

M U N I
E C O N

Referring verbs

Academic writing
Seminar 5

admit conclude present postulate disagree support disprove
contribute outline reflect underscore determine query recognise
assert accuse note declare observe criticise acknowledge
notice assume blame articulate stress rebuff
investigate dismiss warn hold exhort allege discover question endorse
agree concede suspect highlight identify urge posit stipulate discuss inform
concur find advise intimate assess echo prove suggest convince discount deny
believe see view claim inquire maintain dispute feel disapprove remark describe challenge
advocate emphasise contradict oppose calculate compare clarify doubt develop reveal confirm
scrutinise consider recommend define comment accept demonstrate contrast state reject explain
infer speculate imply analyse theorise



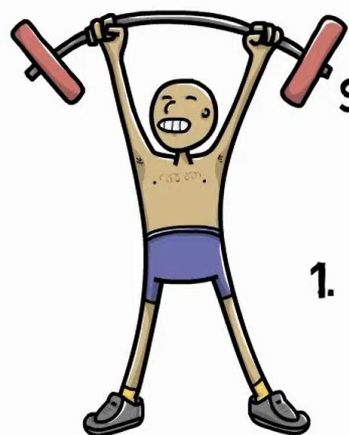


General meaning of agreement



General meaning of disagreement





STRENGTH OF REPORTING VERBS

1. *Smith (2020) assumes that reporting verbs have different strengths.*
2. *Smith (2020) feels that reporting verbs have different strengths.*
3. *Smith (2020) insists that reporting verbs have different strengths.*

Using referring verbs

Referring verbs are used to summarise another writer's ideas:

*Previn **argued** that interest rates were too low.*

*Bakewell (1992) **found** that most managers tended to use traditional terms . . .*

They may also be used to introduce a quotation:

*As Scott **observed**: 'Comment is free but facts are sacred.'*

Most of these verbs are followed by a noun clause beginning with 'that'.

Using referring verbs

The following mean that the writer is presenting a case:

• **argue** • **claim** • **consider** • **hypothesise** • **suggest** • **believe** • **think** • **state**.

Melville (2007) suggested that tax rates should be harmonised.

A second group describe a reaction to a previously stated position:

• **accept** • **admit** • **agree with** • **deny** • **doubt**.

Handlesmith doubts Melville's suggestion that tax rates should be harmonised.

Others include:

• **assume** • **conclude** • **discover** • **explain** • **imply** • **indicate** • **maintain** • **presume** • **reveal** • **show**.

Patel (2003) assumes that inflation will remain low.

- Write a sentence referring to what the following writers said. (More than one verb may be suitable. Use the past tense.)

Example: Z: 'My research shows that biofuels are environmentally neutral'.
Z **claimed/argued** that biofuels were environmentally neutral.

- (a) A: 'I may have made a mistake in my calculations of the cost of living'.
(b) B: 'I did not say that women make better economists than men'.
(c) C: 'Small firms are more dynamic than large ones'.
(d) D: 'I support C's views on small firms'.
(e) E: 'I'm not sure, but most people probably work to earn money'.
(f) F: 'After much research, I've found that growing wheat is more profitable than growing potatoes'.
(g) G: 'I think it unlikely that electric cars will replace conventional ones'.
(h) H: 'There may be a link between age and entrepreneurial ability'.

• argue • claim • consider • hypothesise • suggest • believe • think • state
• accept • admit • agree with • deny • doubt
• assume • conclude • discover • explain • imply • indicate • presume • reveal • show.

Further referring verbs

A small group of verbs is followed by the pattern (somebody/thing + for + noun/gerund):

• **blame** • **censure** • **commend** • **condemn** • **criticise**.

"Lee (1998) blamed the media for creating uncertainty."

Another group is followed by (somebody/thing + as + noun/gerund):

• **assess** • **characterise** • **classify** • **define** • **describe** • **evaluate** • **identify** • **interpret** • **portray** • **present**.

"Terry interprets rising oil prices as a result of the Asian recovery."

■ Rewrite the following statements using verbs from the lists in section 4.

Example: K: 'Guttman's work is responsible for many of the current social problems'.
K **blamed** Guttman's work for many of the current social problems.

(a) L: 'She was very careless about her research methods'.

(b) M: 'There are four main types of government bonds'.

(c) N: 'That company has an excellent record for workplace safety'.

(d) O: 'Falling unemployment must be a sign of economic recovery'.

(e) P: 'Wind power and biomass will be the leading green energy sources'.

(f) Q: 'Adam Smith was the most influential economist of the eighteenth century'.

• blame • censure • commend • condemn • criticise.

• assess • characterise • classify • define • describe • evaluate • identify • interpret • portray • present.

Reporting Verbs

- Hard sciences have a more detached reporting style

The relevant theory was developed by Bruno.

Stein et al. reported that a typical force..

Paiva and Venturinit presented an alternative formulation...

- Contrasted with soft sciences:

Baumgartner and Bagozzi (1995) strongly recommend the use of...

Law and Whitley (1989) argued, for instance, that.....

- Plus use of evaluative adverbial comment

He argues, correctly to my mind, that...

Churchland justifiably rejects this notion....

As Stern and Terrell, correctly assert...

Hedges

- Hedging, also called *caution* or *cautious language* or *tentative language* or *vague language*, is a way of softening the language by making the claims or conclusions less absolute.

Although duration of smoking is also important when considering risk, it is highly correlated with age, which itself is a risk factor, so separating their effects can be difficult; however, large studies tend to show a relation between duration and risk. Because light smoking seems to have dramatic effects on cardiovascular disease, shorter duration might also be associated with a higher than expected risk.

Hedges

Although duration of smoking is also important when considering risk, it is highly correlated with age, which itself is a risk factor, so separating their effects **can** be difficult; however, large studies **tend to** show a relation between duration and risk. Because light smoking **seems to** have dramatic effects on cardiovascular disease, shorter duration **might** also be associated with a higher than expected risk.

How to express caution

Introductory verbs

tend to → *tendency* (n)

□ assume → *assumption* (n)

□ indicate → *indication* (n)

□ estimate → *estimate* (n)

□ seem to → *seemingly* (adv)

□ appear to be → *apparently* (adv)

□ doubt → *doubtful* (adj)

□ believe

□ suggest

□ think

Modal verbs expressing uncertainty instead of more certain modals such as *will* or *would*:

□ may

□ might

□ can

□ could

How to express caution

- probably → *probable* (adj),
probability (n)
- possibly → *possible* (adj),
possibility (n)
- seemingly → *seem to* (v)
- apparently → *appear to be* (v)
- arguably
- perhaps
- maybe
- presumably
- conceivably
- sometimes
- often
- generally
- usually
- commonly
- frequently
- occasionally
- in general
- as a rule
- approximately
- roughly
- about
- reasonably
- somehow
- somewhat

How to write objectively

Use passive

Objective tone is most often connected with the use of passive, which removes the actor from the sentence. For example:

The experiment was conducted.

~~I conducted the experiment.~~

The length of the string was measured using a ruler.

~~I measured the length of the string with a ruler.~~

Focus on the evidence

- Another way to use active voice while remaining objective is to focus on the evidence, and make this the subject of the sentence.

For example:

- The findings show...
- The data illustrate...
- The graph displays...
- The literature indicates...

□ **Use evidence from sources**

- Evidence from sources is a common feature of objective academic writing. This generally uses the third person active. For example:
 - Newbold (2021) shows that... He further demonstrates the relationship between...
 - Greene and Atwood (2013) suggest that...

Use impersonal constructions

Impersonal constructions with *It* and *There* are common ways to write objectively. These structures are often used with hedges (to soften the information) and boosters (to strengthen it).

It is clear that... (booster)

It appears that... (hedge)

~~I believe that...~~

There are three reasons for this.

~~I have identified three reasons for this.~~

There are several disadvantages of this approach.

~~This is a terrible idea.~~

Personify the writing

- Another way to write objectively is to personify the writing (essay, report, etc.) and make this the subject of the sentence.

- This essay considers the role of diesel emissions in global warming.
- ~~I will discuss the role of diesel emissions in global warming.~~
-
- This report has shown that...
- ~~I have shown that...~~

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.
Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

So write with a combination of short, medium, and long sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't just write words. Write music.

Using adverbs

Adverbs are used in academic writing in a variety of ways.

(a) to provide more detail, with verbs and adjectives:

Reasonably good data are available for only . . .

*Economists **traditionally** argued for import controls.*

(b) individually, often at the beginning of sentences, to introduce new points or link sentences together:

***Currently**, the Earth's atmosphere appears to be warming up.*

***Alternatively**, the use of non-conventional renewable energies . . .*

Note: Adverbs used individually need to be employed with care. It is dangerous to overuse them. Adverbs such as 'fortunately' or 'remarkably' may be unsuitable

Using adverbs

Adverbs linked to verbs and adjectives usually fall into three groups:

(a) time (when?)

previously published

retrospectively examined

(b) degree (how much?)

declined considerably

contribute substantially

(c) manner (in what way?)

financially complicated

remotely located

■ Insert a suitable adverb from the table above into the gaps in the sentences.

- (a) The new, low-cost mobile phone was popular, _____ with the young.
- (b) _____, the internet was mainly used for academic purposes.
- (c) Some courses are assessed purely by exams. _____, coursework may be employed.
- (d) _____, there has been growing concern about financing the health service.
- (e) There was strong opposition _____ to the proposal to build the dam.
- (f) _____, the development should be acceptable environmentally.

Time: recently increasingly originally presently currently traditionally continuously

Degree: clearly particularly broadly highly wholly crucially emphatically

Manner: (un)surprisingly factually politically locally alternatively similarly psychologically