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Language for Philosophical Writing

Stating the claim to be defended:

This essay defends the claim / view that...
This essay will argue that...
The main claim / thesis of this essay is...

Giving reasons to believe the claim:

This view is plausible, because...
There are [three] grounds for believing that [view X]. First... Second... Third... (etc.)
Proponents / Defenders of this view argue that... because...

Defining a key term:

X can be defined as...
We can define X as...

Qualifying or limiting the scope of your argument:

My argument for [view X] will be limited to the following cases... because...
I will not discuss at length situations / cases where... because...
I will stipulate / assume that...
Importantly, my argument only goes through if the following conditions are met...
For reasons of space, I will not address the claim that...
Premises [1 and 2] are generally thought to be relatively uncontroversial (because...). Instead,
I will focus on Premise [3]...
(In general, the narrower the claim, the easier it will be to defend against objections.)

Signposting:

I will begin by...
Before I say what is wrong with this argument, I want to...
These passages suggest that...
I will now defend the claim / view that...
Further support for this claim / view comes from..
For example...
At this point, we should...

Connectives to build an argument:

Because, since, given this argument
Thus, therefore, thereby, hence, it follows that, consequently
Nevertheless, however, but
In the first case... in the second case...
On the one hand... on the other hand...

Introducing a case or an analogy:

Suppose / Imagine that...
Therefore, by analogy, we can say that...
This analogy is persuasive because...

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Evaluating the strength of an argument:
This argument is (not) powerful because…
This argument is (not) convincing because…
This argument is (not) persuasive because…

Reporting your own view vs. reporting the views of other philosophers:
Descartes argues that…
In my view, Descartes' argument is (not) plausible because…
On my reading, Descartes' argument is (not) plausible because…

Raising an objection:
An objection to this view is…
Some people may object that…
It may be objected that…
A critic might object that…
An opponent might say that…
One could critique this argument by saying that…

Replying to an objection:
This objection / critique / criticism fails, on [three] counts. First… Second… Third…
A reply to this objection could be… / An answer to this objection could be…
We can defeat / overcome this objection by saying (that)…
This critique is faulty / flawed, for the following reasons…
We should doubt the force of this objection, because…
Even if we think [Premise 1 of the objection] is true, [Premise 2] fails because… Therefore, the objection does not go through / is not successful / does not succeed.

Revising a thesis in the light of an objection:
Given the force of this objection, one might try to repair / rescue the argument by claiming that… / In the light of this objection, it might be argued instead that…
This response is persuasive, because…
This response is not persuasive, because… / This response fails, because…

Concluding an essay:
In short, I have argued in this essay that… / In conclusion, I have tried to show that…
There are [three] reasons for believing this claim… First… Second… Third…
Further issues, which are beyond the scope of this essay, include…

Further reading and resources:
Some of this work builds on Jim Pryor's excellent resource, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper."

Angela Mendelovici has an excellent Prezi tutorial on structuring philosophical essays, with a model essay that includes lots of examples of accurate use of philosophical language.

A. P. Martinich's *Philosophical Writing: An Introduction* (now in a fourth edition!) is indispensable for both new and seasoned writers of philosophy.