

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE OF RESEARCH— RESPONDING

Readers use the words of your acknowledgment to judge how seriously you take an objection or alternative. But they will base that judgment even more on the nature of your response. If your readers think an alternative is a serious one, they expect you to respond to it in some detail, including reasons and evidence to support that response. Do not simply dismiss or attack a position that your readers believe strongly; if you cannot make a convincing argument against it, simply show how it differs from yours and explain why you believe as you do.

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

1. You can state that you don't entirely understand:
But I do not quite understand . . . / I find it difficult to see how . . . / It is not clear to me that . . .
2. Or you can state that there are unsettled issues:
But there are other issues . . . / There remains the problem of . . .
3. You can respond more bluntly by claiming the acknowledged position is irrelevant or unreliable:
But as insightful as that point may be, it [ignores / is irrelevant to] the issue at hand.
But the evidence is [unreliable / shaky / thin / not the best available].
But the argument is [untenable / wrong / weak / confused / simplistic].
But that view [overlooks / ignores / misses] key factors.
But that position is based on [unreliable / faulty / weak / confused] [reasoning / evidence].