

Using Reporting Verbs

When referring to another author’s work within your own (i.e., summaries, quotes, paraphrases), reporting verbs can be useful. They help writers abstain from abusing verbs such as “say” and “tell.” However, it is important to know the meaning of the verb you choose to use. While a lot of reporting verbs can be used neutrally, others convey strong meaning and reflect the writer’s judgment of his or her sources. Consult a dictionary if needed to know exactly what they mean. Consider the examples below:

- Fullerton (1993) **observes** that the procedure is harmful to animals.
- However, Smith (2007) **ignores** the effect of noise pollution on infants and toddlers.
- Souza (2002) **states** that many consumers have sued tobacco companies for health-related damages caused by cigarettes.

The following table will assist you in understanding the meaning(s) associated with each of the verbs below:

Writer’s Attitude Toward Citation

Agree	Neutral		Disagree
acknowledge advocate agree clarify define demonstrate endorse explain identify observe outline shed light on show	add affirm argue claim conclude describe express feel find indicate inform	insist object oppose present propose remark remind report state use	confuse disregard dismiss ignore refuse to consider

(The above table was adapted from the “Reporting Verbs” handout, Australia Catholic University, 2006.)

The list below outlines some additional verbs that may be useful.

<i>Other Reporting Verbs</i>		
admit	explore	infer
advise	express	postulate
allude to	focus on	presume
assert	formulate	point out
assume	highlight	refute
believe	hypothesize	reject
caution	illustrate	stress
concede	imply	survey
establish	include	
examine	indicate	

Activity

Choose the verb that best completes the sentence and conveys the idea expressed in parentheses. Your choice might also be conditioned by sentence structure.

1. In his study, Smith (1987) _____ the advancements previously achieved by Gestalt psychologists. (recognition)
a) ignores b) finds c) acknowledges d) states
2. Clyde (2005) _____ a variety of solutions to the issue of Global Warming. (suggestion)
a) proposes b) finds c) disregards d) sheds light on
3. Previous studies on socialization _____ that children have become less engaged in social activities. (result)
a) state b) claimed c) add d) concluded
4. Leftists _____ that globalization is nothing but a platform for exploitation in developing countries. (point-of-view)
a.) infer b) argue c) describe d) outline

Answer Key for Activity

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. B