

INTRODUCTION

fectly true statement, but precisely because nobody is likely to disagree with it, it goes without saying and thus would seem pointless if said.

disagree

WAYS OF RESPONDING

Just because much argumentative writing is driven by disagreement, it does not follow that agreement is ruled out. Although argumentation is often associated with conflict and opposition, the type of conversational "they say/I say" argument that we focus on in this book can be just as useful when you agree as when you disagree.

Now are there any agreements?

- ▶ She argues _____, and I agree because _____.
- ▶ Her argument that _____ is supported by new research showing that _____.

Nor do you always have to choose between either simply agreeing or disagreeing, since the "they say/I say" format also works to both agree and disagree at the same time.

- ▶ He claims that _____, and I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, I agree that _____; on the other hand, I still insist that _____.

This last option—agreeing and disagreeing simultaneously—is one we especially recommend, since it allows you to avoid a simple yes or no response and present a more complicated argument, while containing that complication within a clear "on the one hand/on the other hand" framework.

Entering the Conversation

While the templates we offer in this book can be used to structure your writing at the sentence level, they can also be expanded as needed to almost any length, as the following elaborated "they say/I say" template demonstrates.

- ▶ In recent discussions of _____, a controversial issue has been whether _____; on the one hand, some argue that _____; from this perspective, _____; on the other hand, however, others argue that _____; in the words of one of this view's main proponents, "_____." According to this view, _____; in sum, then, the issue is whether _____ or _____.
- ▶ My own view is that _____; though I concede that _____, I still maintain that _____; for example, _____; although some might object that _____, I reply that _____; the issue is important because _____.

four moves

If you go back over this template, you will see that it helps you make a host of challenging moves (each of which is taken up in forthcoming chapters in this book). First, the template helps you open your text by identifying an issue in some ongoing conversation or debate ("In recent discussions of _____, a controversial issue has been"), then to map some of the voices in this controversy (by using the "on the one hand/on the other hand" structure). The template also helps you to introduce a quotation ("In the words of"), to explain the quotation in your own words ("According to this view"), and—in a new paragraph—to state your own argument ("My own view is that"), to qualify your argument ("Though I concede that"), and then to support your argument with evidence ("For example"). In addition, the template helps you make one of the most

back to the template