

of what it feels like to enter a public conversation in a way that studying abstract warrants and logical fallacies does not.

We also do not cover the various modes of writing like description, definition, narrative, and comparison/contrast. Nor do we cover the different conventions of writing in the disciplines. It is our belief, that the “they say / I say” pattern cuts across different disciplines and genres of writing, including creative writing. Although students must eventually master the specific writing conventions of their majors, we believe that there is no major or discipline that does not require writers to frame their own claims as a response to what others before them have said. Indeed, students who master the elemental moves prompted by the templates in this book should actually become *better* able to appreciate the differences between disciplines and genres.

ENGAGING THE VOICE OF THE OTHER

A major virtue of the “they say / I say” model is that it returns writing to its social, conversational base. Although writing does require some degree of solitude, the “they say / I say” model shows students that they can best develop their arguments not just by looking inward, but also by looking outward, listening carefully to other views, and engaging the voice of the other. As a result, this approach to writing has an ethical dimension: it asks students not simply to keep proving and reasserting what they already believe, but to stretch what they believe by putting it up against the beliefs of our increasingly diverse, global society, to engage in the reciprocal exchange that characterizes true democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

Entering the Conversation

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T H I N K A B O U T A N activity that you do particularly well, cooking, playing the piano, shooting a basketball, even something as basic as driving a car. If you reflect on this activity, you’ll realize that once you mastered it you no longer had to give much conscious thought to the various moves that go into doing it. Performing this activity, in other words, depends on your having learned a series of complicated moves—moves that may seem mysterious or difficult to those who haven’t yet learned them.

The same applies to writing. Often without consciously realizing it, accomplished writers routinely rely on a stock of established moves that are crucial for communicating sophisticated ideas. What makes writers masters of their trade is not only their ability to express interesting thoughts, but their mastery of an inventory of basic moves that they probably picked up by reading a wide range of other accomplished writers. Less experienced writers, by contrast, are often unfamiliar with these basic moves, and unsure how to make them in their own writing. This book is intended as a short, user-friendly guide to the basic moves of academic writing.

One of our key premises is that these basic moves are so common that they can be represented in *templates* that you can use right away to structure and even generate your own writ-

Example?
Reading
as a
source
for moves?
what is
a template?