

## Task: Sentence Templates

**Situation:** To be used with clients who are having trouble saying something interesting or meaningful about their topic. Sometimes people have trouble inserting themselves into their arguments; it's hard for them to find a place to stand in the midst of the texts that all seem bolder and more intelligent. These templates don't actually solve that problem, but they give clients a chance to try out what it feels like to be someone who takes a stand in an argument.

**Instructions:** Use with discretion. That is, don't just hand this to a client and say, "fill in the blanks." Decide, with the client, which of the templates are likely to be helpful, then give them to the client to work on for 10 minutes or so. Go over the finished product, and see if it leads to anything.

**Outcome:** Maybe the client will write something that's immediately useful, but the more reasonable goal, as stated above, is that the client gets to feel what it's like to be a person who makes the kinds of statements these templates are making.

## Sentence Templates Task

### Templates for disagreeing, with reasons

- Browning's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.
- I disagree with Browning's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ because, as recent research has shown, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Browning is mistaken in his claim that \_\_\_\_\_, because he overlooks \_\_\_\_\_.
- Browning contradicts himself: on the one hand, he argues \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, he also admits \_\_\_\_\_.
- By focusing on the claim that \_\_\_\_\_, Browning overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Templates for agreeing, with difference

- Although Carlyle makes a strong case for \_\_\_\_\_, she does not discuss \_\_\_\_\_, which is crucial for an understanding of the issue.
- Carlyle correctly connects \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_, but she fails to mention \_\_\_\_\_, which is also involved.
- Carlyle is right to argue that \_\_\_\_\_. But she exaggerates/overreaches when she claims that \_\_\_\_\_.
- While it is true, as Carlyle says, that \_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow, as she claims, that \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Templates for establishing why your claims matter**

- Although \_\_\_\_\_ may seem trivial, in fact it plays a crucial role in understanding \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ may seem of interest only to a small group of \_\_\_\_\_, but closer investigation reveals that it matters to everyone who cares about \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Templates for complicating your claims**

- Having just argued that \_\_\_\_\_, I want now to complicate the point by adding that \_\_\_\_\_.
- My point is not \_\_\_\_\_, but rather that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although it may seem that I am arguing for \_\_\_\_\_, in fact I am arguing for \_\_\_\_\_, as I can show with reference to this example.

These templates are based on *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. If you want more, there is a copy of the book that you can use in the Center.