

English Academic Writing Sentence Templates

This handout offers a number of sentence templates to help you get the hang of academic writing. It is intended to give you an idea of the kinds of rhetorical moves you should be making in your papers, but it is by no means exhaustive. For an even more robust online collection of academic sentence templates, we recommend the University of Manchester's [Academic Phrasebank](#).

Openings and Introductions

Introducing scholarly consensus, a common narrative, or common interpretation

It is common among literary critics to claim that...
The critical consensus maintains that...
It is widely argued that...
Much of the contemporary research on [topic] has found that...
Most historians agree that...
The assertion that... is essentially a commonplace among anthropologists at this point.
Few political scientists would disagree that...

Introducing an ongoing debate

There is widespread agreement among scholars concerning [phenomenon]. There is much less agreement, however, about the [detail/ component/ explanation of phenomenon]. Some studies have found evidence that.... However, other scholars have argued... Ultimately, the argument that... appears to be contradicted by a large body of research.
In recent discussions/ debates/ reports of [topic], a controversial/ complex issue has been whether/ to what extent.... On the one hand, some argue that.... On the other hand, however, others argue that... My own position is that...

Establishing the significance of the paper's argument

However, [topic] is still widely misunderstood (or underexamined or excluded or misinterpreted) because...
While research on [topic] is wide-ranging, few have investigated the underlying assumption, present in much of this research, that...
Nevertheless, the question/problem/mystery remains...
While the issue of... is often dismissed as insignificant to [topic], it ought to be granted a closer look because...
While [theory] is widely accepted among literary historians, it is rarely put to the test in other fields. When applied to [new object], new dimensions of the well-known theory come to light.
It is widely asserted that... However, this common claim is unfounded because...
The foundational premise that... is due for a reassessment.

Stating a paper's purpose

The purpose of this paper/ essay/ report is to analyze/ describe/ argue...
This paper ultimately argues that...
My purpose/ aim here is to...
I argue...
The primary emphasis/goal/focus/aim of this paper is...
This paper describes/ analyzes/ (re)assesses/ discusses/ examines/ investigates/ claims...

Indicating a paper's organization

This paper first discusses/analyzes..., before moving on to [argument].
Following a brief discussion of [theory], this paper proceeds as follows:
first, I will... Then, Finally...
After a discussion of..., I will turn to...
This paper first analyzes/discusses ..., followed by an examination/ illustration/ overview of ...
This paper is divided into four sections. First... etc.
Given the centrality of [issue] to any treatment of [topic], this paper will begin by demonstrating the internal complexity of [issue] within the context of [set of conditions/ situation].

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Verbs for describing authorial action

X agrees that...
acknowledges
argues
believes
denies/ does not deny
claims
urges us/readers to
develops the idea
clarifies
implies
proves
corroborates

complains
concedes
demonstrates
demands
emphasizes
insists
contends
addresses
employs
supports
elucidates
exaggerates

observes
questions whether
refutes the claim
reminds us
reports
suggests
celebrates the fact
illustrates
indicates
exemplifies
highlights
declares

Introducing quotations

X states, "..."
As critic X puts it, "..."
According to X, "..."
(As) X himself writes, "..."
In her book, ..., X maintains/ argues/ asserts that "..."
Writing in the journal ..., X contends that "..."
Philosopher X put it well when he wrote, "..."
In X's view, "..."

Explicating or
analyzing
quotations

In other words, ...
Essentially, X is saying that...
What X seems to be saying is that...
Implied in X's use of the term(s)/phrase..., is the meaning...
The critical point of X's argument is...
X's point is...
Ultimately, this means ...
Of particular significance to my argument here is the implication in this statement/ claim/ passage that...

Argumentative Moves

Expressing
agreement with
sources

X makes the significant/necessary point that...
As X correctly notes/ appropriately points out/ convincingly argues...
X's theory/assertion/interpretation is useful here because it sheds light on the significant problem that...
In his/ her/ their analysis, X raises the question..., which, for me, is the central question at the heart of the it all.
My own argument takes up where X leaves off...
Ultimately, X's controversial claim that... holds up to the scrutiny.
My argument here could be read as a defense of/ extension of X's earlier claims that/ assertions about...

Expressing
disagreement
with sources

Ultimately, X overlooks the important detail...
X's assertion that... rests on the questionable/ indefensible/ ill-advised assumption/premise that...
I would dispute X's conclusion that..., because...
I disagree with X's view of... because, as recent research has shown, ...
In at least one/two/three/etc. important respects, X's argument is open to objection. These are...
On the grounds that..., I object to X's assertion that...

Expressing
agreement/
disagreement
simultaneously

While I agree with X's point that..., I cannot accept her/his/their conclusion that..., because...
X makes a convincing argument when he/she/they write...; however, this assertion is nevertheless mounted on the faulty assumption/premise that...
X raises key questions in his/her/their analysis, but still misses the central problem: ...
We might resolve the fundamental problems with X's argument by supplementing his/her/their claims with the theory/method/argument...

Raising
counterarguments
or anticipating
objections

X would/might dispute my claim that..., on the grounds that...
An attentive reader may be asking...
Some readers/ scholars may challenge the assertion that...
X raises a formidable challenge to my argument when he/she/they insist...
At this point, it's necessary to address the elephant in the room: X's significant counterargument that...
Here, many historians would probably object that...
When we consider..., my argument seems to get in a bit of trouble.

Conceding a point
or qualifying claims

Although I grant X's point that..., I nevertheless maintain that...
Scholars on the other side of this debate are on solid ground when they assert that... Ultimately, however, they go too far in coming to the conclusion that...
I concede that...
While it is true/ undeniable that..., it does not necessarily follow that...
Due to X's convincing claim that..., I must qualify my own argument as follows: ...
Even with these objections/ disputes taken into consideration, my argument that... still stands/ holds true.
Insofar as ..., my claim is...

Signal Words and Commonly Used Transitions

Addition	<i>also</i> <i>and</i> <i>besides</i> <i>not only..., but also...</i>	<i>furthermore</i> <i>in addition</i> <i>in fact</i>	<i>indeed</i> <i>moreover</i> <i>so too</i>
Elaboration	<i>actually</i> <i>by extension</i> <i>in short</i> <i>beyond</i>	<i>that is</i> <i>in other words</i> <i>to put it another way</i> <i>what is more</i>	<i>to put it bluntly</i> <i>to put it succinctly</i> <i>ultimately</i> <i>essentially</i>
Example	<i>for example</i> <i>as an illustration</i> <i>consider</i>	<i>for instance</i> <i>specifically</i> <i>in the case of</i>	<i>to take a case in point</i> <i>in particular</i>
Cause and Effect	<i>accordingly</i> <i>as a result (of)</i> <i>consequently</i> <i>hence</i>	<i>it follows, then</i> <i>since</i> <i>so</i> <i>then</i>	<i>therefore</i> <i>thus</i> <i>due to</i> <i>because (of)</i>

Comparison	<i>along the same lines in the same way compared to</i>	<i>likewise similarly</i>	<i>as well as just as</i>
Contrast/ Counter	<i>although but by/ in contrast conversely despite still</i>	<i>even though however nevertheless nonetheless on the contrary instead of</i>	<i>on the other hand regardless whereas while yet rather (than)</i>
Concession/ Qualification	<i>admittedly granted naturally even though at the very least conceding that to the extent that</i>	<i>I concede that of course although insofar as in spite of supposing that</i>	<i>although it is true that to be sure despite ___ notwithstanding, ... seemingly provided that</i>
Conclusion	<i>as a result consequently hence in conclusion, then to summarize in the final analysis</i>	<i>in short in sum, then it follows, then so finally</i>	<i>the upshot of all this is that therefore thus to sum up ultimately</i>

Metacommentary to guide readers

Offering clarification or transparency	<i>In other words, ... What X really means by this is... I don't mean to say... Rather, my point is that... To put it another way, ... It is necessary/ significant to point out that... In short, ... More important, however, is the detail/ claim/ observation/ assertion... My conclusion, then, is that... In sum, ... Incidentally, ... By the way, ... As my use of the term X indicates, ...</i>
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Sign-posting
structure

*Before I can develop my argument that..., I must first discuss its
underlying theory/ premise(s).*

Now that I've fully established ..., I can move on to the claim that...

*Earlier in this paper I argued that...; while I don't mean to contradict
myself, it is important to consider a significant counterargument
to this claim, namely: ...*

It's important here to take a moment to dwell on [detail], because...

Now I will return to the question I raised at the start of my analysis:...

Works Cited:

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein: They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2014.

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