

'Let's get on with it'



What are **REPORTING VERBS**?

Reporting verbs are used to communicate information from other sources, such as books, articles etc. They signal that you are about to use others' ideas to support what you are saying in your writing or oral presentation.

The simplest and most straightforward reporting verb to use when quoting from a book or article, or summarizing or paraphrasing part of it, is 'says'.

For example:

In 1996, Thomas Green, a well-known ecologist, says, "Global warming is slowly but surely becoming a major crisis."

For the sake of variety and interest, however, or to reflect the original meaning accurately, other reporting verbs are frequently used. It is important to choose a verb that fits the context.

For example:

Green claims that ocean water will rise and ice will melt in the North and South Poles.

Hint: In the above examples, the reporting verbs are 'says' and 'claims'. The first example is a direct quotation, using quotation marks (" "), while the second example is an indirect quotation, in which quotation marks are not used and the author's exact words are not required (although the author's meaning is required).

Some verbs are neutral:

- Smith (2004) describes...
- Jones (1999, p 3) states...
- Green (2002) defines...

Some verbs draw attention to the author's viewpoint:

- Harris (2001) argues...
- O'Neill (1997) disputed...
- Jackson (2003) conceded...

Some verbs give information about the author's work:

- Holmes (2000) investigated...
- Church (1998) evaluated...
- McColl (2002) estimated...

Some verbs highlight the author's viewpoint:

- Brown (2001) believes...
- McAllister (1996) recognised...
- Smith (2004) predicted...

Other useful reporting verbs (use present or past tense as appropriate)

- analyse/analysed
- compares/compared
- comments/commented
- concludes/concluded
- criticises/criticised
- demonstrates/demonstrated
- discusses/discussed
- illustrates/illustrated
- indicates/indicated
- notes/noted
- observes/observed
- points out/pointed out
- reports/reported
- shows/showed
- suggests/suggested
- validates/validated
- verifies/verified

(Glasgow Caledonian University)

Below are two tables of useful reporting verbs. The first table is "Stronger Reporting Verbs," which means that they have a strong and assertive tone. The second table is of "Weaker Reporting Verbs," which do not have as strong a tone.

Stronger Reporting Verbs	Weaker Reporting Verbs
affirm	describe
allege	discuss
argue	explain
assert	hypothesis
claim	imply
contend	indicate
demonstrate	note
maintain	propose
predict	report
recommend	state
say (weak or strong, depending on what is said)	say (weak or strong, depending on what is said)
show	suggest

- Describes
- Discusses
- Doubts
- Examines
- Expands
- Implies
- Indicates
- Interprets
- Points out
- Proposes
- Reconciles
- Reformulates
- Rejects
- Retracts
- Holds the view that
- Disagrees
- Dismisses
- Emphasizes
- Explains
- Identifies
- Insists
- Investigates
- Maintains
- Rebuts
- Recommends
- Suggests
- Refutes
- Reports
- States
- Warns



Activity

Study the list of reporting verbs below and think of contexts in which they could replace 'says'. Suggest appropriate words or phrases that could have been used in a source document.

For example:

Original - There is no doubt that X is caused by...

Reported - Butler asserts that X is caused by...

- Accedes
- Admits
- Agrees
- Analyses
- Argues
- Asks
- Asserts
- Assures
- Claims
- Clarifies
- Comments
- Compares
- Concedes
- Concludes
- Confirms
- Contends
- Defends
- Demands