

## VERBS OF ATTRIBUTION

Verbs of attribution are verbs used to signal that a writer is quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to material from another source. Often, these verbs show whether the writer agrees with the cited material.

This handout explains why and how you can use verbs of attribution correctly in your academic writing.

### WHY USE VERBS OF ATTRIBUTION?

Verbs of attribution are important in academic writing because they acknowledge the original authors' ideas, enhance the writer's credibility, and help avoid plagiarism. Learn more about these below:

1. **Giving Credit:** When you use someone else's ideas, research, or words in your writing, it is essential to give credit to the original author or source. Verbs of attribution allow you to do this by explicitly stating who the author is or what the source is.
2. **Building Credibility:** Citing reputable sources strengthens your own credibility as an academic writer. It shows that your work is well-researched and supported by expert opinions.
3. **Avoiding Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious offense in academic and professional settings. Using verbs of attribution helps to prevent unintentional plagiarism and shows that you have properly acknowledged the sources of your information.

### WHAT ARE VERBS OF ATTRIBUTION?

#### General Verbs of Attribution

General verbs of attribution are used when you want to provide a balanced and unbiased approach to acknowledging your source material without conveying any explicit agreement or disagreement with the ideas presented.

Some general verbs of attribution include **said, stated, claimed, argued, suggested, found, reported, concluded, asserted, and advised**. For example:

As reported by Brown (2022), "the prevalence of smartphone addiction among adolescents has increased significantly in the past decade."

In a study conducted by Johnson et al. (2022), it was found that "the new drug led to a significant reduction of symptoms by 30%."

#### CONTACT US:

(702) 895-3908 | [writingcenter@unlv.edu](mailto:writingcenter@unlv.edu)  
[unlv.edu/writing-center](http://unlv.edu/writing-center)



## Verbs of Attribution that Show Agreement

Verbs of agreement add a sense of support and validation to the writer's stance, as they express that various authors you are citing agree with one another or that your ideas, arguments, and claims align with the ideas or findings presented in the cited sources.

Some verbs of agreement include **agreed, supported, corroborated, and endorsed**. For example:

The researchers agreed that further investigation was necessary.

The committee endorsed the proposal for further development.

## Verbs of Attribution that Show Disagreement

Verbs of disagreement introduce a critical perspective to the writer's work by expressing that various authors you are citing disagree with one another or that your ideas, arguments, and claims do not align with the ideas or findings presented in the cited sources.

Some verbs of disagreement include **disputed, challenged, refuted, contested, and rejected**. For example:

The study challenged the prevailing assumptions about the topic.

The scholars disputed the accuracy of the information.

## HOW TO USE VERBS OF ATTRIBUTION?

While some verbs of attribution are relatively objective, others carry more emotional weight and should be used with care. Verbs that carry emotional weight have the potential to influence the reader's perception of the cited material or the writer's stance. Here are some tips to help you use these types of verbs correctly:

1. **Be Clear and Concise:** Ensure that the verbs you choose clearly convey your intended meaning. Pay attention to whether the authors of your sources agree with one another or if certain sources present ideas that differ from others. For instance, do not mistakenly use a verb that implies agreement when none exists between the sources you are citing.
2. **Provide Context:** When using verbs of agreement or disagreement, provide context or evidence to support your stance. Clarify the reasons behind your agreement or disagreement to enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of your writing. By offering a rationale for your stance and connecting it to authoritative sources or existing research, you can present a well-informed argument.
3. **Consider Your Audience:** Tailor your language to the expectations of your audience and your writing style. For example, if your audience consists of experts in the field, use technical and precise verbs that resonate with their level of knowledge. Conversely, when writing for a more general audience, opt for accessible and clear language that facilitates understanding without compromising accuracy.
4. **Blend with Citations to Avoid Plagiarism:** Incorporating sources in your academic writing requires a thoughtful combination of verbs of attribution and in-text citations. Verbs of attribution indicate the origin of the information, while in-text citations provide specific details like the author's name, publication year, and page number. Together, these elements ensure that you give proper credit to the original authors and avoid plagiarism. Different styles, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago, have specific rules for formatting citations, so consult the relevant handbook or style guide for precise instructions.