Critical Review Language

If you are doing a critical review of an article or a literature review of a number of articles in your field, the following expressions will be useful to you.

This help sheet is a "checklist" for you—make sure that you have used *at least some* of the following terms in your own work. (There are many more examples than those given below, but they will give you the general idea.) Make sure that you *vary* the examples in your own work—don't just use one or two.

The language is important because they *force* you to argue and to be critical. This is what lecturers and supervisors want.

Note: Some of these examples will be inappropriate for some disciplines (for example, social science and empirical science subjects may avoid expressions using the first person.) You may need to consult written work in your own discipline to be sure which examples are acceptable.

NOTE: where >>>>>> appear, the variations given in the example above it can also be used. Square brackets [...] indicate that words can be either used or omitted. Obliques (/) indicate that either alternative is acceptable.

Learning Tip:
There are thousands of other variations used in critical review language. Consult academic textbooks and journals to see and learn more!

1. Stating Your Own Position on a Subject or Topic

"I want to claim that.../show that.../demonstrate that.../highlight that...
"The aim of this paper is [to claim that]>>>>>>>>>
"The point of this article is [to claim that] >>>>>>>
"I shall be claiming that.../showing that/demonstrating that/highlighting that..
"It shall be argued in this paper/review/thesis that...
"The view presented in this>>>>>>>>>>is that...
"The argument [advanced/put forward] in this>>>>is that...
"The point of view expressed/put forward in this>>>> is that...
"The conclusion I will be presenting is that...
"The perspective presented here is that ...
"The point of view argued for here is that ...

2. Stating the View of Another Person on a Subject or Topic

"Smith claims that...
"Smith thinks that...
"Smith's argument is that...
"Smith's conclusion is that...
" Smith's claim is that...
" Smith's point is that...
" Smith's point of view is that...
" According to Smith...
" From Smith's point of view...
" The point of Smith's article/paper is that …
" The substance of Smith's article/paper is that...
" The upshot of Smith's argument/paper/article is that...
" Smith's work/data allows him to draw the conclusion that...
" Smith's work/data leads him to the conclusion that...
" Some theorists, such as Smith (1989) think that...
"It is thought by some theorists, for example, Jones (1980) and Smith (1989) that..."

3. Attributing a View to Another Person (When You are Not Quite Sure)

" Smith's claim seems to be that...
" Smith seems to be claiming that...
" Smith's argument seems to be that...
" Smith's conclusion seems to be that...
" The point of Smith's article seems to be that...

(Use any of the examples in (2) and add " seems to" .
Exceptions: *This cannot be used for the examples: "From Smith's point of view…", "According to Smith..." and " It is thought by some theorists...")*

4. Drawing a Conclusion Using the Work of Others

" The conclusion of [all] this is that...
" The result of [all] this is that...
" An outcome of this is that...
" An upshot of this is that...
" A consequence of this is that...
" When Smith's work is looked at closely it is seen that...
"When Smith's argument is analysed it can be seen that...
"Looking at Smith's work/argument [in detail] >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
"Analysing Smith's data shows that...
"Developing Smith's work/argument to its logical conclusion shows that...
">>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>it can be seen/shown that...
" One possible consequence of Smith's work is [that]...
"From Smith's work it can be determined that...
"One outcome of Smith's work is [that]...
"The following point can be brought out of Smith's work...
"The following argument can be brought out of Smith's work...
"Using Smith's work it is possible to show that.../argue that...
"Using the work of Smith (1980) and Jones (1989) it can be shown that.../argued that...

5. Disagreeing With the Views of Others

" I do not agree [with Smith] that...
" I will argue/shall be arguing against Smith's view that...
" My argument against Smith is that...
" My disagreement with Smith is that...
" Unlike Smith, I want to suggest/claim/argue/propose...
"Against Smith, I will/shall be claiming/arguing/presenting the view that...
"Contrary to the views of Smith, I will/shall be/it will/shall>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
" Smith's argument[s] do not seem to work for the reason that...
"In contrast to Smith's view/argument/data...
" The argument being advanced here is opposed to that of Smith...
"It does not seem to follow from Smith's work/data that...
"Smith's data/arguments are faulty for the reason that...
" Analysing Smith's work in this way, it can be seen/one can see that...
" Problems arise in Smith's work [when it is seen that]...
"The point I am making/being made [here] is that Smith's argument/data/conclusion does not follow.

6. Agreeing the Views of Others

" As Smith says...
" I agree with Smith's point [that]...
" This is also Smith's view...
" I will argue a similar view to that of Smith here.
" Here I am following the work of Smith...
" Following from Smith's point...
" I agree with Smith in so far as...
"Not unlike Smith (1980), I am suggesting/proposing/arguing...
" I agree with Smith in respect of his point [that]...
" Along the lines of Smith (1980), I am suggesting/claiming/arguing/putting forward...
"The view I am putting forward here is largely in agreement with [that of] Smith.
"The argument being put forward/espoused here is similar to that of Smith (1980).
"In this matter, I am [largely] in agreement with Smith (1980).

7. Pointing out Assumptions

" This assumes that...
" Smith assumes that...
" Smith's assumption is that...
" Assuming … [then] it follows that...
" The following assumption is being made here...
" One/An assumption of this view is that...
" The point being assumed here is that...
" The assumption on which this depends is …
" The assumption behind this view is [the point that]…
"Smith's argument depends on the assumption/assumes one thing: ...

Practice Critical Review Language

- Write a short response to an academic journal article that you have read. Choose one that you disagree with.
- Compare your review of the article with 2 other reviews of that article that are published in journals.