

Naysayers: Anticipating the Objections to Your Argument

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AP Language

Why Use a Naysayer?

“Writing well does not mean piling up uncontroversial truths in a vacuum; it means engaging others in a dialogue or debate—not only by opening your text with a summary of what others have to say, but also imagining what others might say against your argument as it unfolds.”—Gerald Graff, They Say, I Say

Benefits of Naysayers

— [Increases your credibility with critics.

— [Functions as a preemptive strike against opponents.

— [Treats the reader with respect.

— [Demonstrates security of your claims.

— [Develops your essay without the need for repetition.

Rules for Naysayers

— [Represent Objections Fairly

— [Be Willing Concede Some Element of the Argument

— [Answer the Objections You Raise

— [Can Be An Entire Paragraph/Section of Your Essay or an Element of Proof Inside a Paragraph

Templates for Entertaining Objections

— [Yet, some may challenge the claim that _____.

— [Of course, many will probably disagree with the assertion that _____.

Example

Some would argue that the right to vote must include the right not to, to exercise the franchise by staying at home.

Templates for Naming Your Naysayers

— [Many feminists would probably object that _____.

— [But Social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that _____.

— [Biologists, of course, may dispute the claim that _____.

— [Adherents of Islam would object, suggesting that _____.

Example

Advocates of compulsory voting would certainly object, arguing that the benefits of increased participation would outweigh the loss of liberty.