

Craft of Research (CoR): Chapter 10 – Acknowledgements and Responses

The 10 **salient sentence strings** presented below are lifted from the chapter without modification. They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

Ten Salient Sentence Strings

1. To craft a successful argument, you must do more than assemble a sound edifice of claims, reasons, and evidence; you must also position those claims as contributions to an ongoing conversation in which your readers are invested (see chapter 7). You can do this in your introduction by presenting your main claim as a solution to a problem your readers care about (we'll talk more about introductions in chapter 16). But you can do it throughout your argument as well by anticipating, acknowledging, and responding to questions, objections, and alternatives that your readers are likely to raise along the way. (Quote – top of page 141).
2. They may question its intrinsic soundness by challenging the clarity of your claim, the relevance of your reasons, or the quality of your evidence. They may question its extrinsic soundness by asking you to consider alternatives— different ways of framing the problem, evidence you've overlooked, or what others have written on your topic. When you anticipate, acknowledge, and respond to both kinds of questions, you create an argument that readers are more likely to trust and accept. (Quote – top of page 142).
3. If you come up with a question that you can't answer, decide whether you can find the answer before you go on. Don't go easy on yourself with this one: the time to fix a problem with your argument is when you find it. (Quote – middle of page 143).
4. Most researchers have difficulty finding enough good evidence to make a solid case, especially those working on short deadlines. But teachers grumble most about students who seem to think that the evidence they find first is all they need. (Quote – middle of page 144).
5. In sum, when assembling your argument, test your claims, reasons, and evidence as your most skeptical readers will— and even in ways they might not. You can then address at least the most important objections that you can imagine them raising. Show readers that you put your argument through your own wringer before they put it through theirs. (Quote – bottom of page 144).
6. When you read your sources, note where they advance claims different from yours, take different approaches, focus on different aspects of the problem, and so on. Note especially where— and why— you and your sources disagree. Also note where one source disagrees with another. All those disagreements

can help you identify alternatives to acknowledge in your own argument. If you know how you would respond to a particular source, add that response to your notes as you read. (Quote – middle of page 145).

7. Our advice may seem naive, but it works: candidly acknowledge the issue and respond that • the rest of your argument more than balances the flaw. • while the flaw is serious, more research will show a way around it. • while the flaw makes it impossible to accept your claim fully, your argument offers important insight into the question and suggests what a better answer would need. (Quote – top of page 147).
8. Knowledgeable readers will think better of your argument and of you if, rather than pretending you have all the answers, you acknowledge your argument's limits, especially those that squeeze 148 chapter ten you more than you like. Concessions invite readers into the conversation by legitimizing their views, always a gesture that helps sustain a community of researchers. (Quote – bottom of page 147).
9. When you want to acknowledge and respond to an objection or alternative, you have to decide how much credence to give it: options range from just mentioning an objection and dismissing it to addressing it at length. (Quote – middle of page 149).
10. You can downplay an objection or alternative by introducing it with despite, regardless of, or notwithstanding: [Despite/Regardless of/Notwithstanding] Congress's claims that it wants to cut taxes(*acknowledgment*) the latest budget proposals suggest that ...(*response*). (Quote – bottom of page 149).