Integrating Sources: Guidelines for Teachers and Students

### When do I need to integrate sources?

Often, in academic writing, you will need to draw on ideas and research from other people. This is also known as using *secondary sources.*

It is necessary to show that these ideas and research come from another source. In order to do this, different skills are used, including:

* paraphrasing
* summarising
* quoting
* referencing

All of these skills involve ways of integrating sources so that the flow of the writing is maintained and the transition between ideas is smooth. For further information on paraphrasing, summarising, quoting and referencing, refer to the *Academic Skills Development* page on the SACE website.

### Integrating sources

There are two common ways to integrate sources. The information can be presented in an *author- prominen*t or *information-prominent* manner.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Information-prominent | Author-prominent |
| Emphasis | Information / findings / ideas | Author / author’s expertise |
| In-text reference | Author only referred to in parenthesis () or footnote. | Author’s name + reporting verb is clearly stated together with the information. |
| Example | Research is an important part of many assessment types (SACE Board of SA 2009, p. 1). | The SACE Board of SA (2009, p. 1) states that research is an important part of many assessment types. |

### Author-prominent referencing

An important element of this type of referencing is the choice of reporting verb. In assignments, these types of verbs can demonstrate understanding, analysis and evaluation. In well-developed, academic writing, the choice of reporting verb can:

* identify the viewpoint of the source
* identify the writer’s viewpoint about the information presented by the source
* evaluate the information presented.

### Reporting verbs – strength and function

Reporting verbs can be weak, neutral or strong. They can also be categorised in terms of meaning or function, such as *agreement* or *emphasis.* Being aware of the strength of these verbs and the different functions will help you choose the most appropriate one to use.

Consider the following statements and the difference in meaning because of the change of reporting verb. *Note* is a weaker reporting verb, suggesting that the authors did not pay much attention to the topic. *State* is neutral, while *emphasise* is quite strong, suggesting that the authors have a definite opinion on this topic.

|  |
| --- |
| Norton *et al.* note that maintaining safety is of utmost concern when children are playing sport (Norton *et al.* 2001, p. 14). |
| Norton *et al.* state that maintaining safety is of utmost concern when children are playing sport (Norton *et al.* 2001, p. 14). |
| Norton *et al.* emphasise that maintaining safety is of utmost concern when children are playing sport (Norton *et al.* 2001, p. 14). |

Below is a categorized list of some of the most common reporting verbs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | weak | neutral | strong |
| addition |  | add |  |
| agreement | concede, observe | acknowledge, agree, confirm, concur | support, assure, advocate |
| disagreement | question, doubt | disagree, | reject, refute, deny, dismiss, challenge, dispute |
| emphasis |  |  | emphasise, highlight, stress, assert |
| persuasion | guess | justify, interpret, find | assert, argue, contend, insist, prove, confirm, establish, persuade, emphasise, urge |
| evaluation | consider, recognise, explore | analyse, evaluate, investigate, verify, explain, appraise, list | warn, blame, judge |
| discussion | note, point out | according to, discuss, state, express, explain, as…, describe |  |

### Reporting verbs – showing your attitude

How do you feel about the author’s ideas or opinion? This can be clearly shown through your choice of reporting verbs.

Do you agree with the author’s ideas? Then you can generally use positive verbs

acknowledge, support, assure, agree, confirm, concur, persuade, justify, analyse, assert, prove, establish, emphasise, urge

Do you disagree with the author’s ideas? Then you can generally use negative verbs

disagree, question, doubt, reject, refute, deny, dismiss, allege, speculate, doubt, challenge, confuse

If you don’t feel strongly either way, then you can generally use neutral verbs

consider, note, discuss, state, express, explain, maintain, report, describe, claim, think

### How to use reporting verbs

Different reporting verbs follow different grammatical patterns.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****According to**** | ****author**** | ****(date, page),**** | ****subject + verb**** |
| **According to** | **Norton *et al.*** | **(2001, p.14),** | **maintaining safety is of utmost concern….** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****As author**** | ****(date, page)**** | ****reporting verb,**** | ****subject + verb**** |
| **As Norton *et al.*** | **(2001, p. 14)** | **state,** | **maintaining safety is of utmost concern….** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****Author**** | ****(date, page)**** | ****reporting verb + that**** | ****subject + verb**** |
| **Norton *et al.*** | **(2001, p. 14)** | **state that** | **maintaining safety is of utmost concern….** |
| **Other verbs that follow this pattern:**  ***add, acknowledge, agree, confirm, concede, observe, assure, doubt, disagree, deny, emphasise, highlight, stress, assert, justify, find, assert, argue, contend, insist, prove, confirm, establish, persuade, emphasise, consider, recognise, explain, warn, note, point out, state, express, explain*** | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ****Author**** | ****(date, page)**** | ****reporting verb**** | ****+ noun or gerund (-ing)**** |
| **Norton *et al.*** | **(2001, p. 14)** | **explore** | **the idea that maintaining safety …** |
| **Other verbs that follow this pattern:**  ***analyse, discuss, dismiss, evaluate, explore, investigate, question, refute, reject, support, verify*** | | | |

### Tense of reporting verbs

Present tense:

* often used when describing findings.
* remember to make subject and verb agree.

|  |
| --- |
| Norton *et al.*(2001, p. 14) explore the idea that maintaining safety is of utmost concern. |
| Geise (1992, p. 6) states that England’s first successful settlement in North America started at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. |

Past tense:

* often used when describing methodology that has finished.
* used when reporting findings that are not believed to be true anymore.

|  |
| --- |
| Gray (2005, p. 8) measured the levels in a controlled environment… |
| Initial studies by Cooper (1990, p. 5) did not consider the high levels of…. |

The use of specific tenses may also change according to your subject. Always check with the subject requirements.

### References

Geise, R 1992, *American History to 1877,* Barron’s Educational Services, New York.

Norton, K, Dollman, J, Klanarong, S & Robertson, I 2001, ‘Playing safe: Children in sport’, *Sport Health*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 12–14.

SACE Board of SA 2009, *How to conduct a case study*, South Australia