

## Example Templates from *They Say/I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein

In their book, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Graff and Birkenstein call authors of other works “They.” You can think of “they” as any specific author, or as the mass of experts writing on your topic. “They” may also be written as “X” to symbolize an author’s name. The following are examples of how to build sentences that help you move back and forth between what “they” say and what *you* have to say about it.

### Introducing “What They Say”

- A number of \_\_\_\_ [experts] \_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_.
- 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 assume 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 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 the other 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Capturing Authorial Action**

- 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 conceded that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X demonstrates that\_\_\_\_\_.
- X deplores the tendency to \_\_\_\_\_.
- X celebrates the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X emphasizes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X insists that\_\_\_\_\_.
- X observes that\_\_\_\_\_.
- X questions whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- X refutes the claim that\_\_\_\_\_.
- X reminds us 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 in the journal \_\_ [Journal Title] \_\_, X complains that “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- In X's view, “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- X agrees/disagrees when she 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

## Works Cited

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, W. W. Norton, 2014, pp. 293-297.