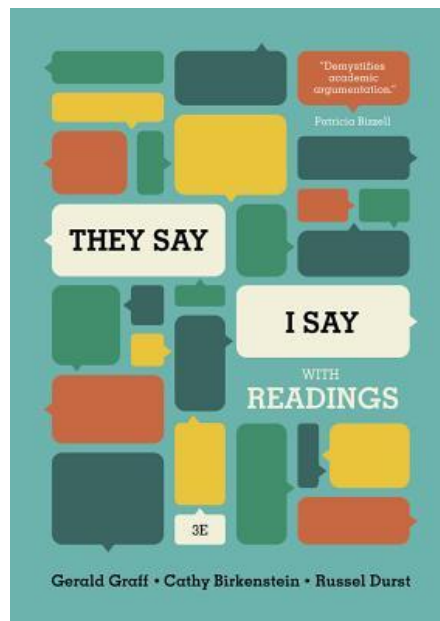




"they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings

Gerald Graff , Cathy Birkenstein , Russel Durst

Download now

Read Online ➔

"they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings

Gerald Graff , Cathy Birkenstein , Russel Durst

"they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings Gerald Graff , Cathy Birkenstein , Russel Durst

They Say / I Say with Readings shows that writing well means mastering some key rhetorical moves, the most important of which is to summarize what others have said ("they say") in order to set up one's own argument ("I say"). Templates help students make these moves in their own writing, and 50 readings demonstrate the moves and prompt students to think and write."

"they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings Details

Date : Published February 1st 2015 by W. W. Norton & Company (first published September 1st 2005)

ISBN : 9780393937510

Author : Gerald Graff , Cathy Birkenstein , Russel Durst

Format : Paperback 816 pages

Genre : Language, Writing, Nonfiction, Education, Teaching, Reference, Academic, School



[Download "they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic W ...pdf](#)



[Read Online "they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online "they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings Gerald Graff , Cathy Birkenstein , Russel Durst

From Reader Review "they Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings for online ebook

Michelle says

This book, given to me by my dear friend Scott who studied under Gerald Graff, singlehandedly improved my essays. It seems weird to have templates for writing essays, but they gave me better ideas about how to enter conversations in my essays and how to move from one paragraph to the next. I had my students read the whole book and then asked them to have 7 out of the 10 elements in their essays. The only things that I've noticed to be confusing for people is their absolute negativity towards using "I" in essays (so I've figured out ways to be personal without using "I" or "me" or whatever else is taboo in a lot of academic writing), and the fact that people don't know how to fit the ten elements neatly into the five-paragraph essay because the book doesn't really go over essay organization.

Don't get me wrong, the five-paragraph essay form has been great in getting a lot of people to learn how to write essays. But somewhere after the first year of writing them, it's time to move on and you just have to see how to really organize essays, five paragraphs or 2,000 paragraphs. So I would at least add to this book my advice that you should write your introduction and your conclusion last. Because you never really know what's going to happen in your writing until you're done. And even when you are writing the introduction and conclusion, sometimes you'll discover something new that needs to be incorporated into the body. So I guess there's one more thing--do NOT ever come up with some new ideas in your conclusion. A conclusion should really be called a "summary" in my opinion.

Wow, can you tell I have a lot of thoughts on this? Email me if you want help with your essay. Ha.

Udeni says

The authors' aim is to help student writers take part in an academic conversation. Their definition of writing well consists of summarising current debate (they say) and setting up one's own arguments (I say). Each chapter provides simple templates to help students make these move in their own writing. For example, "In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____. My own view is _____."

Part One consists of three chapters which cover how to describe a viewpoint, how to summarise a discussion, and how to correctly quote others. Part Two contains four chapters, which cover ways to respond to others' work, identifying one's own argument, introducing objections, and explaining the importance of a discussion. Part Three covers how to connect arguments seamlessly, writing in an individual voice and a revision chapter. Part Four has specific advice for writers in the arts, sciences, and social sciences. There are some weaker chapters on digital communications and verbal discussions.

This is an essential book for 16-18 year olds, and useful for first year undergraduates. Non-native English speakers at postgraduate level will also find this book useful. Teachers can use the exercises at the end of each chapter for class discussions or homework.

The paperback edition loses one star for thin paper and for faint ink, which make the book flimsy and unreadable. Another star was dropped for the patronising writing style. A book that I will probably return to, but not with relish.

Mary says

I think I would have hated this book if I were assigned it as a freshman in college. But I was kind of an asshole then, as are most college freshman.

As such, high school seems the better forum to teach a lot of these very basic writing skills. I used this to help me scaffold a persuasive paper I assigned to eleventh graders and they really seemed to appreciate the help. Graff breaks down the elements of good academic persuasive writing into such useful, manageable chunks that it was a breeze to design mini-lessons around them. I never used the text itself with the kids, but it came in really handy in the planning stages.

Sarah Cammelot says

I could appreciate this book as a great read for beginning writers, but I firmly believe that writing is learned by practice of creativity, not template. I personally feel that this book was too template-focused and did not emphasize the writers natural flow of words enough.

Kris says

A fantastic, actually helpful resource for academic writers.

It's very liberal/lefty, but that's exposed only in the pieces the authors selected for critique. The writing advice itself is very good.

I read the third edition, from 2016, which contains extra chapters on literature and modern Internet technology. This audiobook version also contained some excerpts at the end from essays and short stories to use for practical exercises.

Leave it to Norton Publishing to create a handy guide like this. A truly great addition to any writer's personal shelf, or in combination with another textbook or text.

Donna says

This book was used for my class, The Writing Process. My class was 12 weeks long and having to use this book for 12 long weeks was excruciating. In my opinion, Graff does not give the student enough credit, as this neat little book tries to do all the work for you! Just fill in the blanks. I also thought this book was biased, old fashioned in some of its stories. I saw it as an agenda for a college professor and former MLA President to get colleges to use his book. I think this is a conflict of interest. He thinks he knows what the American Experience is. He defines street smarts in a unique way, not exactly what I have seen as a definition in my lifetime. He assumes too much for the reader. He should have given us more credit. I have to use this book for my next class also...

Siria says

This is a very useful guide that introduces students to the basic concepts of argumentative writing at the college level. Graff and Birkenstein stress that students remember they are not writing in a vacuum but rather to a particular audience as part of a larger ongoing conversation. Some of the templates they provide for students to incorporate into their writing are a little clichéd, sure ("On the one hand... On the other hand"), but they will help students who are only beginning to learn how to write critically.

(It's not, after all, necessarily an intuitive skill—one of the things that left me confused and anxious as an undergrad was getting back papers with comments that read, in their entirety, "More analysis." Now when I look back at my earliest work, I can see clearly what my professors meant; then, I thought that that was what I was doing and couldn't figure out how to do better.)

Graff and Birkenstein's templates are like training wheels for student writers, helping them to formulate ideas in ways that are new to them and hopefully to be discarded as composition and analytical skills improve.

"*They Say/I Say*" is also a useful book for instructors to read, as it provides several reminders of the kinds of things that may now be second nature to us but which are likely to be stumbling blocks for students.

Carol. says

Very interesting premise, namely, looking at academic writing as participating in a dialogue. It's a fascinating idea that goes back to at least Greek roots in the Socratic dialogue. (Come to think of it, some Eastern teachers use that technique as well; I'm just not well-versed in non-Western history). I think it's a technique that helps a student place their work in a larger conversation, and elevate an academic essay above the "explanatory" work into a work that defends or promotes a viewpoint. The writers' mission can be summed up: "Yet despite this growing consensus that writing is a social, conversational act, helping student writers actually participate in these conversations remains a formidable challenge. This book aims to meet that challenge. Its goal is to demystify academic writing by isolating its basic moves, explaining them clearly and representing them in the form of templates."

Broken into four parts, the first part is called, "They Say," and gives students examples of how to take a position, then summarize and quote others in their works. The second section, "I Say," leads the writer how to respond to the "they say" arguments, and how to distinguish one's own position from differing ones. (Incidentally, my professor had us read Martin Luther King's "Letters from a Birmingham Jail" which uses nearly every instance of these techniques, and is a truly impressive essay. For that alone, I'm grateful to her). The third section addresses analysis and conclusions, and shows how to connect the parts, using one's own voice and metacommentary.

The last section addresses writing within specific settings, namely, writing for science, in the social sciences, entering class conversations and deciphering author viewpoints.

Each chapter ends with a few exercises which lead the reader through understanding the technique and how to implement it.

Contains templates to help beginning academic writers formulate ideas, and has a number of specific suggestions throughout to help writers integrate these techniques.

Overall, an interesting read for an academic book. It was required reading for an English Composition class. I wouldn't have mind having run into this in high school or college when I first started academic writing. Four stars for quality of ideas, approachability and useful techniques, if not actual enjoyment.

Ayla says

My two stars are generous. If you need this book's atrocious templates to write a paper, you have some serious literary remediation to do.

The templates, when strung together into a disjointed paragraph of concessions and cliches, make for an amazingly boring and unoriginal essay. Even when incorporated into an otherwise mediocre paper, they stand out as obvious regurgitations of what the writer feels an academic paper "should" say.

Any scholar who pridefully publishes the words "I'm of two minds about X's claim that _____. On the one hand, I agree that _____. On the other hand, I'm not sure if _____." in that order will drastically degrade his paper's quality and damage his credibility in the reader's mind.

Forgiving the contractions and weak verbs, because frankly I don't plan on writing an article on this template, this template lacks anything resembling style or interest to the reader.

"I'm of two minds..." Just... no. Orwell would shit his pants reading that (read "Politics and the English Language" if you want realistic and credible writing advice). The writer did absolutely no thinking in composing that phrase.

"One the one hand... on the other hand..." I could accept that in a middle schooler's persuasive paper, though I'd cringe a bit.

"I'm not sure if ____" No, fuck off. You're not sure? That's what you say when the waiter mentions the restaurant's special on fried squid testicles. Give me a clear position and **argue it**. And stop with the damn contractions.

MB (What she read) says

3.5 stars.

Assigned textbook for class. This book is made up of about 1/3 teaching material and 2/3 essays, articles, speeches, etc. intended for reading/discussions/class assignments. Overall, I thought it did a pretty good job. The "They Say/I Say" part was clear and easily understood. Good examples were provided. The readings were divided into five main themes, and were pretty interesting. Some were new to me, and some familiar. (Some of the readings seemed a teensy bit dated now, but not too bad.)

Thoughts while reading: As far as a textbook goes, this one contains good information in an easy-to-understand and succinct form. However, I sure am noticing a lot of typos, and missing citations and/or attributions. Needs more proofing??? (Authors, get out the red pencil.)

Gaijinmama says

This is one of the most useful books I've ever encountered if you teach academic writing, reading, or critical thinking.

Some instructors might disagree, but I find the use of templates very helpful for my students. In my opinion, it is not encouraging plagiarism to give the students a template to make it easier for them. (For example, "Author X makes an excellent point that_____, but I would also add_____." They are not native English speakers and it is crucial for them to be given a clear idea of what is expected. Once they get used to it, they can bend the rules!

The articles at the end of the book are all good reads, in addition to being great examples of academic written discourse. I also respect the authors' position on the use of first person . They say it's acceptable, I more-or-less disagree but that is probably because my students have problems with it which may be particular to their cultural and linguistic background.

Finally, and most important, the author's main point, that writing is a kind of conversation, makes a lot of sense and they really develop this point clearly and effectively. Because of the focus on writing as a dialogue, this book is helpful for discussion and presentation skills as well as writing.

Jack says

My writing is often competent, but not as effective as I'd like. I bought this expecting to screen it for use as a corrective to my students. I found it surprisingly useful for myself, although at a fairly detailed level. The most useful thing they say, which I should have known already, but didn't, is that it is critically important to remember that one's academic writing is a contribution to an ongoing discussion that one's reader likely has not been paying close attention to. As such, one needs to bring the reader up to speed on where the discussion was ("They Say"), to make it clear why one's own contribution makes any sense. Useful. Not genius, but useful

For your amusement: I came across it in Stanley Fish's provocative column on spending an entire semester trying to teach college students how a sentence works.

Patrick Faller says

I've taught the shorter, rhetoric-based version of this text before, and now, after having moved away from it to teach other texts that seemed even more "democratic" than this, I'm returning to this text next semester because other texts simply don't inspire students to begin writing with near as much purpose and confidence as this one does. I've ordered my copy of the 2nd edition, actually, which comes out on 15 November 2011. The rhetorical chapters haven't changed;

I'm sure they'll contain edits, perhaps a few updated examples, but the "moves," from summarizing to quoting to responding to saying why it matters, haven't been altered. What they've done is added another set of readings to the original sets, which dealt, respectively, with fast food, pop culture, economic mobility, and the notion that the American way of life is under assault. Also, they've updated each of these sets by adding several more timely essays, notably essays by Michelle Obama, David Foster Wallace, and Tom Bissell.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

When students on my campus are flagged for citation troubles and tried for plagiarism, one thing they have to do is come to me for a plagiarism tutorial. Because students accidentally plagiarize (and sometimes not accidentally) for a lot of different reasons, I don't just have a pre-packaged tutorial I send them off to do. I'm finding that most often, students simply are not equipped to write about ideas they have found.

This book attempts to guide students through strategies for handling the ideas of others (even in the research and notetaking stages) and then how to signal they are using another's ideas in a paper. The authors then move into helping students understand how to write about their own ideas, which is another type of struggle. Entering the scholarly conversation can be terrifying!

The book is most useful in the first half, with lists of ideas, examples of quotations handled properly, demonstrates effective paraphrasing, etc. The second half contains full essays for students to reference, but I feel like unless they are required to interact with them in a class setting, they are unlikely to read those. I'm not sure they need to be in the book.

Jon says

When it comes to the topic of learning to write through imitation, Romantic writers—those that claim that style and originality trump everything—must bristle at the idea of templates, asserting that adhering to such confinements would rot their style. This assertion should swiftly end, however, upon discovering that every one of the great writers of the sentence (Shakespeare, Austen, Byron, Keats etc.) learned to write through imitation.

In terms of the simplicity to usefulness ratio, Graff and Birkenstein's book is the best thing I've read on writing. So long as one learns when to drop the templates, thumbs up for imitation.
