

A Quick Reference Guide from Writing Support Services

Achieving Variety when Introducing Quotations

While it is necessary to introduce direct quotations in order to qualify them in relation to the rest of a paper, it is also necessary to introduce these quotations using a varied wording. It becomes monotonous if all the quotations in a paper are introduced with stock phrases: "this critic states" or "another critic says." A paper is much more interesting and cohesive if the introductory phrases, or "signal phrases," are varied.

Here are some possible signal phrases:

- According to Jane Doe, "..."
- As Jane Doe goes on to explain, "..."
- Characterized by John Doe, the society is "..."
- As one critic points out, "..."
- John Doe believes that "..."
- Jane Doe claims that "..."
- In the words of John Doe, "..."

Note that there exist fine shades of meaning between phrases such as "contend" and "argue" and large differences between ones such as "claim" and "demonstrate." Ask yourself questions as to whether the source material is making a claim, asserting a belief, stating a fact, etc. Then choose a verb that is appropriate for the source material's purpose.

A list of possible verbs for use in the introduction of quotations follows. These words are also called **Tag Words**. Double-check meanings before using them!

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| 1. affirms | 31. points out |
| 2. alleges | 32. proposes |
| 3. announces | 33. protests |
| 4. argues | 34. queries |
| 5. ascertains | 35. questions |
| 6. asserts | 36. quotes |
| 7. believes | 37. rails |
| 8. cites | 38. reaffirms |
| 9. claims | 39. recalls |
| 10. complains | 40. recommends |
| 11. concedes | 41. reflects |
| 12. concludes | 42. reiterates |
| 13. contends | 43. repeats |
| 14. deduces | 44. reports |
| 15. demonstrates | 45. reveals |
| 16. describes | 46. says |

17. disagrees
18. emphasizes
19. explains
20. explores
21. finds
22. grants
23. implies
24. informs
25. insists
26. maintains
27. notes
28. observes
29. offers
30. offers another view

47. shares
48. shows
49. speculates
50. states
51. stresses
52. submits
53. suggests
54. supposes
55. takes exception
56. tells
57. thinks
58. volunteers
59. writes