Templates for Integrating Research into Your Writing

Writing about your research is like conducting a conversation among your own ideas and those of others. In our video tutorial on research writing and our handout on integrating sources into your writing, we explain the purpose and value of using signal phrases and commentary. In this handout, we provide templates and suggested vocabulary for different ways you might frame and unpack others’ ideas in your writing. For more on this subject, including many more templates, see They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.

Let’s start with signal phrases: ways to frame others’ ideas and information that you’re quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing in your essay.

**Neutral**
X argues _______________.
According to both X and Y, _______________.
Architects, X argues, should _______________.
In their recent work, Y and Z have offered critiques of _______________ for _______________.

**Suggesting agreement**
In the same way, X suggests _______________.
I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls _______________.
X gives a helpful explanation of this, saying _______________.

**Suggesting disagreement**
Contrary to this concept, X argues that _______________.
I disagree with X’s argument that _______________.
X harshly critiques this notion, saying _______________.

**Suggesting both agreement and disagreement**
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 endorse his final conclusion 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 _______________.

**Comparing or transitioning between others’ ideas**
By Demonstrating _______________, X’s work [extends] the findings of Y.
X’s findings [call into question] the widely accepted theory that _______________.
The results of X contradict/refute Y’s conclusion that _______________.
Whereas X provides ample evidence that _______________, Y and Z’s research on _______________ and _______________ convinces me that _______________ instead.
X’s theory of _______________ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of _______________.
If group X is right that _______________, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that _______________.

Here are some ways to provide your own commentary: following any quoted, paraphrased, or summarized ideas/information with your own explanation, analysis, and/or relating it to your own ideas.

**Explaining an idea**
In other words, __________.
In short, __________.
What X means here is __________.
What X is saying __________.
What __________ really means is __________.

**Agreeing**
I agree, as X may not realize, that __________.
Indeed, it is highly likely that __________.
X is right that __________.

**Disagreeing**
My own view, however, is that __________.
But X is wrong that __________.
X is wrong that __________.
However, it is simply not true that __________.
X's assertion that __________ doesn't fit the facts.
X overlooks what I consider an important point about __________.

**Both agreeing and disagreeing**
X is both right and wrong that __________.
At the same time that I believe __________, I also believe __________.
Though I concede that __________, I still insist that __________.
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.

**Connecting to your own argument/ideas**
My conclusion, then, is that __________.
What is more important, __________.
These conclusions, which X discusses in __________, add weight to the argument that __________.
Ultimately, my goal is to demonstrate that __________
My point is not __________, but __________.
Having just argued that __________, let us now turn our attention to __________.
Although some readers may object that __________, I would answer that __________.

**Establishing why your claim matters**
X matters/is important because __________.
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 __________.
Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of __________, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about __________.
At some points in an essay, it may be appropriate to acknowledge another perspective. This is especially powerful if you can then argue against that opposition. Here is some suggested language for both.

**Entertaining objections**
Yet some readers may challenge the view that ___________.
Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that ___________.
Here, many [photographers] would probably object that ___________.
[Biologists], of course, may want to question whether ___________.
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 ___________?

**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 ___________.

Finally, here’s some more vocabulary commonly used to transition between ideas. This may help you develop your own style of signal phrases and commentary as you develop your research writing voice.

**Cause and Effect**
- accordingly
- as a result
- consequently
- hence
- it follows, then
- since
- so
- then
- therefore
- thus

**Comparison**
- along the same lines
- in the same way
- likewise
- similarly

**Addition**
- also
- and
- besides
- furthermore
- in addition
- in fact

**Concession**
- admittedly
- although it is true that
- granted
- I concede that
- of course
- naturally
- to be sure

**Example**
- after all
- consider
- for example
- for instance
- specifically

**Conclusion**
- as a result
- consequently
- hence
- in conclusion, then
- in short
- in sum, then
- it follows, then
- so
- that
- therefore
- thus

**Elaboration**
- actually
- by extension
- that is
- in other words
- to put it another way
- ultimately

Center for Arts & Language / Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing (second edition, 2010).