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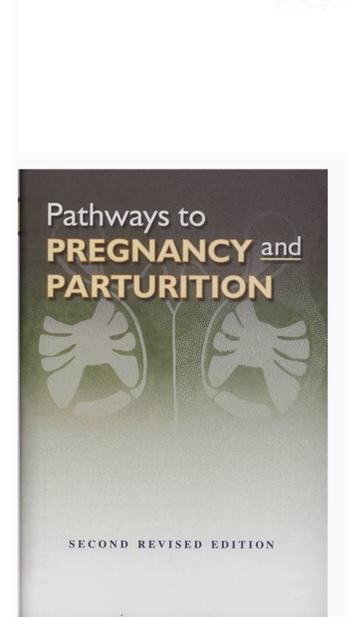
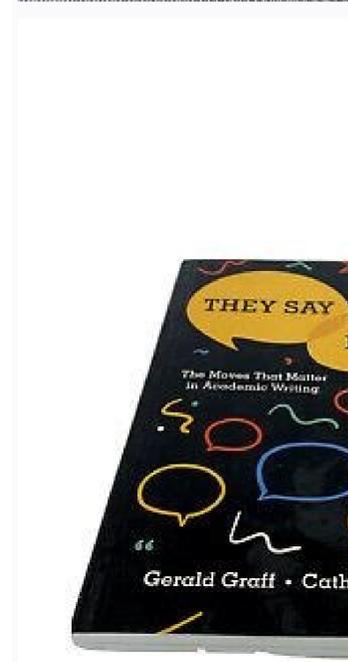
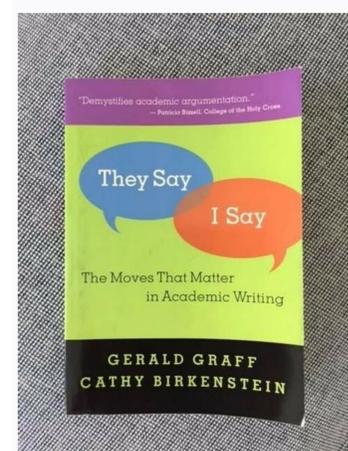


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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT "THEY SAY / I SAY" "Like a Swiss army knife for academic writing, 'They Say / I Say' has long served as a multipurpose tool for students learning how to make the 'moves' that are second nature to more experienced writers. The fifth edition adds several useful implements to the knife, including new chapters with practical, how-to advice on revision and inquiry-driven research." —Steven Bailey, Central Michigan University "It is so invigorating to have a concise, smart chapter on research writing that thinks past the 'standard' process we are all so used to reading and teaching." —Ana Cooke, Penn State University "The text isn't just about writing arguments—it's about reading and evaluating arguments, understanding who is saying what and why. That's the heart of research and inquiry." —Kay Halasek, The Ohio State University "The templates were beyond helpful. They give an excellent starting point from which to launch my writing and would oftentimes help me with the flow of my writing." —First Year Student, College of Southern Nevada "Many students say that it is the first book they've found that actually helps them with writing in all disciplines." —Laura Sonderman, Marshall University "A beautifully lucid way to approach argument—different from any rhetoric I've ever seen." —Anne-Marie Thomas, Austin Community College, Riverside "This book demystifies rhetorical moves, tricks of the trade that many students are unsure about. It's reasonable, helpful, nicely written . . . and hey, it's true. I would have found it immensely helpful myself in high school and college." —Mike Rose, University of California, Los Angeles "The argument of this book is important—that there are 'moves' to academic writing . . . and that knowledge of them can be generative. The template format is a good way to teach and demystify the moves that matter. I like this book a lot." —David Bartholomae, University of Pittsburgh "Students need to walk a fine line between their work and that of others, and this book helps them walk that line, providing specific methods and techniques for introducing, explaining, and integrating other voices with their own ideas." —Libby Miles, University of Vermont "A brilliant book. . . . It's like a membership card in the academic club." —Eileen Seifert, DePaul University "It offers students the formulas we, as academic writers, all carry in our heads." —Karen Gardiner, University of Alabama "The best tribute to 'They Say / I Say' I've heard is this, from a student. This is one book I'm not selling back to the bookstore." Nods all around the room. The students love this book." —Christine Ross, Quinnipiac University "What effect has 'They Say' had on my students' writing? They are finally entering the Burkian Parlor of the university. This book uncovers the rhetorical conventions that transcend disciplinary boundaries, so that even freshmen, newcomers to the academy, are immediately able to join in the conversation." —Margaret Weaver, Missouri State University "It's the anti-composition text: Fun, creative, humorous, brilliant, effective." —Perry Cumbie, Durham Technical Community College "This book explains in clear detail what skilled writers take for granted." —John Hyman, American University W. W. Norton & Company has been independent since its founding in 1923, when William Warder Norton and Mary D. Herter Norton first published lectures delivered at the People's Institute, the adult education division of New York City's Cooper Union. The firm soon expanded its program beyond the Institute, publishing books by celebrated academics from America and abroad. By midcentury, the two major pillars of Norton's publishing program—trade books and college texts—were firmly established. 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Norton & Company Ltd., 15 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BS Cover design: Kiss Me I'm Polish Ebook version: 5.1-retailer For Aaron David CONTENTS/PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION x PREFACE xiv Demystifying Academic Conversation INTRODUCTION 1 Entering the Conversation PART 1 "THEY SAY" ONE "THEY SAY" 19 Starting with What Others Are Saying TWO "HER POINT IS" 32 The Art of Summarizing THREE "AS HE HIMSELF PUTS IT" 47 The Art of Quoting PART 2 "I SAY" FOUR "YES / NO / OK, BUT" 57 Three Ways to Respond FIVE "AND YET" 72 Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say SIX "SKEPTICIS MAY OBJECT" 82 Planting a Naysayer in Your Text SEVEN "SO WHAT? WHO CARES?" 96 Saying Why It Matters PART 3. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER EIGHT "AS A RESULT" 107 Connecting the Parts NINE "YOU MEAN I CAN JUST SAY IT THAT WAY?" 123 Academic Writing Doesn't Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice TEN "BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG" 138 The Art of Metacommentary ELEVEN "WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SAY IS" 149 Revising Substantially PART 4. 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When students work with one of this book's templates like "They say that . . . and I concede . . . but . . ." they see their beliefs from another side and, in our view, are therefore able to produce more compelling arguments. As the twenty-first century unfolds, however, the increasingly polarized state of our society is making it harder to listen to those who see things differently than we do. With the recent outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, for instance, those for and against the seemingly simple act of wearing a protective face mask have come to occupy two noncommunicating universes. The wider such divisions become, the harder it is to find anyone who is willing to seriously consider viewpoints that oppose their own. Too often we either avoid difficult discussions altogether, or we talk only with like-minded people, who often reinforce our preexisting assumptions and insulate us from serious challenge. In this fifth edition of our book, therefore, we continue to emphasize the importance of getting outside our isolated silos and listening to others, even when—especially when—we may not like what we hear. WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION "But as Several Sources Suggest" Research as Conversation. This new chapter, written with the help of librarian and social scientist Erin Ackerman, focuses on the research essay, as it is traditionally called, and on research writing more broadly. It suggests that the research paper is not just about amassing information, as is often assumed, but also about entering into conversation with other researchers. With a variety of templates and examples from academic writing, the chapter offers advice on such issues as how to craft good research question (spoiler alert: it's one that can be debated), how to find relevant sources, how to synthesize sources into a common conversation, and how to locate online sources that are reliable and credible. The chapter concludes with an annotated student essay that shows how the advice we offer might look in a final piece of writing. "What I Really Want to Say Is . . ." Revising Substantially. This new chapter takes on one of the more formidable challenges faced by college students: how to move beyond superficial revision and improve a composition in a genuinely substantial way. It presents revision not as a matter of simply correcting spelling or moving a sentence or two but as a process students can use to discover what it is they really want to say. More specifically, the chapter encourages students to reread their writing with an eye to whether, for instance, they have accurately represented their sources, inadvertently contradicted themselves or lost their train of thought, or included "uh-oh" moments, as we refer to them, that are out of step with their larger intentions and aims. New Exercises. Each main chapter (Chapters 1–15) now includes three exercises, which give students an opportunity to apply the chapter's advice. Instructors can either use these exercises for in-class work or assign them as homework. Many exercises include a short passage for reading and writing practice and also prompt students to join conversations on thesayingblog.com. New Student Writing. This edition now includes three student essays in their entirety that model the moves taught in this book. Written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and documented in MLA or APA style, these essays complement the chapters on writing in the disciplines. Annotated and shaded in gray, they can be found in the new Chapter 15 and the Reading section. WHAT'S ONLINE "They Say / I Say" comes with more online options than ever—all of which are packaged automatically with all new copies of the book and are also available separately for a low cost. Visit digital.wwnorton.com/thesay5 for access, or contact your Norton representative for more information or help with any of the resources below. Ebooks, available for both "They Say / I Say" and "They Say / I Say" with Readings, provide an enhanced reading experience. Convenient and affordable, the Norton ebooks can be used on any device and let students highlight ideas, bookmark passages, take notes, and even listen to the text. Online tutorials give students hands-on practice using the rhetorical moves that this book emphasizes. Each tutorial helps students analyze an essay with an eye to these "moves that matter" and then use the book's templates to craft a response. Inquisitive for Writers delivers adaptive, game-like exercises to help students practice editing and working with sources, including fact-checking. Inquisitive for Writers includes The Little Seagull Handbook, so students get two books for the price of one with all new copies of "They Say / I Say." Instructor's Guide includes expanded in-class activities, sample syllabi, summaries of each chapter and reading, and a chapter on using the online resources, including the tutorials and the book's blog. "They Say / I Blog" provides current readings that use the rhetorical moves covered in the book, along with questions that prompt students to join conversations online. Updated twice a month by Laura J. Panning Davies of SUNY Cortland, the blog provides a rich archive of additional readings on important issues. Check it out at thesayingblog.com. Resources for your learning management system (LMS) provide high-quality Norton content for your online, hybrid, or in-person course. Customizable resources include assignable writing prompts from thesayingblog.com, quizzes on editing and documentation, style guides, student essays, and more. Even as we have updated "They Say / I Say" and added more online components, our basic goals remain unchanged: to help students master the all-too-rare skill of engaging closely with others, particularly those who challenge what we say. Our additions, that is, are meant to reinforce our long-standing goal of demystifying academic discourse by identifying its key moves in forms that students can put into practice. Given the deeply divided society we live in, this practice of engaging in dialogue and entertaining counterarguments seems more urgent than ever. PREFACE Demystifying Academic Conversation * * * EXPERIENCED WRITING INSTRUCTORS have long recognized that writing well means entering into conversation with others. Academic writing in particular calls on writers not simply to express their own ideas but to do so as a response to what others have said. The first-year writing program at our own university, according to its mission statement, asks "students to participate in ongoing conversations about vitally important academic and public issues." A similar statement by another program holds that "intellectual writing is almost always composed in response to others' texts." These statements echo the ideas of rhetorical theorists like Kenneth Burke, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Wayne Booth as well as recent composition scholars like David Bartholomae, John Bean, Patricia Bizzell, Irene Clark, Greg Colomb, Lisa Ede, Peter Elbow, Joseph Harris, Andrea Lunsford, Elaine Maimon, Gary Olson, Mike Rose, John Swales and Christine Feak, Tilly Warnock, and others who argue that writing well means engaging the voices of others and letting them in turn engage us. Yet despite this growing consensus that writing is a social, conversational act, helping student writers actually participate in these conversations remains a formidable challenge. This book aims to meet that challenge. Its goal is to demystify academic writing by isolating its basic moves, explaining them clearly, and representing them in the form of templates. In this way, we hope to help students become active participants in the important conversations of the academic world and the wider public sphere. HIGHLIGHTS Shows that writing well means entering a conversation, summarizing others ("they say") to set up one's own argument ("I say") Demystifies academic writing, showing students "the moves that matter" in language they can readily apply Provides user-friendly templates to help writers make those moves in their own writing Shows that reading is a way of entering a conversation—not just of passively absorbing information but of understanding and actively entering dialogues and debates HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE The original idea for this book grew out of our shared interest in democratizing academic culture. First, it grew out of arguments that Gerald Graff has been making throughout his career that schools and colleges need to invite students into the conversations and debates that surround them. More specifically, it is a practical, hands-on companion to his book Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind, in which he looks at academic conversations from the perspective of those who find them mysterious and proposes ways in which such mystification can be overcome. Second, this book grew out of writing templates that Cathy Birkenstein developed in the 1990s for use in writing and literature courses she was teaching. Many students, she found, could readily grasp what it meant to support a thesis with evidence, to entertain a counterargument, to identify a textual contradiction, and ultimately to summarize and respond to challenging arguments, but they often had trouble putting these concepts into practice in their own writing. When Cathy sketched out templates on the board, however, giving her students some of the language and patterns that these sophisticated moves require, their writing—and even their quality of thought—significantly improved. This book began, then, when we put our ideas together and realized that these templates might have the potential to open up and clarify academic conversation. We proceeded from the premise that all writers rely on certain stock formulas that they themselves didn't invent—and that many of these formulas are so commonly used that they can be represented in model templates that students can use to structure and even generate what they want to say. As we developed a working draft of this book, we began using it in first-year writing courses that we teach at UIC. In classroom exercises and writing assignments, we found that students who otherwise struggled to organize their thoughts, or even to think of something to say, did much better when we provided them with templates like the following: In discussions of . . . , a controversial issue is whether While some argue that . . . , others contend that This is not to say that One virtue of such templates, we found, is that they focus writers' attention not just on what is being said but also on the forms that structure what is being said. In other words, they make students more conscious of the rhetorical patterns that are key to academic success but often pass under the classroom radar. THE CENTRALITY OF "THEY SAY / I SAY" The central rhetorical move that we focus on in this book is the "they say / I say" template that gives our book its title. In our view, this template represents the deep, underlying structure, the internal DNA as it were, of all effective argument. Effective persuasive writers do more than make well-sourced claims ("I say"); they also map those claims relative to the claims of others ("they say"). Here, for example, the "they say / I say" pattern structures a passage from an essay by the media and technology critic Steven Johnson: For decades, we've worked under the assumption that mass culture follows a path declining steadily toward lower-common-denominator standards, presumably because the "masses" want dumb, simple pleasures and big media companies try to give the masses what they want. But . . . the exact opposite is happening: the culture is getting more cognitively demanding, not less. STEVEN JOHNSON, "Watching TV Makes You Smarter" In generating his own argument from something "they say," Johnson suggests why he needs to say what he is saying: to correct a popular misconception. Even when writers do not explicitly identify the views they are responding to, as Johnson does, an implicit "they say" can often be discerned, as in the following passage by Zora Neale Hurston: I remember the day I became colored. ZORA NEALE HURSTON, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" In order to grasp Hurston's point here, we need to be able to reconstruct the implicit view she is responding to and questioning: that racial identity is an innate quality we are simply born with. On the contrary, Hurston suggests, our race is imposed on us by society—something we "become" by virtue of how we are treated. As these examples suggest, the "they say / I say" model can improve not just student writing but student reading comprehension as well. Since reading and writing are deeply reciprocal activities, students who learn to make the rhetorical moves represented by the templates in this book figure to become more adept at identifying these same moves in the texts they read. And if we are right that effective arguments are always in dialogue with other arguments, then it follows that in order to understand the types of challenging texts assigned in college, students need to identify the views to which those texts are responding. Working with the "they say / I say" model can also help with invention, finding something to say. In our experience, students best discover what they want to say not by thinking about a subject in an isolation booth but by reading texts, listening closely to what other writers say, and looking for an opening through which they can enter the conversation. In other words, listening closely to others and summarizing what they have to say can help writers generate their own ideas. THE USEFULNESS OF TEMPLATES Our templates also have a generative quality, prompting students to make moves in their writing that they might not otherwise make or even know they should make. The

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This book uncovers the rhetorical conventions that transcend disciplinary boundaries, so that even freshmen, newcomers to the academy, are immediately able to join in the conversation." —Margaret Weaver, Missouri State University "It's the anti-composition text: Fun, creative, humorous, brilliant, effective." —Perry Cumbie, Durham Technical Community College "This book explains in clear detail what skilled writers take for granted." —John Hyman, American University W. W. Norton & Company has been independent since its founding in 1923, when William Warder Norton and Mary D. Herter Norton first published lectures delivered at the People's Institute, the adult education division of New York City's Cooper Union. The firm soon expanded its program beyond the Institute, publishing books by celebrated academics from America and abroad. By midcentury, the two major pillars of Norton's publishing program—trade books and college texts—were firmly established. 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IN SPECIFIC ACADEMIC CONTEXTS TWELVE "I TAKE YOUR POINT" 172 Entering Class Discussions THIRTEEN DON'T MAKE THEM SCROLL UP 177 Entering Online Conversations FOURTEEN WHAT'S MOTIVATING THIS WRITER? 187 Reading for the Conversation FIFTEEN "BUT AS SEVERAL SOURCES SUGGEST" 203 Research as Conversation SIXTEEN "ON CLOSER EXAMINATION" 232 Entering Conversations about Literature SEVENTEEN "THE DATA SUGGESTS" 250 Writing in the Sciences EIGHTEEN "ANALYZE THIS" 269 Writing in the Social Sciences READINGS 289 Hidden Intellectualism 291 GERALD GRAFF The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness 298 MICHELLE ALEXANDER All Words Matter: The Manipulation behind "All Lives Matter" 312 KELLY CORYELL "Rise of the Machines" Is Not a Likely Future 326 MICHAEL LITTMAN The Electoral College Embodies American Ideals 331 GAVIN REID See Also Don't Blame the Eater 199 DAVID ZINCZENKO Roe Butt, Cy Borg, Ann Droid: Hint, They're Not Taking Your Job 222 JASON SMITH CREDITS 339 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 341 INDEX OF TEMPLATES 355 PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION * * * SINCE IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED over a decade ago, this book has been dedicated to the idea that our own views are most thoughtfully formed in conversation with the views of others, including views that differ from our own. When students work with one of this book's templates like "They say that . . . and I concede . . . but . . ." they see their beliefs from another side and, in our view, are therefore able to produce more compelling arguments. As the twenty-first century unfolds, however, the increasingly polarized state of our society is making it harder to listen to those who see things differently than we do. With the recent outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, for instance, those for and against the seemingly simple act of wearing a protective face mask have come to occupy two noncommunicating universes. The wider such divisions become, the harder it is to find anyone who is willing to seriously consider viewpoints that oppose their own. Too often we either avoid difficult discussions altogether, or we talk only with like-minded people, who often reinforce our preexisting assumptions and insulate us from serious challenge. In this fifth edition of our book, therefore, we continue to emphasize the importance of getting outside our isolated silos and listening to others, even when—especially when—we may not like what we hear. WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION "But as Several Sources Suggest" Research as Conversation. This new chapter, written with the help of librarian and social scientist Erin Ackerman, focuses on the research essay, as it is traditionally called, and on research writing more broadly. It suggests that the research paper is not just about amassing information, as is often assumed, but also about entering into conversation with other researchers. With a variety of templates and examples from academic writing, the chapter offers advice on such issues as how to craft good research question (spoiler alert: it's one that can be debated), how to find relevant sources, how to synthesize sources into a common conversation, and how to locate online sources that are reliable and credible. The chapter concludes with an annotated student essay that shows how the advice we offer might look in a final piece of writing. "What I Really Want to Say Is . . ." Revising Substantially. This new chapter takes on one of the more formidable challenges faced by college students: how to move beyond superficial revision and improve a composition in a genuinely substantial way. It presents revision not as a matter of simply correcting spelling or moving a sentence or two but as a process students can use to discover what it is they really want to say. More specifically, the chapter encourages students to reread their writing with an eye to whether, for instance, they have accurately represented their sources, inadvertently contradicted themselves or lost their train of thought, or included "uh-oh" moments, as we refer to them, that are out of step with their larger intentions and aims. New Exercises. Each main chapter (Chapters 1–15) now includes three exercises, which give students an opportunity to apply the chapter's advice. Instructors can either use these exercises for in-class work or assign them as homework. Many exercises include a short passage for reading and writing practice and also prompt students to join conversations on thesayingblog.com. New Student Writing. This edition now includes three student essays in their entirety that model the moves taught in this book. Written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and documented in MLA or APA style, these essays complement the chapters on writing in the disciplines. Annotated and shaded in gray, they can be found in the new Chapter 15 and the Reading section. WHAT'S ONLINE "They Say / I Say" comes with more online options than ever—all of which are packaged automatically with all new copies of the book and are also available separately for a low cost. Visit digital.wwnorton.com/thesay5 for access, or contact your Norton representative for more information or help with any of the resources below. Ebooks, available for both "They Say / I Say" and "They Say / I Say" with Readings, provide an enhanced reading experience. Convenient and affordable, the Norton ebooks can be used on any device and let students highlight ideas, bookmark passages, take notes, and even listen to the text. Online tutorials give students hands-on practice using the rhetorical moves that this book emphasizes. Each tutorial helps students analyze an essay with an eye to these "moves that matter" and then use the book's templates to craft a response. Inquisitive for Writers delivers adaptive, game-like exercises to help students practice editing and working with sources, including fact-checking. Inquisitive for Writers includes The Little Seagull Handbook, so students get two books for the price of one with all new copies of "They Say / I Say." Instructor's Guide includes expanded in-class activities, sample syllabi, summaries of each chapter and reading, and a chapter on using the online resources, including the tutorials and the book's blog. "They Say / I Blog" provides current readings that use the rhetorical moves covered in the book, along with questions that prompt students to join conversations online. Updated twice a month by Laura J. Panning Davies of SUNY Cortland, the blog provides a rich archive of additional readings on important issues. Check it out at thesayingblog.com. Resources for your learning management system (LMS) provide high-quality Norton content for your online, hybrid, or in-person course. Customizable resources include assignable writing prompts from thesayingblog.com, quizzes on editing and documentation, style guides, student essays, and more. Even as we have updated "They Say / I Say" and added more online components, our basic goals remain unchanged: to help students master the all-too-rare skill of engaging closely with others, particularly those who challenge what we say. Our additions, that is, are meant to reinforce our long-standing goal of demystifying academic discourse by identifying its key moves in forms that students can put into practice. Given the deeply divided society we live in, this practice of engaging in dialogue and entertaining counterarguments seems more urgent than ever. PREFACE Demystifying Academic Conversation * * * EXPERIENCED WRITING INSTRUCTORS have long recognized that writing well means entering into conversation with others. Academic writing in particular calls on writers not simply to express their own ideas but to do so as a response to what others have said. The first-year writing program at our own university, according to its mission statement, asks "students to participate in ongoing conversations about vitally important academic and public issues." A similar statement by another program holds that "intellectual writing is almost always composed in response to others' texts." These statements echo the ideas of rhetorical theorists like Kenneth Burke, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Wayne Booth as well as recent composition scholars like David Bartholomae, John Bean, Patricia Bizzell, Irene Clark, Greg Colomb, Lisa Ede, Peter Elbow, Joseph Harris, Andrea Lunsford, Elaine Maimon, Gary Olson, Mike Rose, John Swales and Christine Feak, Tilly Warnock, and others who argue that writing well means engaging the voices of others and letting them in turn engage us. Yet despite this growing consensus that writing is a social, conversational act, helping student writers actually participate in these conversations remains a formidable challenge. This book aims to meet that challenge. Its goal is to demystify academic writing by isolating its basic moves, explaining them clearly, and representing them in the form of templates. In this way, we hope to help students become active participants in the important conversations of the academic world and the wider public sphere. HIGHLIGHTS Shows that writing well means entering a conversation, summarizing others ("they say") to set up one's own argument ("I say") Demystifies academic writing, showing students "the moves that matter" in language they can readily apply Provides user-friendly templates to help writers make those moves in their own writing Shows that reading is a way of entering a conversation—not just of passively absorbing information but of understanding and actively entering dialogues and debates HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE The original idea for this book grew out of our shared interest in democratizing academic culture. First, it grew out of arguments that Gerald Graff has been making throughout his career that schools and colleges need to invite students into the conversations and debates that surround them. More specifically, it is a practical, hands-on companion to his book Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind, in which he looks at academic conversations from the perspective of those who find them mysterious and proposes ways in which such mystification can be overcome. Second, this book grew out of writing templates that Cathy Birkenstein developed in the 1990s for use in writing and literature courses she was teaching. Many students, she found, could readily grasp what it meant to support a thesis with evidence, to entertain a counterargument, to identify a textual contradiction, and ultimately to summarize and respond to challenging arguments, but they often had trouble putting these concepts into practice in their own writing. When Cathy sketched out templates on the board, however, giving her students some of the language and patterns that these sophisticated moves require, their writing—and even their quality of thought—significantly improved. This book began, then, when we put our ideas together and realized that these templates might have the potential to open up and clarify academic conversation. We proceeded from the premise that all writers rely on certain stock formulas that they themselves didn't invent—and that many of these formulas are so commonly used that they can be represented in model templates that students can use to structure and even generate what they want to say. As we developed a working draft of this book, we began using it in first-year writing courses that we teach at UIC. In classroom exercises and writing assignments, we found that students who otherwise struggled to organize their thoughts, or even to think of something to say, did much better when we provided them with templates like the following: In discussions of . . . , a controversial issue is whether While some argue that . . . , others contend that This is not to say that One virtue of such templates, we found, is that they focus writers' attention not just on what is being said but also on the forms that structure what is being said. In other words, they make students more conscious of the rhetorical patterns that are key to academic success but often pass under the classroom radar. THE CENTRALITY OF "THEY SAY / I SAY" The central rhetorical move that we focus on in this book is the "they say / I say" template that gives our book its title. In our view, this template represents the deep, underlying structure, the internal DNA as it were, of all effective argument. Effective persuasive writers do more than make well-sourced claims ("I say"); they also map those claims relative to the claims of others ("they say"). Here, for example, the "they say / I say" pattern structures a passage from an essay by the media and technology critic Steven Johnson: For decades, we've worked under the assumption that mass culture follows a path declining steadily toward lower-common-denominator standards, presumably because the "masses" want dumb, simple pleasures and big media companies try to give the masses what they want. But . . . the exact opposite is happening: the culture is getting more cognitively demanding, not less. STEVEN JOHNSON, "Watching TV Makes You Smarter" In generating his own argument from something "they say," Johnson suggests why he needs to say what he is saying: to correct a popular misconception. Even when writers do not explicitly identify the views they are responding to, as Johnson does, an implicit "they say" can often be discerned, as in the following passage by Zora Neale Hurston: I remember the day I became colored. ZORA NEALE HURSTON, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" In order to grasp Hurston's point here, we need to be able to reconstruct the implicit view she is responding to and questioning: that racial identity is an innate quality we are simply born with. On the contrary, Hurston suggests, our race is imposed on us by society—something we "become" by virtue of how we are treated. As these examples suggest, the "they say / I say" model can improve not just student writing but student reading comprehension as well. Since reading and writing are deeply reciprocal activities, students who learn to make the rhetorical moves represented by the templates in this book figure to become more adept at identifying these same moves in the texts they read. And if we are right that effective arguments are always in dialogue with other arguments, then it follows that in order to understand the types of challenging texts assigned in college, students need to identify the views to which those texts are responding. Working with the "they say / I say" model can also help with invention, finding something to say. In our experience, students best discover what they want to say not by thinking about a subject in an isolation booth but by reading texts, listening closely to what other writers say, and looking for an opening through which they can enter the conversation. In other words, listening closely to others and summarizing what they have to say can help writers generate their own ideas. THE USEFULNESS OF TEMPLATES Our templates also have a generative quality, prompting students to make moves in their writing that they might not otherwise make or even know they should make. The

