School of Liberal Arts

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Literature Review Templates:

How to Present What 'They' Say

The following templates help writers introduce and discuss sources ('they') when writing a literature review. Additionally, 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 definitely 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 <u>sociologists</u> 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.*]
- ➢ <u>Americans</u> today tend to believe that _____
- ➢ Conventional wisdom has it that_____.
- ➢ The standard way of thinking about topic X has been_____.
- ➢ Many <u>students</u> 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		Verbs for Expressing Agreement	
Argue	Insist	Acknowledge	Endorse
Assert	Observe	Admire	Extol
Believe	Remind us	Agree	Praise
Claim	Report	Celebrate the fact that	Reaffirm
Emphasize	Suggest	Corroborate	Support
		Do not deny	Verify

Verbs for Questioning or Disagreeing		Verbs for Making Recommendations	
Complain	Question	Advocate	Implore
Complicate	Refute	Call for	Plead
Contend	Reject	Demand	Recommend
Contradict	Renounce	Encourage	Urge
Deny	Repudiate	Exhort	Warn
Deplore the tendency to			
Disavow			

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-quotation-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

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
        5th ed. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001. Print.
Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing.*
        New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. Print.
Modern Language Association of America, The. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed.
        New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

<h1>Templates to Declare the Writer's Position:</h1>
<h2>How to Present What 'I' Say</h2>

The following templates help writers introduce and discuss your own ideas as a writer ('I') when writing a paper that requires the writer's response to or stance/position on a topic. Furthermore, 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

"I" can be used in well-grounded and well supported arguments just as those that don't use "I". Some occasions may warrant avoiding first person ("I"). Overuse of "I" can also result in a monotonous series of "I" statements—"I believe, I think, I argue". It is a good idea to mix first-person assertions with assertions that signal your position without using "I".

➢ 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 _____.

Templates for 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 _____.
➢ The evidence shows 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 taken 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 <u>Christians</u> think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that _____.
- <u>Non-native English speakers</u> 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 <u>dieters'</u> common assumption that _____.
- At first glance, <u>teenagers</u> 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
Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. Print.

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