

## Useful Moves and Templates (A Companion List for *They Say/I Say*)

In the textbook *They Say, I Say*, Graff and Birkenstein suggest that there are certain “moves” you often need to make in academic writing; for example, you often need to summarize other people’s views, introduce quotations, report findings, and so forth. They also provide many useful “templates” – phrases and patterns you can use to make these moves. However, some of these are rather long and perhaps hard to memorize, so here we offer a shorter list of the most important moves for academic writing in English and easy templates you can use. **Warning:** The templates below do not always mean exactly the same thing!

### Chapter 1: “They Say”: Starting With What Others Are Saying

**(The move) You want to introduce “standard views” – beliefs that are held by many people.**

- ❖ It is often said that...
  - It is often said that motivation is the most important factor in language learning.
- ❖ Many people believe that...
  - Many people believe that motivation is the most important factor in language learning.
- ❖ Conventional wisdom has it that...
  - Conventional wisdom has it that motivation is the most important factor in language learning.

**(The move) You want to introduce a widely held assumption.**

- ❖ Many people assume that...
  - Many people assume that taking a course is the best way to learn a language.
- ❖ It is widely assumed that...
  - It is widely assumed that taking a course is the best way to learn a language.
- ❖ People often take it for granted that...
  - People often take it for granted that taking a course is the best way to learn a language.

**(The move) You want to introduce an idea you (and perhaps others) once held.**

- ❖ I used to believe that...
  - I used to believe that learning foreign languages wasn’t very useful.
- ❖ I used to think that...
  - When I was young, I used to think that learning foreign languages wasn’t very useful.

**(The move) You want to introduce an idea that someone else implies (but doesn’t say explicitly).**

- ❖ (Who) implies that \_\_\_\_.
  - Gardner implies that instrumental motivation is not so powerful in language learning.
- ❖ (Who) apparently believes that \_\_\_\_.
  - Gardner apparently believes that instrumental motivation is not so powerful in language learning.
- ❖ While (who) does not say so explicitly, (s/he) seems to imply that \_\_\_\_.
  - While Gardner does not say so explicitly, he seems to imply that instrumental motivation is not so powerful in language learning.
- ❖ While (who) does not say so in so many words, (s/he) seems to imply that \_\_\_\_.

- While Gardner does not say it in so many words, he seems to imply that instrumental motivation is never very powerful in language learning.

**(The move) You want to introduce a controversial issue.**

- ❖ There is considerable debate about \_\_\_\_.
- There is considerable debate about the role of tests in motivating language learners.
- ❖ There is much controversy over the issue of \_\_\_\_\_.
- In recent years, there has been much controversy over the issue of tests and motivating language learners.
- ❖ There is a great deal of controversy over whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- In recent years, there has been a great deal of controversy over whether tests are the best way for teachers to motivate language learners.
- ❖ There is a great deal of controversy over whether or not to \_\_\_\_\_.
- In recent years, there has been a great deal of controversy over whether or not to rely heavily on tests to motivate language learners.

**Chapter 2: “Her Point Is” The Art of Summarizing**

**(The move) You want to start a summary of what “they say” in an article, report....**

- ❖ In (whose) (date) (book/article...), (last name) says that \_\_\_\_.
- In her 2013 book, Ushioda says that \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ In (whose) (date) (book/article...) on (what), (last name) says that \_\_\_\_.
- In her 2013 book on motivation, Ushioda says that \_\_\_\_.

**(The move) You want to introduce something “they say.”**

- ❖ (Who) says that \_\_\_\_.
- Norton says that identity plays a major role in language learning motivation.
- ❖ (Who) points out that \_\_\_\_.
- Norton points out that identity plays a major role in language learning motivation.
- ❖ (Who) notes that \_\_\_\_.
- Norton notes that identity plays a major role in language learning motivation.
- ❖ (Who) observes that \_\_\_\_.
- Norton observes that identity plays a major role in language learning motivation.
- ❖ (Who) makes the point that \_\_\_\_.
- Norton makes the point that identity plays a major role in language learning motivation.

**(The move) You want to introduce a suggestion “they” make.**

- ❖ (Who) suggests that \_\_\_\_.
- Dörnyei suggests that students should be taught to use visualization strategies.
- ❖ (Who) recommends that \_\_\_\_.
- Dörnyei recommends that students should be taught to use visualization strategies.
- ❖ (Who) calls for (gerund phrase).
- Dörnyei calls for teaching students to use visualization strategies.
- ❖ (Who) advocates (gerund phrase).
- Dörnyei advocates teaching students to use visualization strategies.
- ❖ (Who) advocates the (noun/gerund phrase).
- Dörnyei advocates the use of visualization strategies.
- Dörnyei advocates the teaching of visualization strategies.
- ❖ (Who) urges us to \_\_\_\_ . [This is stronger.]
- Dörnyei urges us to use visualization strategies.

**(The move) You want to introduce an argument “they” make.**

- ❖ (Who) argues that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei argues that powerful visual images can enhance motivation.
- ❖ (Who) makes the case that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei makes the case that powerful visual images can enhance motivation.
- ❖ (Who) contends that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei contends that powerful visual images can enhance motivation.
- ❖ (Who) maintains that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei maintains that powerful visual images can enhance motivation.

**(The move) You want to introduce a claim “they” make (but can’t necessarily prove).**

- ❖ (Who) asserts that \_\_\_\_.
  - Gardner asserts that instrumental motivation isn’t very powerful.
- ❖ (Who) claims that \_\_\_\_.
  - Gardner claims that instrumental motivation isn’t very powerful.

**(The move) You want to introduce a point “they” emphasize.**

- ❖ (Who) emphasizes that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei emphasizes that unmotivated language learners have little chance of success.
- ❖ (Who) stresses that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei stresses that unmotivated language learners have little chance of success.
- ❖ (Who) insists that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei insists that unmotivated language learners have little chance of success.

**(The move) You want to summarize findings (of a study).**

- ❖ (Who) reports that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei reports that most Hungarian students are more motivated to learn English than Russian.
- ❖ (Who) finds that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei finds that most Hungarian students are more motivated to learn English than Russian.
- ❖ (A study) shows that \_\_\_\_:
  - Dörnyei and Csizer’s 2006 study shows that most Hungarian students are more motivated to learn English than Russian.

### **Chapter 3: “As He Himself Puts It” The Art of Quoting**

**(The move) You want to introduce a quotation.**

- ❖ (Who) states that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova state that “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning....” (2014, 2).
- ❖ (Who) writes that \_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova write that “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning....” (2014, 2).
- ❖ According to (who) \_\_\_\_.
  - According to Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning....” (2014, 2).
- ❖ As (who) writes:

- As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova write, “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning...” (2014, 2).

**(The move) You want to explain a quotation.**

- ❖ In other words \_\_\_\_.
- As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova write, “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning...” (2014, 2). In other words, we should pay as much attention to vision as we do to goals.
- ❖ This means that \_\_\_\_:
- As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova write, “vision is one of the single most important factors within the domain of language learning...” (2014, 2). This means that we should pay as much attention to vision as we do to goals.

**Chapter 4: “Yes/No/Okay, But” Three Ways to Respond**

**(The move) You want to disagree with what “they” say.**

- ❖ I disagree with the view that \_\_\_\_.
- I disagree with the view that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning.
- ❖ I can’t agree that \_\_\_\_.
- I can’t agree that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning.
- ❖ My view differs from (whose). I feel that (what) \_\_\_\_.
- My view differs from Dörnyei and Kubanyiova’s. Unlike them, I feel that visualization is not necessarily the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning.
- ❖ I find it difficult to accept the argument that \_\_\_\_.
- I find it difficult to accept the argument that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning.

**(The move) You want to agree with what “they” say.**

- ❖ I share (whose) view that (what).
- I share Dörnyei and Kubanyiova’s view that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning, because \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ Like (who) I believe that (what), because \_\_\_\_.
- Like Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, I believe that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning, because \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ I agree with (who) that (what), because \_\_\_\_.
- I agree with Dörnyei and Kubanyiova that visualization is the best strategy for sustaining motivation in language learning, because \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ I support (whose) position on (what), because \_\_\_\_.
- I support Dörnyei and Kubanyiova’s position on the importance of visualization for sustaining motivation in language learning, because \_\_\_\_.

**(The move) You want to partially agree but also state how your view differs from “theirs.”**

- ❖ While I agree that (what), I also feel that (what). This is because \_\_\_\_.
- While I agree that visualization strategies may help sustain motivation, I also feel they are not as useful as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are. This is because \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ I agree that (what). However, \_\_\_\_.
- I agree that visualization strategies may help sustain motivation. However, I don’t feel they are as useful as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are, because \_\_\_\_.
- ❖ Although I agree that \_\_\_\_, I feel that \_\_\_\_.

- Although I agree that visualization strategies may help sustain motivation, I feel that they are less useful than Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are, because \_\_\_\_.

### Chapter 5: “And Yet” Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say

**(The move) You want to signal that you are shifting from what “they say” to what “I say” – stating your own position.**

- ❖ In my view \_\_\_\_.
- In my view, visualization strategies are not as important as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are.
- ❖ My own view is that \_\_\_\_.
- My own view is that visualization strategies are just as important as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are.
- ❖ My opinion is that \_\_\_\_.
- My opinion is that visualization strategies are not as important as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are.
- ❖ I feel that \_\_\_\_.
- I feel that visualization strategies are just as important as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova say they are.

### Chapter 6: “Skeptics May Object” Planting a Naysayer in Your Text

**(The move) You want to put a naysayer in your text.**

- ❖ (Who) might argue that \_\_\_\_.
- Some people might argue that visualization strategies will not motivate everyone.
- ❖ (Who) would probably object that \_\_\_\_.
- Some people would probably object that visualization strategies will not motivate everyone.
- ❖ (Who) may question whether \_\_\_\_.
- Some people may question whether visualization strategies will motivate everyone.
- ❖ (Who) will probably disagree, arguing that \_\_\_\_.
- Some people will probably disagree, arguing that visualization strategies will not motivate everyone.

**(The move) You want to concede a point but also hold your ground.**

- ❖ While it is true that \_\_\_\_.
- While it is true that visualization strategies may not work for everyone, they may work for many students.
- ❖ I grant that \_\_\_\_ . However, this doesn’t mean that \_\_\_\_.
- I grant that visualization strategies may not work for everyone. However, this doesn’t mean that teachers shouldn’t teach them in language classes.
- ❖ I concede that \_\_\_\_ . However, \_\_\_\_.
- I concede that visualization strategies may not work for everyone. However, I still think teachers should teach them in language classes.
- ❖ On the one hand I agree that \_\_\_\_ . On the other hand, however, I think that \_\_\_\_.
- On the one hand I agree that visualization strategies may not work for everyone. On the other hand, however, I think that they would help most students.

### Chapter 7: “So What? Who Cares?” Saying Why It Matters

**(The move) You want to say why a claim matters.**

- ❖ (What) is important because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's argument is important because it calls our attention to a major language learning strategy we might otherwise not be aware of.
- ❖ (What) is significant because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's argument is significant because it helps us see the importance of a language learning strategy we might otherwise overlook.
- ❖ (What) has important implications for (what, who) because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's argument has important implications for English teaching in China because it suggests that test scores are not necessarily the best way to motivate language learners.

**(The move) You want to indicate who cares.**

- ❖ (What) is important for (who) because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's argument is important for educators because sustaining motivation is essential for successful language learning.
- ❖ (What) is significant for (who) because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's argument is significant for educators because sustaining motivation is essential for successful language learning.