

Reporting the ideas of others

An obvious feature of academic English is references to other peoples' ideas. This is an important aspect of academic writing that you will need to develop.

You can report the ideas of others in different ways:

1. Direct reporting (source is copied exactly)

Quoting

Quotations involve copying the exact words, phrases or sentences (including the same spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and paragraphing) from another person's work. A quotation is surrounded by inverted commas and is fitted into your own sentence. Long quotes (more than 30 words or 2 lines) should be introduced in your own words, begin on a new line and be fully indented from the left margin.

Example

So it has been recommended that 'a classification system that would assist planners has to be based on something other than component shape' (Luong 1991, p 57).

2. Indirect reporting (source is paraphrased)

Non-integral orientation

Non-integral reporting is the restatement of the content in reduced form in your own words (paraphrased) and the author is mentioned in brackets. This practice gives greater emphasis to the information itself and the author is added simply as the reference.

Example

Classification systems in process planning should not be based on component shape alone since other factors may influence the processes used (Luong 1991, p 57).

Integral orientation

Integral reporting is the restatement of the content in reduced form in your own words (paraphrased) and the author is included as part of the sentence. This gives greater emphasis to the original author.

Example

Luong (1991, p 57) prefers the inclusion of factors other than component shape as a basis for designing a classification system for process planning.

This way usually involves the use of a reporting verb. The reporting verb you choose allows you to:

- show what the author/s of the source did, that is whether they conducted some research, developed an experiment, wrote about an idea
- signal whether or not you accept the ideas you are reporting (Hyland 1999, p 344).

There are many reporting verbs to choose from:

affirm	agree	assert	state
demonstrate	support	allow	accept
describe	remark	claim	display
point out	propose	add	implies
clarify	report	challenge	establish
disagree	doubt	question	contend
acknowledge	admit	associate	find
emphasise	maintain	indicate	assume
show	argue	suggest	grant
question	elaborate	put forward	answer
stress	outline	feel	link
speculate	infer	hypothesise	theorise
warn	conclude	connect	conjecture
consider	surmise	determine	

The seven verbs in **bold italics** are the most frequently used across all disciplines (Hyland, 1999).

3. Reporting multiple sources

To refer to more than one author you can use integral or non-integral orientation.

Examples

'Another aspect of reporting that has interested researchers is how source material is used in the writer's argument (Dubois 1988; Thompson 1996).'

'...a growing literature has revealed the availability of a wide range of signalling structures and reporting forms (for example Thomas and Hawes 1994; Thompson 1996).'

Many researchers (Porter 1990; Betts & Ofori 1991; Warszawski 1994) stress that for survival in this rapidly changing environment ...

Porter (1990) and many other researchers (Betts & Ofori, 1991; Warszawski, 1994) stress that for survival in this rapidly changing environment ...

A final reminder: You need to think carefully before quoting directly. It is usually better to present other people's ideas in your own words, (as a paraphrase). This way your reader can see how you have interpreted the ideas. By explaining them in your own words you can use them in a way that best supports the arguments you are developing.

Source: Hyland, K 1999, 'Academic attribution: citation and the construction of disciplinary knowledge', *Applied Linguistics*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp.341-367.