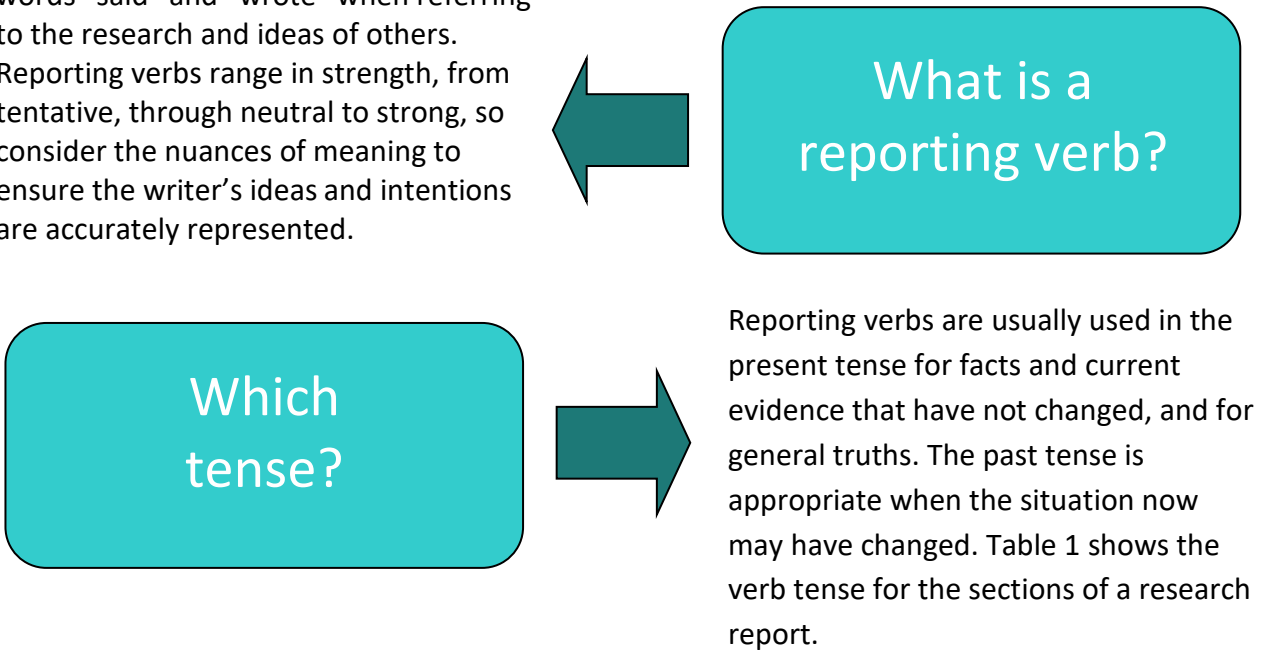


Reporting Verbs: Incorporate a Citation Into Your Writing Without Using “say” or “write”

Reporting verbs are alternatives to the words “said” and “wrote” when referring to the research and ideas of others. Reporting verbs range in strength, from tentative, through neutral to strong, so consider the nuances of meaning to ensure the writer’s ideas and intentions are accurately represented.



What is a reporting verb?

Which tense?

Reporting verbs are usually used in the present tense for facts and current evidence that have not changed, and for general truths. The past tense is appropriate when the situation now may have changed. Table 1 shows the verb tense for the sections of a research report.

Examples

Smith (2013) **reasons** that communication skills are essential to building effective nurse-patient relationships.

In her presentation, although Smith (2013) **reiterated** her belief that communication skills are essential ..., she **added** that attitude towards patients also affects ...

In her presentation, Smith (2013) **challenged** the claim that communication skills were the only ingredient necessary for building ...

Jones (2013) **concurs that** communication skills are essential to building ...

In his study on building effective nurse-student relationships, Jones (2013) **endorses** the idea that communication skills are essential ...

Nevertheless, Jones (2013) **highlights** the value of communications skills as being essential to building ... while **emphasising** the need for ...

The following lists are classified according to strength. However, do not feel bound by this classification; rather, choose the most appropriate word for the context. The list has been given in the present tense; you may need to change the tense to the past.

Tentative

More speculative, not absolutely certain

assume	identify	maintain	propose	speculate
claim	imply	moot	put forward	suggest
develop	indicate	ponder	question	suppose
deliberate	inquire	posit	reason	theorise
hypothesise	intimate	postulate	recommend	take into consideration

Neutral

Usually to present the facts

allege	consider	examine	mention	put forward
analyse	contrast	expand	note	reflect
categorise	define	explain	observe	report
comment	describe	find	outline	state
compare	discuss	identify	point out	study
conclude	echo	inform	present	theorise

Strong

Making a strong argument, either positive or negative

	Positive	Negative
add	confirm	argue
affirm	contend	cast doubt
agree	contribute	challenge
assert	determine	contradict
believe	emphasise	counter
claim	endorse	criticise
clarify	highlight	deny
concur	maintain	disagree
	point out	dismiss
	prove	disprove
	reason	negate
	reveal	oppose
	show	rebuff
	stress	refute
	support	reject
	urge	warn

Table 1

Recommended Verb Tenses in APA Style Papers

Paper section	Recommended tense	Example
Literature review (or whenever discussing other researchers' work)	Past	Quinn (2020) presented
	Present perfect	Since then, many investigators have used
Method Description of procedure	Past	Participants completed a survey
	Present perfect	Others have used similar approaches
Reporting of results	Past	Results were nonsignificant Scores increased Hypotheses were supported
Discussion of implications of results	Present	The results indicate
Presentation of conclusion, limitations, future directions, and so forth	Present	We conclude Limitations of the study are

Note. From *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: The Official Guide to APA style (7th ed.)*, by American Psychological Association, 2020, p.118. Copyright 2020 by APA.

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