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ENGL 2010: Research Writing in A Persuasive Mode

Section 048

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Summary 1 TSIS

## Chapter 1

Will the reader or won't the reader remember the original thesis of an academic writer? That is the question Gerald Graffe and Cathy Birkenstein, authors of the book *They Say, I Say* would have you ask. To them, the answer is an obvious "no, they won't," hence their adoration for "return statements."

While I believe there is some merit to that accusation, I believe it entirely depends on the subject and length of writing. Graffe and Birkenstein argue, "by reminding readers of the ideas you're responding to, return sentences ensure that your text maintains a sense of mission and urgency from start to finish." But that makes me wonder, what if academic writing is not meant to be urgent? Brief, as this summary is, yes. But that does not make it urgent.

Graffe and Birkenstein's book is replete with templates and snark to give their readers both a starting point in their writing and anecdotal humor to keep the reader entertained and pressing forward. Perhaps I am wrong about my attitude toward templates and return statements, as I have made use of them myself, if only to get a decent grade. I maintain that there is only "some merit" to the idea of return statements.

In conclusion, for a short summary, it is probably sufficient to make a thesis statement and not return to that thesis statement until the conclusion. Templates can be useful, like my favorite from Graffe and Birkenstein, "I'm afraid that templates like the ones in this book will stifle my creativity."

## Chapter 2

Balance for a toddler learning to walk is key. According to Gerald Graffe and Cathy Birkenstein, for academic prose, balance is similarly the key to writing well. Striking that balance can make or break any piece of prose. I agree!

I know it is expected of academic writing to disagree wherever possible, but this is exactly what I believe. To disagree would be to figuratively hurl me into a pit despair, as I would be forced to deny my own rectitude and be labeled a perjurer. Balance is the key to life itself, let alone to writing. Without balance, bias quickly asserts itself as the dominant force in nature and society, much like the zero-sum politics of the third graders ruling our country from the playground that is Capitol Hill.

I cannot suspend my beliefs because Graffe's and Birkenstein's beliefs and mine are one in the same in this instance. But it appears I must, if only for a moment, suspend my beliefs. For I wish to be a good, nay, great writer! "This ability to temporarily suspend one's own convictions is a hallmark of good actors, who must convincingly "become" characters whom in real life they may detest."

Well, I was talking about writing, not acting. But I suppose I can accept Graffe's and Birkenstein's analogy. Nay! I mustn't. For I must suspend my belief. Graffe and Birkenstein extol me through verse, "...if, as a writer, you cannot or will not suspend your own beliefs in this way, you are likely to produce summaries that are so obviously biased that they undermine your credibility with readers." So, I shan't! Or, is it shall?

Balance, who needs such a thing. All peoples and Animals on this earth are perfectly able to flop around on their bellies like a fish out of water until they pull themselves that final hurtle to their destination. Be it to work, school, or even to Death's door. Balance is not truly the key all.

"Even as writing an effective summary requires you to temporarily adopt the worldview of another, it does not mean ignoring your own view altogether."

Oh. Well, then I agree. To conclude, in effective writing, we must seek balance, and we must be as impartial as possible and we mustn't summarize through lists.