Sentence Templates & Transitions
from Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say, I Say*

Remember: the templates below are meant to guide you in using “key rhetorical moves that [critical thinking] comprises” (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010). Think of them as moves in a game-- the better we get at the game or sport, the more comfortable we get with knowing when and how to use a move best.

**Introducing What an Author Says / 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 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 ________.

**Examples:**
- 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 the field of sociology.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for ________.

**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, “______” ().
  - **Example:** According to Standage, “Wine was the lifeblood of [Greece]” (3).

- In his book, ________, X maintains that “______” ().
  - **Example:** In his book, *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, Standage maintains that “Greek and Roman knowledge... had been safeguarded and extended by scholars in the Arab world” (4).

- X agrees when she writes, “______” ().
  - **Example:** I believe wine was the most influential drink in history. Standage agrees when he writes, “Wine was the lifeblood of [Greece]” (4).
Explaning a Quotation (i.e., Showing that you understand what the quote says)

- 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 ________.

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 ________.
- X contradicts himself. On the one hand, he argues ________. But on the other hand, he also says ________.
- X claims ________, but we don't need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with ________ has long known that ________.

AGREEING AND DISAGREEING SIMULTANEOUSLY

- Whereas X provides ample evidence that ________, Y and Z's research on ________ and ________ reveal that ________ instead.
- While X is probably wrong when she claims that ________, she is right that ________.
- X's position that ________ is compelling, but Y's argument about ________ and Z's research on ________ are equally persuasive.

Establishing Why Your Claims Matter (i.e., Why should I care about this argument?)

- 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.