

JK II Session II

Task 1 Reporting

- A) Reporting what others say is a key aspect of academic English and you need a range of verbs to do this in an appropriate and varied way. Note the structures below and match them with synonymous phrases:

highlights *notes* *proposes* *shows that sth. must be true* *expresses doubts*
says and gives reasons for the view *suggest indirectly* *demonstrates* *declares*

1. Gray **proves** there is a link between obesity and genes.
2. Gerhardt **questions** previous interpretations of the data.
3. Greenberg **emphasises** the importance of rigorous standards in research methodology.
4. Jameson **observes** that there is a mismatch between people's real needs and the available facilities.
5. Pavlenko **argues** that governments should continue to fund basic research.
6. Groot **claims** that the he cares about fighting poverty.
7. Vaz **puts forward** a new theory of the aquatic ape.
8. Duncan **shows** how dangerous genetic modifications can be.
9. The report **implies** that more people are moving house than was thought.

- B) There is **one mistake** in each of these sentences. Find it and correct it.

1. **As far as I'm concern, technological innovation is the key to our success.*
2. **Richardson emphasises on a number of weaknesses in the theory.*
3. **Taylor mentions to several studies which have looked at the problem in the past.*
4. **The evidence indicate that molecular water exists across the surface of the moon.*
5. **According the dean, courses in academic writing should be compulsory for all new students.*

(Adapted from McCarthy, M. & O'Dell, F. *Academic Vocabulary in Use*. CUP 2008)

Task 2 Language focus: Moderating a claim

- A) There are many ways of expressing your degree of commitment to your claims in academic English. One simple way is to use a **modal verb**. Look at the list below – which of them is the strongest? Which is the most cautious?

May *Can* *Will* *Could* *Might*

Consider the link between *physical activity* and *depression*. Formulate sentences about the correlation between the two phenomena using some of the modal verbs.

- B) Now order the following **phrases** from the stronger to the weaker ones:

1. It is possible that...
2. It is rather clear that...
3. It is unlikely that...
4. It is probable / likely that ...
5. It is clear that ...
6. It is very probable / highly likely that ...

C) Distance

Distance is another way of indicating your stance. This involves removing yourself from a strong – and possibly unjustified – claim. Notice how sentence A leaves no room for doubt, which may be too strong. Highlight **the weaker phrases** in the other sentences.

- A. Health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- B. Health education seems to have a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- C. It seems that health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.
- D. It would appear that health education has a positive impact on a patient's quality of life.

D) Underline the verb that makes **the weaker claim**:

1. The results *indicate/ establish* that there is a link between smoking and lung cancer.
2. The survey results *suggest / show* that the popularity of physical education has declined.
3. The results given in Figure 2 *validate / support* the conclusion that certain bacteria can reduce arsenic levels in groundwater.
4. The latest results of studies *question / challenge* the value of socioeconomic status in the assessment of physical activity.
5. Changes in ambient temperature may have *influenced / distorted* the test results.

E) Now, try to **soften the claims** below. Make the sentences academically respectable and defensible.

1. Tall people have higher incomes than short people.
.....
2. There is a performance gap between those born early in the calendar year and those born in the last months of a year.
.....
3. Obesity is programmed in the womb.
.....
4. Swimming in cold water encourages the body to maintain fat stores.
.....
5. Alcohol causes brain damage in teenagers.
.....
6. People who restrict their calorie intake live longer.
.....

(Adapted from Swales, J.M. & Feak, C. B. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. University of Michigan, 2012.)