**Argumentative Writing: Claims & Counterclaims**

**Writing Claims:** Writing claims is similar to writing thesis statements. Below are some general strategies to keep in mind as you develop your claims on evidence. Your claim must…

1. **… require further defending**. It should not simply be a fact. To test this, ask, “Could anyone argue *against* this?” Your answer should be yes.
2. **… pose a possible answer to a question, not be itself a question.** Think about how you would answer your research question. This answer can become your claim.
3. **… be narrow enough to argue in the size of your essay.** You’re writing an essay, not a book. Likewise, you are not writing just a paragraph, either. Like a good thesis statement, it should not be too broad or narrow. Make it just right.
4. **… be clear.** Avoid using ambiguous words like “good” or “important.” The less subjective you make your claim, the more likely readers will be to clearly understand the exact claim you are making. Explore word choices here. Spend time crafting an effective claim. It will save you revision work later – and guide you more effectively when writing the essay!

**Writing Counterclaims:** Integrate counterclaims into the essay via the counterclaim paragraph. There are other organizational patterns to use when incorporating counterclaims, but this one is a good first step. Below, find a list of possible sentence structures for counterclaims you may want to use.

**Standard counterclaim Template:**

1. On the one hand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; on the other hand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Although \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, in reality \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Author X contradicts what she says earlier… While she argues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, she also \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Evidence supports that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; however, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. While it is true that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. In recent discussions of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a controversial issue has been whether \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Introducing Standard Views:**

1. Americans today tend to believe that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Conventional wisdom has it that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Writing a Summary:**

1. She demonstrates that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. In fact, they celebrate the fact that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Introducing a Quote:**

1. X insists, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
2. As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
3. According to X, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
4. In her book, Book Title, X maintains that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (This is used for your non-fiction articles)
5. X complicates matters further when she writes that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Disagreeing:**

1. X is mistaken because she overlooks \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Many disagree with X’s view that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because, as recent research has shown, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Establishing Why Your Claims Matter. This goes after the refute:**

1. X is important because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Ultimately, what is at stake here is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The finding that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ should be of interest to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

For more templates reference the rest of the text:

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing.* New York: Norton, 2006.