

## Paragraphs: Reporting Verbs for Introducing Authors

Academic writing refers to the research of others to validate claims made in your text. In-text citations appear within the body paragraphs of your essay. You **MUST** connect the author clearly to the information you are using. If you place the author before the information in your writing, then **reporting verbs** can be used to introduce other people's ideas. There are many reporting verbs that you can choose from to avoid overusing 'says' . . . **Brown (2009) says that** . . . It is important that you choose and use reporting verbs effectively:

1. Use the correct tense for reporting verbs
2. Incorporate reporting verbs into your writing
3. Match reporting verbs to your intended meaning

**NOTE:** Citation style  
APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Modify  
for other citation styles.

### 1. Use the correct tense for reporting verbs

Mostly, students are encouraged to use **present tense** to report findings from literature. However, **past tense** is mainly used to report findings from personal research or to refer to information that was once true, but is no longer valid. This can vary, however, according to subject areas (e.g., past tense is mainly used in the Sciences and Psychology). Refer to your unit guides for advice on appropriate style.

#### Examples

In her study on internet privacy, Johnson (2005) **concludes** that a person can be identified by name on the internet by using age and address details. (**Present tense/current information**)

Previous studies on internet usage throughout the 1990s **ignored** the notion of internet security and **focused** mainly on the benefits of accessing information via the internet (Black, 2013).  
(**Past tense/former studies examined in terms of relevance to topic in today's world**)

In their study on suburban internet usage, Smith et al. (2012) **demonstrated** that "90% of 2000 surveyed participants were concerned about violations of their privacy" (pp. 34–126) (**Past tense/data sampling was completed in the past**)

### 2. Incorporate reporting verbs into your writing

When you are going to support your argument with a paraphrase or a direct quotation from another writer, you must avoid just 'dropping in' the information. One way to avoid this is to use a reporting verb (or signal phrase) to prepare your reader that you are using information obtained from another author.

✗ The right to privacy of internet users has been challenged as the use of the WWW spreads throughout the world. Governments are now passing acts to support consumer rights to privacy. "**Organisations are required to safeguard personal information they hold from unauthorised access and disclosure**" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, para. 21).

**Incorrect** – Short quotation is just 'dropped in' without preparing the reader first and explaining afterwards.

✓ The right to privacy of internet users has been challenged as the use of the WWW spreads throughout the world. Governments are now passing acts to support consumer rights to privacy. **Legislation by the Commonwealth of Australia (2015) states that** "organisations are required to safeguard personal information they hold from unauthorised access and disclosure" (para. 21). Therefore, companies are forced to consider ways of ensuring that they have adequate data security to protect the privacy of their customers.

**Correct** – Short quotation moves smoothly from the writer's own words to the words of the quoted author. Embed a quotation between sentences of your own. Follow it with interpretative comments that explain the source's ideas in terms of your own argument.

### 3. Use grammatically correct verbs to match your intended meaning

There are many reporting verbs that you can choose. Think very carefully about the meaning you wish to convey as your choice of reporting words will indicate to the reader YOUR STANCE on the information that you are discussing. Moreover, your use of signal verbs and phrases will influence your reader's/marker's interpretation of your work so that he/she is more likely to agree with the conclusions you have reached in your essay.

#### Example

Smith et al. (2015) **reject** the proposal that . . . is a far stronger indication of your claims than Smith et al. (2015) **discuss** the proposal that . . .

Take care to construct **grammatically correct** sentences when you incorporate paraphrases, summaries, and direct quotations into your writing. The following verbs are written in singular form and present tense, so you will need to modify these words to suit the grammar of your sentences.

#### REPORTING VERBS + THAT + MAIN IDEA

##### Example

Peterson (2013) **acknowledges that** internet privacy is a growing issue in the modern world of communication.

##### CHOICES

accepts, acknowledges, adds, admits, advises, announces, agrees, alleges, argues, asserts, assumes, believes, claims, comments, complains, concedes, concludes, confirms, considers, contends, decides, declares, denies (deny), determines, discovers, doubts, emphasises, estimates, explains, feels, finds, guarantees, holds, hypothesises, knows, implies (imply), indicates, infers, insists, maintains, mentions, notes, observes, object, points out, postulates, predicts, professes, promises, proposes, proves, reasons, realises, recommends, remarks, reports requests, restates, reveals, says, shows, states, stresses, suggests, thinks, theorises, understands, verifies (verify), warns

Some reporting verbs cannot be followed immediately by 'that'.

#### REPORTING VERBS + SOMETHING/SOMEONE + CONNECTING WORD + (e.g., as, because, by, in terms of, for, that)

##### Examples

Jackson (2012) **refutes** the claim made by Smith et al. (2016) **that** . . .

Studies by Campbell (2015, 2018) **highlight** the disadvantages **in terms of** . . .

Research by Smith et al. (2016) **validates** the argument **that** . . .

These findings **illustrate** the importance of internet privacy **as** . . . (Brown, 2013; Jackson, 2018)

Brown and Peters (2015, p. 3) **describe** Johnson's (2013) findings **as** "disturbing . . ." (p. 3)

Jackson and Peters (2019) **applaud** the Green Party **for** their stance on . . .

Cleary (2017) **advocates** for the rights of internet users **because** . . .

Joseph et al. (2013) **question** all previous research on the subject **in terms of** . . .

TechTimes (2016) **discusses** the reasons behind the increase in internet bullying **by** . . .

advocates (for), alerts, analyses, appraises, applauds, assesses, assures, blames, challenges, characterises, congratulates, classifies (classify), criticises, defines, demonstrates, defends, describes, discusses, depicts, encourages, endorses, evaluates, examines, expresses, faults, identifies(identify), illustrates, interprets, investigates, objects (to), portrays, praises, presents, puts forward, questions, refers, refutes, rejects, studies (study), substantiates, supports, takes issue with, throws light on, validates, verifies (verify), views