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HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

Grammar 2A: Reporting Verbs

Workshop objectives

This workshop will assist you in becoming familiar with:

- **The function and correct use of reporting verbs**
- **Demonstrating attitude toward/of an author**
- **Modifying reporting verbs**
- **Grammatically correct forms of reporting verb structures**

Reporting verbs are used with:

- quotes
- paraphrases
- summaries

Choosing the 'right' reporting verb depends on:

- what the author is doing
- the author's attitude to the information
- the extent to which you agree with the author
- the way the reporting verb fits together with other words in a sentence (ie grammar)

What the author is doing

ARGUE: verbs concerned with writing or saying

**argue, suggest, propose, point out, explain,
conclude, claim, state**

THINK: verbs concerned with thinking, knowing, understanding

think, believe, assume, feel, hold, hope

What the author is doing

SHOW: verbs concerned with indicating a fact or situation

show, demonstrate, reveal, indicate, confirm, imply

FIND: verbs concerned with the research process

find, discover, observe, establish, identify

Author's attitude

It is possible to indicate whether the author is positive or negative in their attitude to the content of the information.

POSITIVE

accept, advise, affirm, agree, applaud, assert, concur, insist, maintain, note, praise, point out, posit, recommend, remark, stress, subscribe to, suggest, support, think, urge

NEGATIVE or uncertain

attack, challenge, disagree, dismiss, dispute, doubt, mistrust, oppose, question, reject, suspect, warn

Author's attitude

The author is very assertive/certain

argue, challenge, claim, insist, refute, reject

The author is tentative

propose, speculate, suggest

The author believes the information is very important

contend, emphasise, stress

The author believes the information is of lesser importance

mention, note, say

The author is offering advice to the reader

recommend, urge, caution, warn

Agreement with author

You can indicate, through a choice of reporting verbs, your own viewpoint:

- agreement with author
e.g. show, throw light on
- disagreement with author
e.g. confuse, disregard
- a neutral attitude towards the author
e.g. describe, explain, define



You must choose your reporting verbs carefully.
The meaning of a reporting verb can change according to the context and the language surrounding it.

Modifying reporting verbs

In order to develop your own argument and emphasise your own voice, you can modify reporting verbs.

You can show strong agreement with the author's line of argument.

Peres da Costa (2015) clearly demonstrates that....
Balik and Bayrak (2011) correctly conclude that...
Young and Chen (2014) perceptively identify....
Zvangoli (1999) persuasively argues that..

You can show your uncertainty about or disagreement with the author's line of argument.

Craig and Blaster (2014) attempt to argue that...
Crawford (2015) incorrectly concludes that...
Although Webster (2011) might claim that...

Grammar

ARGUE, THINK and SHOW verbs are mostly in the present tense.

ARGUE, FIND and SHOW verbs are occasionally in the present perfect tense.

FIND verbs (concerned with the research process) are mostly in the past tense.

Grammar

Verbs followed by a preposition

defines x as y

accuses x of y
warns x of y

alerts	x to y
compares	x to y
objects	to x
subscribes	to x
challenges	x to do y
exhorts	x to do y
forbids	x to do y
warns	x to do y

apologises	for x
blames	x for y
criticises	x for y

confuses	x with y
contrasts	x with y
disagrees	with x
concurrs	with x

Grammar

Verbs followed by a noun or -ing form

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

Grammar

Verbs followed by 'that'

accepts, acknowledges, 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, reasons, recognises, recommends, remarks, reminds, reports, reveals, shows, speculates, states, stresses, suggests, suspects, tells, theorises, thinks, understands, urges, warns

References

Centre for Learning and Professional Development 2010, *Reporting verbs*, University of Adelaide.

Craven, E. n.d., *Which reporting verb should I use?*, ELSSA Centre, University of Technology, Sydney.

Office of Student Success 2010, *Reporting verbs*, Australian Catholic University.

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