

Templates for Incorporating Secondary Sources

There are three basic ways of using a secondary source. You can use it to summarize an idea or other document, you can use it to bolster your argument, and you can use it to acknowledge a disagreement.

Summarizing.

_____ concisely describes it as _____.

One thorough summary says _____.

Summarizing, with additions.

_____ overlooks what I consider an important point about _____.

My own view is that what _____ insists is a _____ is in fact a _____.

I wholeheartedly endorse what _____ calls _____.

These conclusions, which _____ discusses in _____, add weight to the argument that _____.

Agreeing.

Although _____ is discussing a different text, I endorse the most important part of their argument:

I agree that _____, a point that needs emphasizing since other scholars believe _____.

_____’s theory of _____ is useful because it illuminates the difficult problem of _____.

Disagreeing.

Although I grant that _____ has flaws, I still maintain that it raises an important issue.

Proponents of _____ accurately argue that _____. But they exaggerate when they claim that _____.

While it is true that _____, it does not necessarily follow that _____.

On the one hand, I agree with _____ that _____. But on the other hand, I still insist that _____.

These are closely adapted from Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 6th Edition. Norton, 2024.

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