

Integrating Research: How To Provide Your Perspective

Unless you are asked to write a literature review, a thesis-driven paper takes a position on a particular topic relative to the voices of other scholars. Starting with a summary of others' views situates your argument within a larger conversation. The three most common ways to respond to ideas include disagreeing, agreeing, or some combination of both.

How to disagree with others

Expressing your disagreement with authoritative voices may seem daunting, but doing so tactfully serves to further academic discourse. If you disagree with another writer's stance, you must support your opposing view with compelling reasons, such as the following:

- 1) The original text overlooks relevant factors.
- 2) The original text is based on faulty evidence, flawed logic, or questionable assumptions.

The following templates can help you structure your arguments for disagreeing with a source:

Person X's claim that _____ inaccurately assumes that _____.
Person X's views are contradicted by recent research showing that _____.
Person X overlooks the deeper problem of _____ by focusing on _____.

How to agree with others

Even if you agree with the sources you cite, your paper needs to go beyond simply echoing the points of others. You can contribute to the academic discourse in a variety of ways that still agree with the claims you cite:

- 1) Point out evidence or a line of reasoning that supports Person X's claims that they themselves don't mention.
- 2) Corroborate Person X's perspective with a personal experience or situation that helps to explain something that needs to be better understood. (*Not all papers allow for this.)

The following templates can help you structure your arguments for agreeing with a source:

Person X's theory that _____ holds true because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that _____.
Person X's interpretation of _____ also sheds light on the problem of _____.
*I agree that _____ because my experience with _____ confirms it.

How to agree and disagree simultaneously

Whenever you agree with one person's view, you are opposing the voices of their critics. Using the following templates will allow you to agree with one view while challenging another.

If Person X is correct in their assumption that _____, then society should question the popular belief that _____.

*I agree that _____, which should be emphasized since many people still believe _____.

Alternatively, you may wish to critique a scholar while simultaneously conceding one or more elements of their argument. In doing so, your writing becomes more nuanced and complex. Using the following templates will allow you to situate your argument relative to others in terms of similarity and divergence.

Although Person X raises an important point about _____, his assumption that _____ is an overgeneralization.

Whereas Person X provides ample evidence that _____, researchers Y and Z's findings that _____ are more compelling.

*Though I concede that _____, I still insist that _____.

How to express a certain degree of doubt

Occasionally, you may find that taking a decisive stance against or in favour of another is not possible. While complete ambivalence may frustrate your reader, acknowledging the lack of a clear-cut resolution demonstrates maturity and sophisticated, complex thought. Indeed, an undecided position may be the most appropriate when evaluating a variety of voices speaking about a novel or multi-layered issue. The following templates can help you communicate ambivalence.

While Person X's position on _____ is valid, Person Y's argument about _____ and Person Z's research on _____ are equally as persuasive.

*I am of two minds about Person X's claim that _____. On the one hand, I agree that _____. On the other hand, I am unsure if _____.

*Check with your professor if using the first person is acceptable in your paper.

Material adapted from:

Birkenstein, C., & Graff, G. (2021). *They say/I say: The moves that matter in academic writing* (5th ed.). W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

