



Reporting Verbs

When writing about someone else’s research, opinion, or perspective, it is can be difficult to decide on the appropriate “reporting verb” to use.

It’s often easy to become repetitive when reporting on research by using the same verb over and over again. The following list of verbs may help you to discuss your research in a more versatile, interesting and sophisticated manner.

The Writing Centre (2014) outlines the following verbs and their appropriate contexts:

Verbs followed by a preposition (e.g. as, to, for, with, of)

Preposition	Verbs	Example
as	defines	defines x as y
to	alerts, compares, objects, subscribes, challenges, exhorts, forbid, warns	alerts x to y
for	apologises, blames, criticises	apologises for
with	confuses, contrasts, disagrees, concurs	confuses x with y
of	accuses, warns	accuses x of y

Verbs [usually] followed by a noun or –ing form	Verbs [usually] followed by ‘that’
analyses, applauds, appraises, assesses, attacks, considers, contradicts, critiques, debates, describes, discards, disclaims, discounts, discusses, dismisses, disregards, evaluates, examines, explores, expresses, extols, forbids, highlights, identifies, ignores, illustrates, investigates, justifies, lists, opposes, outlines, praises, presents, questions, refutes, rejects, restates, scrutinises, studies, supports, underscores, uses, validates, verifies	accepts, acknowledged, adds, admits, advises, advocates, agrees, alerts, alleges, announces, argues, articulates, asserts, assures, believes, boasts, claims, clarifies, comments, complains, concedes, concludes, confirms, feels, finds, forgets, guarantees, guesses, hopes, hypothesises, imagines, implies, indicates, infers, informs, insists, justifies, knows, maintains, notes, observes, persuades, points out, posits, postulates, promises, proposes, proves, questions, realises, reasons, recognises, recommends, remarks, reminds, reports, reveals, shows, speculates, states, stresses, suggests, suspects, tells, theorises, thinks, understands, urges, warns

The following table from the Study & Learning Centre, RMIT (2005) clarifies how to use reporting verbs effectively in academic writing:

Suggest (that)	Recent studies outlined by Leonard et al (1999) suggest that personality and disposition play an equally important role in motivation.
Argue (that)	Leonard et al (1999) argue that there are three elements of self-perception.
Contend(s)	Mullens (1994) contends that motivation to work well is usually related to job satisfaction.
Outline	Recent studies outlined by Mullins (1994) suggest that personality and disposition play an equally important role in motivation.
Focus on	The early theories of Maslow and McGregor (Robbins et al, 1998) focused on personal needs and wants as the basis for motivation.
Define(s)	Eunson (1987, p. 67) defines motivation as 'what is important to you'.
Conclude(s) (that)	Reviewing the results of the case study, Taylor (1980) concludes that the theories of job enrichment and employee motivation do work.
State	He further states that there is an increasing importance on the role of autonomy and self-regulation of tasks in increasing motivation.
Maintains (that)	Mullins (1994) maintains that job enrichment came from Herzber's two factor theory.
Found (that)	Mullins (1994) found that there is an increasing importance on the role of autonomy and self-regulation of tasks in improving motivation.
Promote(s)	This promotes the idea that tension and stress are important external sources of motivation, which can be eliminated by completing certain tasks.
Establish(ed) (by)	As established by Csikszentmihalyi (Yair 2000, p. 2) 'the more students feel in command of their learning, the more they fulfil their learning potential'.
Asserts (that)	Locke's Goal Setting Theory asserts that setting specific goals tends to encourage work motivation (Robbins et al, 1998).
Show(s)	Various theories of motivation show employers that there are many factors that influence employees work performance.
Claim(s) (that)	Hackman and Oldham (1975) claim that people with enriched jobs, and high scores on the Job Diagnostic Survey, experienced more satisfaction and motivation.
Report(s)	Mullins (1994) reports on four content theories of motivation.
Mention(s)	Mullins (1994) mentions two common general criticisms of Herzberg's theory.
Address	Redesigning jobs so that responsibility moved from supervisors to the workers, was an attempt to address the issues of job satisfaction (Mullins, 1994).

References

Study & Learning Centre, RMIT. (2005). Literature review: verbs for referencing. Retrieved November 10, 2016 from https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lisu/content/2_assessmenttasks/assess_tuts/lit_review_LL/verbs.html

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