

They Say I Say - Chapter 1 Summary

"They Say"

Starting with What Others are Saying

The Writers Motivation

To Give a point: "a writer needs to indicate clearly not only what his or her thesis is, but also what larger conversation that thesis is responding to"

Providing the proper context to an argument allows the audience to better understand and contextualize it. This is called reminding the audience of what "They Say"

Order: "a writer needs to explain what he or she is responding to--either before offering that response or, at least, very early in the discussion." This better mimics that natural order of which information is synthesized. You always learn about something first before developing an idea about it.

When writing: "remember that you are entering a conversation and therefore need to start with "what others are saying," ... then introduce your own ideas as a response. Specifically ... summarize what "they say" as soon as you can ... and remind readers of it at strategic points as your text unfolds."

Use what "they say" as a jumping off point for your writing. Since you need to introduce the reader to the source of your argument anyway, there's no reason not to use that same information later in your work to advance or prove your point.

To avoid listing everything: "as soon as possible [state] your own position and the one it's responding to i-together, and that you think of the two as a unit.

Avoid going to extremes when mentioning your argument or what it is based off of, one provides the foundation for the other so it's best to avoid building too big a foundation.

Most important to show your reader's your motivation. The introduction serves to provide an example or meaning for what you are about to say.

Templates for Introductions of Ideas

"They say"

It has become common today to dismiss ____.

In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of ____ for ____.

"Standard Views"

Allows writers to introduce and potentially challenge common views/beliefs.

Conventional wisdom has it that ____.

Common sense seems to dictate that ____.

The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that ____.

It is often said that ____.

My whole life I have heard it said that ____.

You would think that ____.

Many people assume that ____.

Making what "They Say" something "You Say"

Introduce a view by presenting it as your own.

When I was a child, I used to think that ____.

Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that ____.

At the same time that I believe ____, I also believe ____.

Something Implied or Assumed

Introduce analysis or critical thinking about an idea.

One implication of X's treatment of ____ is that ____.

Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that ____.

While they rarely admit as much, ____ often take for granted that ____.

An Ongoing Debate

Paints the writer as reliable and allows them to "find" their view as they write.

In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____.

On the other hand, _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____. My own view is _____.

Alternatively introducing an idea most agree with in an attempt to highlight what they ultimately disagree

with.

When it comes to the topic of ____, most of us will readily agree that _____. Where this agreement usually end, however, is on the question of _____. Whereas some are convinced that ____, others maintain that _____.

Review

After introducing what "They Say" don't forget to continue to refer back to it, in order to keep the reader reminded of what you are framing your argument around and what you are responding to. Keep showing the reader your motivation in order to better frame your argument.

Return Sentences

Reminds the reader what you are arguing for/against maintaining the sense of motivation and reasoning.

In conclusion, then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of ____ can't have it both ways. Their assertion that ____ is contradicted by their claim that _____.