ACADEMIC LANGUAGE OF RESEARCH— HOW TO POSITION YOUR IDEA

You may need to find your topic and question in relation to something you read, either because your teacher assigned a text or because you have found a writer or a work that interests you. In that case, look for surprises, puzzles, or disagreements. Or you can also look for ways to make the text itself your guide.

Here are some common sentence stems that can help get your ideas in writing, particularly in the preliminary stages of your project:

1. **Kind:** "Smith claims that _____ belongs in category A, but I will show that it really belongs in category B."

   Smith claims that fringe religious groups are "cults" because of their strange beliefs, but I will show that those beliefs are no different in kind from standard religions.

2. **Part-Whole:** "Smith claims that _[whole]_ always has _[part]_ as one of its defining features/components/qualities, but I will show that _[part]_ is not essential."

   Smith claims that competition is the essence of sport, but I will show that, even by her standards, competition is only incidental to the way most people actually play sports.

3. **Change:** "Smith claims that _____ is changing in a certain way, but I will show that it is really the same as it was/it is really changing in a different way."

   Smith claims that social media marketing will let consumers get the products they want and need, but I will show that this will really let companies manipulate their customers more than ever.

4. **Cause and Effect:** "Smith claims that _____ is caused by _____, but I will show that it is really caused by _____."

   Smith claims that the collapse of the banking system was caused by greed and a lack of government oversight, but I will show that the real cause was that financial instruments became so complicated that no one could evaluate their risks.