

Verbal Gestures

Like any conversation, an essay that is a writer's conversation with others about a question that matters to them includes verbal gestures. These are words or phrases like those below. Some are gestures that invite sources to provide *background* on the question so that everyone understands what has already been said. Other gestures signal *analysis*, or a closer examination and critique of something someone said. Sometimes these verbal gestures signify *speculation*; the writer just isn't quite sure what to think for sure but maybe.... Or they might indicate *alignment*—statements in which the writer is taking sides with a particular idea, position, or certain way of seeing.

Consider whether verbal gestures like these will help you manage the conversation about your topic.

Background

Among the most important voices on _____, the most relevant to this inquiry are _____.

Most people _____.

The major sources of controversy are _____.

One idea emerges again and again, and it's _____.

Like most people, I believed that _____.

The unanswered questions are _____.

This much is clear, _____.

_____ 's most important contribution is _____.

Most relevant is _____.

Analysis

The most relevant point is _____.

In comparison, ...

In contrast, ...

What is most convincing is _____.

What is least convincing is _____.

What's most interesting is _____.

The surprising connection is _____.

Paradoxically, ...

Actually, ...

What isn't clear is _____.

Speculation

Perhaps ...

Maybe...

It's possible that _____.

Alignment

Indeed...

Obviously...

Alternatively...

While others have argued that _____, I think _____.

On balance, the most convincing idea is _____.

What _____ has failed to consider is _____.

The more important question is _____.

Based on my research, _____.

A better explanation is _____.

It's hard to argue with _____.

What I understand now that I didn't understand before is _____.

