

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE OF RESEARCH— ACKNOWLEDGING AND RESPONDING

Recall that a research argument is not a one-sided lecture to passive listeners but a two-sided conversation in which you speak with and for your readers. You must *acknowledge* the questions and objections your readers might raise and then *respond* to them.

Use the following language and sentence stems to help you acknowledge and respond to anticipated questions or objections:

Forms for Acknowledging

1. You can downplay an alternative by summarizing it in a short phrase introduced with *despite*, *regardless of*, *notwithstanding*, *although*, *while*, or *even though*.
Despite Congress's claims that it wants to cut taxes(acknowledgment), *the public believes that . . .*(response)
2. You can signal an alternative with *seem* or *appear*, or with a qualifying adverb, such as *plausibly*, *reasonably*, *understandably*, *surprisingly*, *foolishly*, or even *certainly*.
In his letters, Lincoln expresses what appears to be depression.(acknowledgment) *But those who observed him . . .*(response)
3. You can acknowledge an alternative without naming its source. This gives it just a little weight. If you name the source, that gives it more weight.
Some evidence might suggest that we should . . .
Jones claims that we should . . .
4. You can acknowledge an alternative in your own voice or with adverbs such as *admittedly*, *granted*, *to be sure*, and so on. This construction admits that the alternative has some validity, but by changing the words, you can qualify how valid you think it is.
We have to raise the possibility that further study might show . . .
We have to consider the probability that further study will show . . .

Forms for Responding

1. You can state that you don't entirely understand someone's objection.
It is not clear to me that . . .
2. Or you can state that there are unsettled issues with someone's objection.
But there are other issues . . .
3. You can respond more bluntly by claiming the acknowledged person is irrelevant or unreliable.
But the evidence is unreliable . . .