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In the Introduction to *“They Say/I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein provide templates designed to help structure argumentative responses and meaningful writing. Specifically, Graff and Birkenstein argue that the types of writing templates they offer mirror the approach that many good writers take when making effective and well-thought-out claims. As the authors themselves put it, “Many accomplished writers make explicit ‘they say’ moves to set up and motivate their own arguments.” Although some people believe that the use of templates might seem too restricting or unoriginal, Graff and Birkenstein insist that the actual substance of the writing does not come from generic phrases of the template itself—it comes from creativity put into the content. In sum, then, their view is that templates are a beneficial writing tool that is useful when making impactful writing.

I agree. In my view, the types of templates that the authors recommend could be beneficial when trying to make a sound argument on a debatable subject. For instance, when giving a response to a claim someone has made, the “they say, I say” template allows for recognition of others’ arguments while also stating your own. In addition, it emphasizes that acknowledging contradiction from critics before making your own opinion allows for your argument to seem more understandable or valid. Some might object, of course, on the grounds that a template doesn’t allow for room to be flexible in the different ways arguments might be structured. Yet I would argue that templates can be written to be used flexibly and adaptively; though everyone might not agree on one structure, it is a baseline for what could form a debatable argument. Overall, then, I believe the use of templates in responsive writing can be beneficial to make use of—an important point to make given the stigma surrounding the usage of templates in higher levels of writing.