Sentence Templates + Transitions
Derived from Graff and Birkenstein’s crazy-helpful *They Say, I Say*¹

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 “________” ( ).

- 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, “Wins 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, __________ 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 CONCESSIONING 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