It wasn’t.
*Pause*
A: I’m sorry, but I’m not allowed to argue anymore.
M: What?!
A: If you want me to go on arguing, you’ll have to pay for another five minutes.
M: Yes, but that was never five minutes, just now. Oh come on!
A: *(Hums)*
M: Look, this is ridiculous.
A: I’m sorry, but I’m not allowed to argue unless you’ve paid!
M: Oh, all right. *(pays money)*
A: Thank you. *(short pause)*
M: Well?
A: Well what?
M: That wasn’t really five minutes, just now.
A: I told you, I’m not allowed to argue unless you’ve paid.
M: I just paid!
A: No you didn’t.
M: I DID!
A: No you didn’t.
M: Look, I don’t want to argue about that.
A: Well, you didn’t pay.
M: Aha. If I didn’t pay, why are you arguing? I got you!
A: No you haven’t.
M: Yes I have. If you’re arguing, I must have paid.
A: Not necessarily. I could be arguing in my spare time.
M: Oh I’ve had enough of this.
A: No you haven’t.
M: Oh Shut up. *(walks out)*
Argumentation is for solving problems, not just for getting one’s own way.

**Arguments to Assert** *(to state or declare positively)*

“To assert what you think and believe can help you gain credibility as a thoughtful participant in discussion and contribute toward arguing to inquire. In short, honest assertions can be useful to offer and helpful to learn. Almost any assertion can lead to a prolonged discussion or a well-developed piece of writing. But arguments to assert usually begin with an assertion instead of being composed to arrive at one.” (Miller, 9)

**Arguments to Prevail** *(1: to gain ascendancy through strength or superiority  2 : to be or become effective or effectual)*

“When most people think of formal arguments, they think of arguments whose primary purpose is to prevail. The most common example is an argument made in a legal case.” (Miller, 9)

“You can probably think of many occasions during which you might need to use argument to prevail. For example:

- Getting admitted to a school to which you want to transfer
- Winning a required debate in a course in political science or communications
- Retaining your ability to drive after having been ticketed for speeding” (Miller, 10)

**Arguments to Inquire** *(1: seek for information by questioning  2 : to make investigation)*

“To write an effective argument of inquiry requires researching the topic and examining the issues surrounding it. It might require using evidence, but the evidence might be used to *illustrate* a point rather than to support it....

What is especially noteworthy about an argument to inquire is that your own position might change or evolve as you examine the topic and go through the process of planning, writing, and revising your argument.” (Miller, 12)

**Arguments to Negotiate and Reconcile** *(negotiate: to confer with another so as to arrive at the settlement of some matter / reconcile: to restore to friendship or harmony)*

“Arguing to negotiate differences is sometimes called Rogerian argument, after the influential psychotherapist Carl Rogers, who emphasized the importance of communication to resolve conflicts. Rogers believed that most people are so ready “to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove” that they fail to understand what others think. He urged people to “listen with understanding” and recommended a model for communication in which listeners are required to restate what others have said before offering their own views....

It is extremely hard to listen when feelings are strong. The greater the conflict, the greater the chance of misinterpreting what others have said....

Although arguing to negotiate differences is especially useful in public affairs, ... it can also be useful when resolving differences that may arise in your daily life. Examples include the following:

- Establishing helpful rules that can keep roommates living together peacefully
- Distributing responsibilities fairly among coworkers to improve morale
- Convincing your family to stop fighting with one another to develop a better relationship (Miller, 13-15)

Whenever you read an argument, you must ask yourself, "is this persuasive? If so, to whom?" There are several ways to appeal to an audience. Among them are appealing to logos, ethos and pathos. These appeals are prevalent in almost all arguments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Appeal to Logic (logos)</th>
<th>To Develop Ethos</th>
<th>To Appeal to Emotion (pathos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical, abstract language</td>
<td>Language appropriate to audience and subject</td>
<td>Vivid, concrete language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denotative meanings/reasons</td>
<td>Restrained, sincere, fair minded presentation</td>
<td>Emotionally loaded language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal and historical analogies</td>
<td>Appropriate level of vocabulary</td>
<td>Connotative meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>Correct grammar</td>
<td>Emotional examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual data and statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vivid descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Narratives of emotional events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations from experts and authorities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Figurative language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effect**

| Evokes a cognitive, rationale response | Demonstrates author's reliability, competence, and respect for the audience's ideas and values through reliable and appropriate use of support and general accuracy | Evokes an emotional response |

Logos, Ethos and Pathos 1
Definitions

**Logos:** The Greek word logos is the basis for the English word logic. Logos is a broader idea than formal logic—the highly symbolic and mathematical logic that you might study in a philosophy course. Logos refers to any attempt to appeal to the intellect, the general meaning of "logical argument." Everyday arguments rely heavily on ethos and pathos, but academic arguments rely more on logos. Yes, these arguments will call upon the writers' credibility and try to touch the audience's emotions, but there will more often than not be logical chains of reasoning supporting all claims.

**Ethos:** Ethos is related to the English word ethics and refers to the trustworthiness of the speaker/writer. Ethos is an effective persuasive strategy because when we believe that the speaker does not intend to do us harm, we are more willing to listen to what s/he has to say. For example, when a trusted doctor gives you advice, you may not understand all of the medical reasoning behind the advice, but you nonetheless follow the directions because you believe that the doctor knows what s/he is talking about. Likewise, when a judge comments on legal precedent audiences tend to listen because it is the job of a judge to know the nature of past legal cases.

**Pathos:** Pathos is related to the words pathetic, sympathy and empathy. Whenever you accept a claim based on how it makes you feel without fully analyzing the rationale behind the claim, you are acting on pathos. They may be any emotions: love, fear, patriotism, guilt, hate or joy. A majority of arguments in the popular press are heavily dependent on pathetic appeals. The more people react without full consideration for the WHY, the more effective an argument can be. Although the pathetic appeal can be manipulative, it is the cornerstone of moving people to action. Many arguments are able to persuade people logically, but the apathetic audience may not follow through on the call to action. Appeals to pathos touch a nerve and compel people to not only listen, but to also take the next step and act in the world.

Examples of Logos, Ethos and Pathos

**Logos**

Let us begin with a simple proposition: What democracy requires is public debate, not information. Of course it needs information too, but the kind of information it needs can be generated only by vigorous popular debate. We do not know what we need to know until we ask the right questions, and we can identify the right questions only by subjecting our ideas about the world to the test of public controversy. Information, usually seen as the precondition of debate, is better understood as its by product. When we get into arguments that focus and fully engage our attention, we become avid seekers of relevant information. Otherwise, we take in information passively--if we take it in at all.

Christopher Lasch, "The Lost Art of Political Argument"

Logos, Ethos and Pathos 2
Ethos

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely."...Since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable in terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in."...I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Pathos

For me, commentary on war zones at home and abroad begins and ends with personal reflections. A few years ago, while watching the news in Chicago, a local news story made a personal connection with me. The report concerned a teenager who had been shot because he had angered a group of his male peers. This act of violence caused me to recapture a memory from my own adolescence because of an instructive parallel in my own life with this boy who had been shot. When I was a teenager some thirty-five years ago in the New York metropolitan area, I wrote a regular column for my high school newspaper. One week, I wrote a column in which I made fun of the fraternities in my high school. As a result, I elicited the anger of some of the most aggressive teenagers in my high school. A couple of nights later, a car pulled up in front of my house, and the angry teenagers in the car dumped garbage on the lawn of my house as an act of revenge and intimidation.

James Garbarino "Children in a Violent World: A Metaphysical Perspective"
There are three types of rhetorical appeals, or persuasive strategies, used in arguments to support claims and respond to opposing arguments. A good argument will generally use a combination of all three appeals to make its case.

**Logos**

Logos or the appeal to reason relies on logic or reason. Logos often depends on the use of inductive or deductive reasoning.

Inductive reasoning takes a specific representative case or facts and then draws generalizations or conclusions from them. Inductive reasoning must be based on a sufficient amount of reliable evidence, in other words the facts you draw on must fairly represent the larger situation or population. Example:

*Fair trade agreements have raised the quality of life for coffee producers, so fair trade agreements could be used to help other farmers as well.*

In this example the specific case of fair trade agreements with coffee producers is being used as the starting point for the claim. Because these agreements have worked the author concludes that it could work for other farmers as well.

Deductive reasoning begins with a generalization and then applies it to a specific case. The generalization you start with must have been based on a sufficient amount of reliable evidence. Example:

*Genetically modified seeds have caused poverty, hunger, and a decline in bio-diversity everywhere they have been introduced, so there is no reason the same thing will not occur when genetically modified corn seeds are introduced in Mexico.*

In this example the author starts with a large claim, that genetically modified seeds have been problematic everywhere, and from this draws the more localized or specific conclusion that Mexico will be affected in the same way.

**Avoid Logical Fallacies**

These are some common errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of your argument. Also, watch out for these slips in other people's arguments.

**Slippery slope:** This is a conclusion based on the premise that if A happens, then eventually through a series of small steps, through B, C, ..., X, Y, Z will happen, too, basically equating A and Z. So, if we don't want Z to occur A must not be allowed to occur either. Example:

*If we ban Hummers because they are bad for the environment eventually the government will ban all cars, so we should not ban Hummers.*
In this example the author is equating banning Hummers with banning all cars, which is not the same thing.

**Hasty Generalization:** This is a conclusion based on insufficient or biased evidence. In other words, you are rushing to a conclusion before you have all the relevant facts. Example:

*Even though it's only the first day, I can tell this is going to be a boring course.*

In this example the author is basing their evaluation of the entire course on only one class, and on the first day which is notoriously boring and full of housekeeping tasks for most courses. To make a fair and reasonable evaluation the author must attend several classes, and possibly even examine the textbook, talk to the professor, or talk to others who have previously finished the course in order to have sufficient evidence to base a conclusion on.

**Post hoc ergo propter hoc:** This is a conclusion that assumes that if 'A' occurred after 'B' then 'B' must have caused 'A.' Example:

*I drank bottled water and now I am sick, so the water must have made me sick.*

In this example the author assumes that if one event chronologically follows another the first event must have caused the second. But the illness could have been caused by the burrito the night before, a flu bug that had been working on the body for days, or a chemical spill across campus. There is no reason, without more evidence, to assume the water caused the person to be sick.

**Genetic Fallacy:** A conclusion is based on an argument that the origins of a person, idea, institute, or theory determine its character, nature, or worth. Example:

*The Volkswagen Beetle is an evil car because it was originally designed by Hitler's army.*

In this example the author is equating the character of a car with the character of the people who built the car.

**Begging the Claim:** The conclusion that the writer should prove is validated within the claim. Example:

*Filthy and polluting coal should be banned.*

Arguing that coal pollutes the earth and thus should be banned would be logical. But the very conclusion that should be proved, that coal causes enough pollution to warrant banning its use, is already assumed in the claim by referring to it as "filthy and polluting."

**Circular Argument:** This restates the argument rather than actually proving it. Example:
George Bush is a good communicator because he speaks effectively.

In this example the conclusion that Bush is a "good communicator" and the evidence used to prove it "he speaks effectively" are basically the same idea. Specific evidence such as using everyday language, breaking down complex problems, or illustrating his points with humorous stories would be needed to prove either half of the sentence.

Either/or: This is a conclusion that oversimplifies the argument by reducing it to only two sides or choices. Example:

*We can either stop using cars or destroy the earth.*

In this example where two choices are presented as the only options, yet the author ignores a range of choices in between such as developing cleaner technology, car sharing systems for necessities and emergencies, or better community planning to discourage daily driving.

Ad hominem: This is an attack on the character of a person rather than their opinions or arguments. Example:

*Green Peace's strategies aren't effective because they are all dirty, lazy hippies.*

In this example the author doesn't even name particular strategies Green Peace has suggested, much less evaluate those strategies on their merits. Instead, the author attacks the characters of the individuals in the group.

Ad populum: This is an emotional appeal that speaks to positive (such as patriotism, religion, democracy) or negative (such as terrorism or fascism) concepts rather than the real issue at hand. Example:

*If you were a true American you would support the rights of people to choose whatever vehicle they want.*

In this example the author equates being a "true American," a concept that people want to be associated with, particularly in a time of war, with allowing people to buy any vehicle they want even though there is no inherent connection between the two.

Red Herring: This is a diversionary tactic that avoids the key issues, often by avoiding opposing arguments rather than addressing them. Example:

*The level of mercury in seafood may be unsafe, but what will fishers do to support their families.*

In this example the author switches the discussion away from the safety of the food and talks instead about an economic issue, the livelihood of those catching fish. While one
issue may effect the other it does not mean we should ignore possible safety issues because of possible economic consequences to a few individuals.

**Ethos**

Ethos or the ethical appeal is based on the character, credibility, or reliability of the writer. There are many ways to establish good character and credibility as an author:

- Use only credible, reliable sources to build your argument and cite those sources properly.
- Respect the reader by stating the opposing position accurately.
- Establish common ground with your audience, often this can be done by acknowledging values and beliefs shared by those on both sides of the argument.
- If appropriate for the assignment, disclose why you are interested in this topic or what personal experiences you have had with the topic.
- Organize your argument in a logical, easy to follow manner. You can use the Toulmin method of logic or a simple pattern such as chronological order, most general to most detailed example, earliest to most recent example, etc.
- Proofread the argument. Too many careless grammar mistakes cast doubt on your character as a writer.

**Pathos**

Pathos or the emotional appeal appeals to an audience's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities.

Argument emphasizes reason, but used properly there is often a place for emotion as well. Emotional appeals can use sources such as interviews and individual stories to paint a more legitimate and moving picture of reality or illuminate the truth. For example, telling the story of a single child who has been abused may make for a more persuasive argument than simply the number of children abused each year because it would give a human face to the numbers.

Only use an emotional appeal if it truly supports the claim you are making, not as a way to distract from the real issues of debate. An argument should never use emotion to misrepresent the topic or frighten people.
If You Can Convince Mom and Dad, YOU CAN CONVINCE ANYONE!

The purpose of this assignment is to persuade your parents and/or guardian (you may work with one parent/guardian if you prefer) to allow you to do something they do not want you to do. The form of the assignment will be a one-page (minimum) letter to your parents in which you attempt to win their permission. You may use the personal letter form or a business format. The final draft must be typed.

Remember that the audience, of course, will be your parents - - an audience opposed to what you have to say. You must speak directly to them and use forceful, but respectful and appropriate language, to convince them of your side of the issue. Finally, follow this procedure:

1. Get a list of opposing arguments from your parents. The more arguments they provide, the easier your task will probably be. I’ll help you out by writing an explanatory letter for you to take home (it is attached).

2. Turn in your parents’ list with the final copy of your letter. Your letter will not be graded, however, until you have shared it with your parents and obtained a parental signature.

Grading Scale

Opposing Arguments List from your parents – 10 points
Signature on your final letter – 10 points
Content of your letter – 40 points
Presentation of your argument – 40 points
TOTAL – 100 points
Daily Schedule

Day One: Work in groups/pairs to brainstorm at least 10 things that your parents will not let you do (or 10 things that you don’t want to do that your parents want you to do.) Share ideas with the class.

Choose one argument that you will take home to your parent(s). They will give you a list of opposing arguments (hopefully, 708 reasons why you can or cannot do something). Please ask them to sign their list of reasons and bring the list to class the next day.

Day Two: In class, you will begin your letter to your parent(s) trying to convince them of your argument. You must address each opposing argument that they have given you. Try to give reasons that refute what they have said. Be forceful in your writing, yet respectful . . . these are your parents!

A rough draft is due at the end of the hour. If you finish early, let me see what you have written.

Day Three: Peer editing.

You should also have a conference with me. While everyone else is peer editing, one person at a time should conference with me. I’ll try to give you some of my ideas.

Day Four: Re-write and polish your rough draft. You may begin typing if you wish. The paper is due at the end of hour. You will take the letter home and you must let your parents read your letter and then sign the bottom indicating that they have read it.

Day Five: Signed persuasive letter is due.
Dear Parents and Guardians,

The students are currently working on persuasive writing. A major problem in this kind of writing is anticipating the arguments of the “other side” and responding satisfactorily to those arguments.

We would appreciate your assistance for one writing assignment. Since almost all teenagers would very much like to do one thing that their parents have forbidden, I have chosen that parent-child scenario for this persuasive writing assignment. Your son or daughter is to choose the specific topic. As preparation, he or she will ask you to list all of your reasons for opposition. I’ve suggested below how such a scenario might go.

**Student Topic:** I want to redecorate my room.

**Possible Parental objections:**
1. It’s too expensive.
2. You never even clean your room; why decorate?
3. You already spend too much time there. We only see you at meals as it is now.
4. You never spend any time in your room; why should we bother?
5. Your brother (sister) is going to feel left out. We can’t start redecorating everyone’s room.
6. Your taste in interior decoration is questionable. We can’t paint ceilings and walls in school colors or indulge in other such fads.
7. I’ll end up doing all the work. I don’t have the time or the energy.
8. It’ll cost too much.
9. I said “No!”

Some of your objections may be difficult to refute, but don’t hold back. Students need to be challenged by realistic opposition.

After students have brought in your arguments, they will write letters to you answering those objections. I am requiring your son or daughter to show you this final letter. Your signature on that letter indicating that you have read it will be satisfactory. A written response to your son or daughter would be delightful.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,
Rhetoric Out on the Town!

**Set-up:** You will be working in groups of 2, 3, or 4 people, of your own choosing. You will need a digital camera (most likely), a few hours over the weekend, stuff to write with, and your imaginations.

**Task:** Your group is to spend a lovely few hours this weekend around town(s), going to stores, going to restaurants, being on the roads, walking the downtowns, looking for examples of rhetoric (in pictures and/or writing) as you do so.

When you see a good example of rhetoric in action, take a picture of it and record when and where you found it. If you can’t reasonably capture its essence by photography, explain in great detail what it is you’ve found.

For each example (you’ll have 5 examples when you’re finished, minimum), you’ll then need to type up answers to each of the following questions, a paragraph or two for each question:

1) Why do you think this is an example of rhetoric?
2) What is the message being given by this example?
3) Who is the audience/target for this particular example?
4) What techniques did the creator(s) of this example use to get this message across?
5) Could other techniques be used more effectively, do you think? If so, what would you have done differently?

**Due Date:** On (date), you’ll present your findings to the class (summarizing your paragraphs, not reading them) and then turn in the following:

- A cover sheet explaining who the group members are and the places you looked for examples.
- A page for each example, including the digital picture you took and the answers to the questions.

**Assessment:**

- Following Directions
- Creativity in finding examples of Rhetoric
- Full explanations for each question, for each example
- Presentation to the class
- Mechanics/Conventions
Literature Review Templates: 
How to Present What ‘They’ Say

This handout will provide templates for introducing and discussing sources (‘they’) when writing a literature review. These templates help writers summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of their sources in order to help the writer establish creditability and provide a solid background for a research paper or project.

**THEY SAY:** Reporting what authors are saying about a topic

**VERB TENSE & SOURCES**

- **APA:** In APA, when you discuss cited sources, you are required to use PAST TENSE (e.g., Smith argued) or PRESENT PERFECT TENSE (e.g., Smith [and Jones] has [have] argued). See pg. 33 in the APA Manual for more information.

- **MLA:** Generally, in MLA, when you discuss cited sources, use PRESENT TENSE (e.g. Smith believes). PRESENT PERFECT TENSE can also be used, but definitively there are no rules for verb tense and sources in the MLA Handbook.

**Introducing an Ongoing Debate**

**APA**

- In discussion of X, one controversial issue has been__________. On the one hand, ________ argued ________. On the other hand, ________ contended_______. Some researchers, such as_______, have maintained _________.

**MLA**

- When it comes to the topic of ______, most of expert/scholars/researchers will readily agree that _______. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of ___________. Whereas some are convinced that ____________, others maintain that _____________.

**Templates for Introducing What “They Say”**

- A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems. [*The underlined word can be replaced with other nouns appropriate to your field of study—researchers, scientists, politicians, feminists, etc.*]

- It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to the field of ____ .

- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of X for _____.
Templates for Introducing “Standard Views”
Standard views are views that have become so widely accepted that by now it is essentially the
conventional way of thinking about a topic. [The underlined word can be replaced with other nouns
appropriate to your field of study—researchers, scientists, politicians, feminists, etc.]
- Americans today tend to believe that ________
- Conventional wisdom has it that ________.
- The standard way of thinking about topic X has been______.
- Many students assume that ________.

Introducing Quotations and Summaries
APA [notice the verbs are past tense]
- She demonstrated that ________.
- In X’s study of _____, she found that ________.
- They argued ________.
MLA [notice the verbs are in present tense]
- ________, he admits.
- He states,______.

Verbs for Introducing Summaries and Quotations
Verbs for Making a Claim
Argue  Insist
Assert  Observe
Believe  Remind us
Claim  Report
Emphasize  Suggest

Verbs for Expressing Agreement
Acknowledge  Endorse
Admire  Extol
Agree  Praise
Celebrate the fact that  Reaffirm
Corroborate  Support
Do not deny  Verify

Verbs for Questioning or Disagreeing
Complain  Question
Complicate  Refute
Contend  Reject
Contradict  Renounce
Deny  Repudiate
Deplore the tendency to
Disavow

Verbs for Making Recommendations
Advocate  Implore
Call for  Plead
Demand  Recommend
Encourage  Urge
Exhort  Warn

Frame Every Quote
Since quotations do not speak for themselves, you need to build a frame around them in which you do
that speaking for them. You need to make a ‘quotation sandwich’ [Introduction-quotatıon-explanation].
Introduce the quotation adequately by explaining who is speaking and setting up what the quotation
says. Then follow up with explaining why you consider the quotation important and what you take it to
say. [The () represents the placement of your in-text citation.]

For introducing quotations
APA
- X (year) stated, “_________” (p. #).
- As the prominent researcher/scholar X (year) put it, “_____” (p. #).
- According to X (year), “______” (p. #).
› X (year) himself wrote, “_______” (p. #).
› In her book, _____, X (year) maintained that “_________” (p. #).

**MLA**
› In X’s view, “________” (page #).
› X agrees when she writes, “______” (page #).
› X disagrees when he writes, “________” (page #).
› X complicates matters further when she writes, “____________” (page #).

**For 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 ________.

**DO NOT** introduce quotations by saying something like “X asserts an idea that” or “A quote by X says.” Introductory phrases like these are both redundant and misleading.

**Additional Resources**


Created by Keva Sherven for the UWC—April 2010
Most of the examples are taken directly from *They Say, I Say* by Graff & Birkenstein
Templates to Declare the Writer's Position: How to Present What 'I' Say

This handout will provide templates for introducing and discussing your own ideas as a writer ('I') when writing a paper that requires the writer's response to or stance/position on a topic. These templates help writers agree, disagree, or both agree and disagree with sources in order to declare their position relative to the views they've summarized or quoted.

**I SAY:** a writer offering his/her own argument as a response to what ‘they’ said

Experienced writers know how to express their thoughts. Since academic writing, broadly speaking, is argumentative, college writers need to argue well. Thus, writers need to be able to assert their own ideas as well as enter the ongoing conversation (they say) of a topic and use the ideas of others as a launching pad for furthering their ideas. Many times the use of “I” is appropriate; however, check with your professor.

### 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 himself/can’t have it both ways. On the one hand, he argues _____ But on the other hand, he also says _____.
- By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____.
- X claims _____, but we don’t need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _____ has long known that _____.

### Agreeing

- I agree that _____ because my experience _____ confirms it.
- X is surely right about _____ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that _____.
- X’s theory of _____ is extremely useful because it shed 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 basically boils down to _____.

### 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 _____.
- 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 _____.
- Whereas X provides ample evidence that _____, Y and Z’s research on _____ and _____ convinces me that _____ instead.
- I’m of two minds about X’s claims that ____. On the one hand, I agree that ____. On the other hand, I’m not sure if _____.
- My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X’s position that _____, but I find Y’s arguments about _____ and Z’s research on _____ to be equally persuasive.
Signaling who is Saying What in Your Own Writing

- X argues ______.
- According to both X and Y _______.
- Politicians, X argues, should _______.
- Most athletes will tell you that _______.
- My own view, however, is that _______.
- I agree, as X may not realize, that _______.
- X is right that _______.
- X’s assertion that _____ does not fit the facts.
- Anyone familiar with ______ should agree that _______
- But ______ are real, and are arguably the most significant factor in _______.

Indicate Multiple Perspectives—“I” versus “They” [p.70]
Point-of-view clues in the text that clearly separates the views of the writer (“I”) from those of source authors (“they”).

- 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 _______.

Entertaining Objections
Notice that the following examples are not attributed to any specific person or group, but to “skeptics,” “readers,” or “many”. This kind of nameless, faceless naysayer is appropriate in some cases.

- Yet some readers may challenge my view that _______. After all, many believe that _______.
  Indeed, my own argument that _____ seems to ignore _____ and _____.
- Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that______.

Naming Your Naysayers
The underlined words can be interchanged with another specific group.

- Here many feminists would probably object that _______.
- But social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that _______.
- Biologists, of course, may want to dispute my claim that _______.
- Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably suggest otherwise and argue that _____.

To minimize stereotyping...

- 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’s hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _______.

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 _______.
**Indicating Who Cares**
Underlined words can be replaced with other groups or references to certain people.
- ____ used to think _______. But recently [or within the past few decades], _____ suggests that ________.
- This interpretation challenges the work of those critics who have long assumed that ____.
- These finding 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.
- These findings challenge dieters' common assumption that ____.
- At first glance, teenagers might say ______. But on closer inspection.

**Why Your Claim Matters**
- X matters/is important because ______.
- Although X might 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 ____.

**So What and Who Cares**
- Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of ______, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about ________.

**Page References for They Say, I Say**
- Pages 1-47 contain “They Say” templates and explanations
- Pages 51-97 contain “I Say” templates and explanations
- Pages 101-135 contain “Tying it All Together” templates and explanations
- Pages 163-176 contain the Index of Templates use in the book

**Additional Resources**

Created by Keva Sherven for the UWC—April 2010
Most of the examples are taken directly from *They Say, I Say* by Graff & Birkenstein
Useful Templates

Need help getting started on a paper and/or making certain rhetorical moves in your paper? These templates might help!

INTRODUCING WHAT “THEY SAY”
- A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems.
- It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to this field of sociology.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for ________.

INTRODUCING “STANDARD VIEWS”
- Americans today 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 ________.

MAKING WHAT “THEY SAY” SOMETHING YOU SAY
- I’ve always believed that ________.
- When I was a child, I used to think that ________.
- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that ________.
- At the same time that I believe _________. I also believe _________.

INTRODUCING SOMETHING IMPLIED OR ASSUMED
- Although none of them have ever said it 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 X, one controversial issue has been _________. On 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 ________ can’t have it both ways. Their assertion that ________ in contradicted by their claim that ________.

CAPTURING AUTHORIAL ACTION
- X acknowledges that ________.
- X agrees that ________.
- X argues that ________.
- X believes that ________.
- X denies/does not deny that ________.
- X complains that ________.
- X concedes that ________.
- X demonstrates that ________.
- X deplores the tendency to ________.
- X celebrates the fact that ________.
- X emphasizes that ________.
CAPTURING AUTHORIAL ACTION cont.
- 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 ________.

INTRODUCING QUOTATIONS
- X states, "_________"
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, "_________"
- According to X, "_________"
- X himself writes, "_________"
- In her book, ________, X maintains that "_________"
- Writing the journal Commentary, X complains that, "_________"
- In X's view, "_________"
- X agrees when she writes, "_________"
- X disagrees when he writes, "_________"
- X complicates matters further when he writes, "_________"

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 ________.

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/can't 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 don't need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with ________ has long known that ________.

AGREEING—WITH A DIFFERENCE
- I agree that ________ because my experience ________ confirms it.
- X is surely 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 basically boils down to ________.
- If group X is right that ________, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that ________.

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 ________.

Courtesy the Odegaard Writing & Research Center (http://www.depts.washington.edu/owrc)
Adapted from Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter In Academic Writing.
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 _________, 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 _________.
- I’m of two minds about X’s claim that _________. On the one hand, I agree that _________. On the other hand, I’m not sure if _________.
- 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.

SIGNAL WHO IS SAYING WHAT

- X argues _________.
- According to both X and Y, _________.
- Politicians _________, X argues, should _________.
- Most athletes will tell you that _________.
- My own view, however, is that _________.
- I agree, as X may not realize, that _________.
- But _________ are real, and arguably, the most significant factor in _________.
- But X is wrong that _________.
- However, it is 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 _________.
- Yet a sober analysis of the matter reveals _________.
- Nevertheless, new research shows _________.
- Anyone familiar with _________ should see that _________.

ENTERTAINING OBJECTIONS

- At this point I would like to raise some objections that have been inspired by the skeptic in me. She feels that I have been ignoring _________. “_________,” she says to me, “_________.”
- 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 _________.

NAMING YOUR NAYSAYERS

- Here many _________ would probably object that _________.
- But _________ _________ would certainly take issue with the argument that _________.
- _________, of course, may want to dispute my claim that _________.
- Nevertheless, both _________ and _________ will probably argue that _________.
- Although not all _________ think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that _________.
- _________ _________ are so diverse in their views that it’s hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _________.

INTRODUCING OBJECTIONS INFORMALLY

- But is my proposal realistic? What are the chances of its actually being adopted?
- Yet is it always true that _________? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that _________.
- However, does the evidence I’ve cited prove conclusively that _________?
- “Impossible,” you say. “Your evidence must be skewed.”
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 _________.

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 cell biology, ________ assumed in _________, her seminal work on cell structures and functions that fat cells _________. As ________ herself put it, "_________" (200). Another leading scientist, ________, argued that fat cells "_________" (200). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of fat, the basic assumption was that _________.
- If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes _________. However, new research shows _________.
- These findings challenge dieter's common assumptions that _________.
- At first glance, teenagers appear to _________. But on closer inspection _________.

ESTABLISHING WHY YOUR CLAIM MATTERS

- 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 _________. is should in fact concern anyone who cares about _________.

ADDING METACOMMENTARY

- In other words,
- What ________ really means by this is _________.
- Essentially, I am arguing that _________.
- My point is not that we should _________. but that we should _________.
- What ________ really means is _________.
- In other words, _________.
- To put it another way, _________.
- In sum, then, _________.
- My conclusion, then, is that, _________.
- In short, _________.
- What is more important, _________.
- Incidentally, _________.
- By the way, _________.
- Chapter 2 explores, _________. while Chapter 3 examines _________.
- Having just argued that _________. let us now turn our attention to _________.
- Although some readers may object that _________. I would answer that _________.

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Adapted from Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter In Academic Writing.