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Verbs of Attribution

When writing a research paper, verbs of attribution are used to introduce quotes and paraphrases, or information from various sources. Different verbs of attribution can add variety to research writing. For instance, instead of using “said,” the most common verb of attribution, you might try “found” or “reported,” to name just a couple.

When choosing which verb of attribution to use, however, remember to be careful. Each verb has implied meanings, and many are not interchangeable. For example, it is different to “argue” something than it is to “suggest” it. Pay attention to subtleties of meaning. If in doubt, consult a dictionary. Make sure that the verb of attribution matches the nature of the quote or paraphrase.

Verbs of Attribution—Agreement		
Affirms	Concurs with	Supports
Agrees	Confirms	Verifies
Concludes	Echoes	

Verbs of Attribution—Disagreement		
Counters	Disagrees	Opposes
Criticizes	Disputes	Refutes
Denies	Objects	Rejects

Verbs of Attribution—General			
Accepts	Concedes	Indicates	Speculates
Acknowledges	Concludes	Insists	States
Addresses	Considers	Interprets	Suggests
Adds	Contends	Introduces	Supposes
Advises	Deals with	Lists	Thinks
Allows	Decides	Maintains	Uses
Analyzes	Declares	Mentions	Utilizes
Answers	Defines	Notes	Warns
Asks	Describes	Observes	Wonders
Asserts	Discusses	Offers	Writes
Assumes	Echoes	Points out	
Assures	Emphasizes	Proposes	
Argues	Exclaims	Questions	
Believes	Explains	Realizes	
Categorizes	Expresses	Reasons	
Challenges	Finds	Remarks	
Charges	Grants	Replies	
Cites	Holds	Reports	
Claims	Hypothesizes	Responds	
Comments	Illustrates	Reveals	
Compares	Implies	Shows	

The next time you are quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to something in a paper, instead of automatically using “said,” consult these lists and try some of these verbs of attribution. It’s a simple way to make your writing less repetitive and dull.