REPORTING WHAT OTHERS SAY

argues

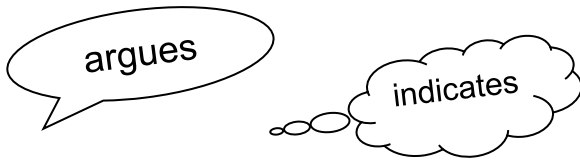indicates

Reporting verbs are used to report what someone else has said or written. They can be used to introduce:

Direct quotes: Smith (2013, p. 12) **states** 'a range of reporting verbs improve academic writing.'

Indirect quotes: Smith (2013) **explains** that academic writing is improved by the use of reporting verbs.

An external voice: It has been **suggested** that academic writing is improved by the use of reporting verbs (Smith, 2013).

TIP
Avoid repetition through using a range of reporting verbs, ensuring you select that which is most appropriate to your intentions, i.e., to show agreement, disagreement, neutrality or a lack of certainty.

Tense in reporting verbs

The present tense is commonly used to refer to other sources, e.g., Smith (2013) **contends**... The past tense can be used to disagree with the literature or show that the information is no longer true, current or relevant, e.g., Smith (2013) **dismissed**… Many Science disciplines use the past tense to refer to the methodology or findings.

Sentence patterns for reporting verbs

Knowing the verbs is one thing, but knowing how to use them is another. Reporting verbs fit into different sentence patterns and some can fit into more than one.

1. Reporting verb + that
Many reporting verbs fit into this sentence pattern, e.g., Smith (2013) **indicates that** the results have applications in other fields.

2. As + someone + reporting verb
Reporting verbs can also fit into this pattern, e.g., **As Smith (2013) demonstrates**, the results have applications in other fields.

TIP
Although reporting verbs can be grouped together (as shown over the page), some are much stronger in meaning, so check to ensure your chosen term is appropriate.

3. Reporting verb + noun (something)
Some reporting verbs are followed by a noun or a verb in the –ing form, e.g., Smith (2013) **disputes the findings** of the study.

4. Reporting verb + preposition
Others are followed by a preposition, e.g., Smith (2013) **agrees with** earlier findings. Smith (2013) **objects to** the use of the verb 'say' in academic writing.

Note: The numbers next to the reporting verbs in the table on the next page indicate which sentence pattern can be used.

Neutral	
1.2.	adds
1.2.	assert
1.2.4.	argue for
1.2.	believe
1.2.	comment
1.2.	conclude
1.2.	contend
4.	define something as
3.	details
1.2	determine
1.2	demonstrate
3.4.	describe something as
3.	discuss
3.	examine
1.	explain
1.	find
4.	focus on
3.	highlight
3. 4.	identify something as
1. 2.	illustrate
1. 2.	indicate
1. 2.	maintain
1. 2.	mention
1. 2.	note
1. 2.	observe
1. 2.	outlines
1. 2.	points out
1. 2.	posit
1. 2. 3.	prove
1. 2.	reason
1. 2.	recognize
4.	regard something as
1. 2.	report
1. 2.	reveal
1. 2.	show
1. 2.	state
4.	view something as

Agree	
1.2.3.	accept
1.2.3.	acknowledge
1.2.	admit
1.2.4.	agree with
1.2.	concede
4.	concur with
1.2.	confirm
1.2.	emphasize
3.	endorse
1.2.	insist
1.2.3.	recommend
1.2.	stress
1.	support the view
Disagree	
3.	challenge
3.4.	criticise someone
3.	condemn
1.2.4.	disagree with
3.	discount
3.	dismiss
3.	dispute
3.	disregard
4.	object to
3.	oppose
3.	question
3.	Refute
Unsure	
1.2.	assume
1.2.	claim
1.2.	hypothesize
1.2.	imply
1.2.	infer
1.2.	postulate
1.2	speculate
1.2.	suggest

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