



Report What Others Say

Verbs Used for Reporting

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 used with each verb:

Example 1: In her latest article, Morton explains how IT is changing society.

Example 2: Schmidt describes the process of language change.

Example 3: Ramirez suggests that all poets are strongly influenced by their childhood. [i.e. indirectly / tentatively]

Example 4: Lee states that problems arose earlier than previously thought. [directly]

Example 5: Uvarov claims / asserts / contends / maintains / declares that the causes of the revolution can be traced back to the 18th Century. [something is true directly and firmly, often used when others disagree]

Example 6: Watanabe implies that other historians have misinterpreted the period. [suggests indirectly]

Verbs Used for Reporting

Academic writing also uses **nouns** rather than verbs to report others' ideas. Below, nouns for some of the verbs in the section above. Note how these nouns often head long phrases (underlined below) which can be either the subject or the object of the verb. According to is used when reporting others' viewpoints rather than one's own. For example, **according to** Greene and Willis... but when talking about yourself write **in my opinion**, not **according to me**.

Example 1: Morton provides an explanation as to how IT is changing society.

Example 2: Schmidt gives a description of the process of language change.

Example 3: Ramirez's suggestion that poets are influenced by their childhood is uncontroversial.

Example 4: Lee's statement that problems arose earlier than previously thought has been challenged.

Example 5: Uvarov’s claim/assertion/contention that the causes of the revolution can be traced back to the 18th century is worth considering in some depth.

Example 6: Watanabe’s implication that other historians have misinterpreted the period has caused some controversy.

Practice Exercises

Exercise 1

Fill in the missing verbs and nouns

Noun	Verb
1. Implication	Imply
2.	Observe
3. Argument	
4. Assertion	
5.	Contend
6.	Describe
7. Statement	
8.	Emphasize
9.	Explain
10. Demonstration	

Exercise 2

Find and correct the mistake in each of these sentences.

- a) According to me, courses in academic writing should be compulsory for all students.
- b) It has not yet been proof that the virus can jump from species to species.
- c) Richardson emphasis on a number of weaknesses in the theory.
- d) Pratt’s suggest that the poet may have suffered from depression is an interesting one.
- e) Taylor makes a description to several studies which have looked at past problems.

Exercise 3

Which one of the underlined options are not possible?

- a) Grey puts forward / proves / advances a controversial theory to explain climate change.
- b) Philip claims / questions / challenges the accuracy of Einstein's figures.
- c) Troy stresses / emphasizes / asserts the importance of pilot testing before surveying.
- d) Riley advances / demonstrates / shows how large-scale urban planning can go wrong.
- e) Evans declared / cast doubt / maintained that there was no link between the events.

Answers

Exercise 1

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Imply | 5. Contention | 9. Explanation |
| 2. Observation | 6. Description | 10. Demonstrate |
| 3. Argue | 7. State | |
| 4. Assert | 8. Emphasis | |

Exercise 2

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) In my opinion | c) emphasizes a number | e) give a description of |
| b) been proven | d) suggestion | |

Exercise 3

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| a) proves | c) asserts | e) cast doubt |
| b) claims | d) advances | |