

Verbs For Citing Sources

It is important that you learn how to cite information in the correct way. Many ignorant students do it incorrectly like this:

Brown (2003) says: "The level of motivation to succeed depends not only on factors in the home but also the"

There are certain conventions to follow when citing someone's work. Words like "says", "tells", "asks" are normally used in oral conversation but are not appropriate in formal academic writing. The following table illustrates some appropriate words to use for reporting the work of others.

When you mention a published work for the **first** time, you can use the following basic patterns:

Brown (2003)	<i>comments</i> <i>concludes</i> <i>explains</i> <i>indicates</i> <i>notes</i> <i>observes</i> <i>remarks</i> <i>states</i>	that ...
Brown, Horton and Tomlinson (2004)	<i>advocate the view</i> <i>hold the position</i> <i>present arguments to emphasize</i> <i>propose</i>	that ...
Brown's (2003) study	<i>emphasizes</i> <i>illustrates</i> <i>points out</i> <i>proposes</i> <i>shows</i> <i>suggests</i>	that ...
Brown's (2003) findings	<i>confirm</i> <i>establish</i> <i>maintain</i> <i>show</i>	that ...
The analysis of the ABC report	<i>denies</i> <i>shows</i> <i>suggests</i>	that ...

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY SERIES

For the **second or subsequent** mentions of your sources in your paraphrase of a linked point, you can use these patterns:

Brown (2003)	further	asserts points out suggests	that ...
Brown <i>et al.</i> (2004)	additionally	advocate argue emphasize explain	that...

Other useful verbs that you can use when citing from sources are:

compare
observe

determine
distinguish

identify
prove

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The sentence patterns shown above are meant to illustrate the verbs you can use for citing sources that you have referred to. However, you need to ensure that you have good sentence variety. You also need to show that you are not merely name-dropping; it is important that you show that you have a clear understanding of the patterns that you see from the various sources you have looked at.

Poor sample that looks like the writer has a poor grasp of the literature:

Jonston (1996) feels that..... Stone (1998) notes that..... One of the factors that people tend to overlook is Lockshead (2004) argues in favour of studying this factor. Brown (2003) proposes that...

Better sample showing some critical thinking and sentence variety:

Jonston (1986) reports that his study of ...shows..... This finding is supported by Stone's (1998) replication of Although both these studies focus on theaspect of motivation, they have omitted....According to Dornyei (1999), motivation....This has serious implications for...

Academic style of writing vs. informal spoken language

In academic writing, you will want to project objectivity, distance and detachment instead of emotional subjectivity. Thus, you need to avoid citing published sources using the verbs that you normally use in conversation such as:

believe
feel
think
try

hear
like
suppose
want

listen
love
wonder

References:

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Swales, J., & Feak, C. (1994). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

© Dr. Elaine Khoo, 2005. The Writing Centre, University of Toronto Scarborough. See terms and conditions for use at <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ctl/twc/webresources/terms.htm>