**Reporting words/expressions (Citation words/expressions):**

*Please note: many of these words have multiple meanings, and some of them differ from the way they are used in academic writing to report other people’s ideas. This is a guide to how to use the words as reporting words in academic writing and speaking, but does not cover all the ways they can be used. Thus, if you look some of these up in the dictionary, this may not be the first definition, and the transitive verb may not be the first part of speech listed.*

Many reporting/ citation words follow the same pattern: **verb + that + SVC** (in other words, you must use a noun clause to say the complete idea that the other person said – Subject, Verb, Complement if any):

(He asserts that the buses are often late . She warns that this law will have terrible consequences .)

If “that” is **in parentheses** (that), it means **you can omit it**. (*Winer says that we should bring cookies to class./ Winer says we should bring cookies to class.)* Using “that” when it is optional usually makes your sentence sound more formal. In the list below, if “that” is **not in parentheses**, you **should** include it to follow academic writing custom.

You can use any of the expressions listed here with *that* or *(that)* to **attribute direct quotations**. To do this, omit *that* and put the reporting word before the quotation, embedded after the subject of the first sentence in the quotation, or after the quotation. Notice the patterns for capital letters and commas. You can also use these various positions with paraphrasing.

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| with **paraphrased** material | with **quoted** material |
| She notes that these words have multiple meanings.  These words have multiple meanings, she notes.  These words, she notes, have multiple meanings. | She notes, “These words have multiple meanings.”  “These words have multiple meanings,” she notes.  “These words,” she notes, “have multiple meanings.” |

WEIRD US ACADEMIC CUSTOM ALERT: Usually, use **SIMPLE PRESENT to report people’s ideas**, even though they already said it. Don’t forget that stupid little –s if it’s one person. Use a **PAST TENSE to report events** that happened in the past.

**Reporting words that attach a COMPLETE IDEA:**

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| ***reporting word(s)*** | *special meaning (flavor of “says”)* | *example* |
| **agrees**  (that) + SVC | expresses the same opinion as someone else | Le agrees with Smith that drugs should be decriminalized. |
| **argues**  that + SVC | states that something is true, should be done, etc. | Le argues that drugs should be decriminalized. |
| **asserts**  (that) + SVC | states firmly that something is true | Le asserts that drugs should be decriminalized. |
| **believes**  (that) + SVC | is sure something is true (be careful with this one, because it’s more a statement of what the author thinks than what s/he says, and we can’t read their minds, only their words.) | Le believes that drugs should be decriminalized. |
| **cautions**  that + SVC | warns | Le cautions that if drugs are not decriminalized, more violence will result. |
| **claims**  (that) + SVC | states that something is true, especially if there is little proof, if it is a new idea, or if there is controversy – if you use “claims” to report someone else’s opinion, you probably doubt that they are right | Opponents claim that drug use will increase with decriminalization. |
| **concludes**  that + SVC | decides that something is true after considering all the information | Le concludes that despite the risks, decriminalization of drugs is the best public health policy. |
| **insists**  (that) + SVC | says firmly and often that something is true, especially when other people think it may not be true | Le insists that decriminalization of drugs will not result in rampant abuse. |
| **notes**  that + SVC | notices or pays careful attention to something (often something that is important but not the main idea) | Le notes that the end of Prohibition did not result in greater alcohol abuse. |
| **reports**  that + SVC | gives information about events, facts, or what someone else said | Le reports that in Holland, where drug use is not criminalized, overdose rates are lower. |
| **says**  (that) + SVC | expresses an idea, even in writing | Le says that many police departments are resistant to decriminalization. |
| **speculates**  that + SVC | guesses about the possible causes or effects of something without knowing all the facts or details (often used to make a prediction about the future) | Le speculates that the initial transition period might be difficult. |
| **states**  that + SVC | says, but more formal | Le states that decriminalization would benefit public health as well as reducing crime. |
| **thinks**  (that) + SVC | has an opinion (I don’t recommend using “thinks” often because of the same reason above with “believes.”) | Le thinks that decriminalization is the best approach. |

Some follow a different pattern: (NP = noun phrase: noun and things attached to it, but not a complete sentence)

These are good for introducing a topic because topics are usually noun phrases.

Note: some of these can be followed by a noun clause that starts with “how,” or “whether” but not “that,” and many can use a gerund (verb**ing**) in place of the noun phrase.

The author questions *treating drug addicts as criminals instead of sick people.*

She questions *his preparation.*

She questions *whether he is prepared.*

She questions *how well he prepared.*

After the noun, to add more information, you can use connectors like “the fact that” or “with” or add an adj clause that wrap in another complete idea while not making the noun into the subject of a sentence:

The author examines the flaws *in a study that claims to link immunizations to autism*.

The author describes an experiment *that tested methods of memorization.*

The author discusses the barriers *for immigrants* *who cannot return to their prior professions.*

The author considers problems *with current infrastructure for utilizing solar energy*.

**reporting words that attach a THINGY** *(note: thingy is a silly word, but I do mean it):*

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| ***reporting word(s)*** | *special meaning (flavor of “says”)* | *example* |
| **challenges** + NP | argues against; tests; refuses to believe | Ruiz challenges the assumption that decriminalization encourages drug use. |
| **considers** + NP | thinks about carefully; discusses | Ruiz considers the health and legal aspects of decriminalization. |
| **criticizes** + NP | says why something is bad or wrong | Ruiz criticizes the policy of imprisoning nonviolent drug offenders. |
| **describes** + NP | says what something/someone is like by giving details, often specific or sensory details | Ruiz describes a clinic in Vancouver that provides clean needles to addicts. |
| **discusses** + NP | talks about the different parts/sides of something | Ruiz discusses the health and legal aspects of decriminalization. |
| **examines** + NP | studies closely; discusses | Ruiz examines the health and legal aspects of decriminalization. |
| **investigates** + NP | tries to find out more about something; discusses | Ruiz investigates the health and legal aspects of decriminalization. |
| **refers to** + NP | mentions or speaks about someone else or someone else’s text | Ruiz refers to a 2009 study of prison populations and drug convictions. |
| **summarizes** + NP | makes a short statement giving only the main information and not the details of a plan, event, report etc. | Ruiz summarizes the policies of six nations that have successfully decriminalized drugs. |

Some reporting words can follow **more than one pattern** (you can say **verb + that + SVC** OR **verb + NP**):

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| ***reporting word(s)*** | *special meaning (flavor of “says”)* | *example* |
| **acknowledges** (**that)** + SVC  **acknowledges** + NP | admits or accepts that something is true, especially something that is unpleasant or that supports the opposite of the author’s argument | Kaur acknowledges that the new policy has some risks.  Kaur acknowledges some risks of the new policy. |
| **adds that** + SVC  **adds** + NP | says another thing or adds to an existing conversation/argument | Kaur adds that rehabilitation programs are underfunded.  Kaur adds another benefit of decriminalization: there will be more money for rehabilitation programs. |
| **admits** (**that)** + SVC  **admits** + NP | agrees unwillingly that something is true or that someone else is right about something | The authors admit that the study design isn’t perfect.  The authors admit mistakes in the study design. |
| **asks if/whether** + SVC  **asks about** + NP | poses a question | Kaur asks whether the risks are greater than the benefits.  The study asks about the effects of the new law. |
| **comments that** + SVC  **comments on** + NP | adds his/her opinion to a subject, idea, or plan | Kaur comments that a new therapy has been more successful in treating addiction.  Kaur comments on a new therapy that has been more successful in treating addiction. |
| **explains that** + SVC  **explains** + NP | tells about something in a way that makes it more clear | Kaur explains that the new therapy combines medical treatment with social support.  Kaur explains a new therapy that combines medical treatment with social support. |
| **indicates that** + SVC  **indicates** + NP | points to (this is often used with something besides a person as the subject: the study indicates… evidence indicates…) | Recent figures indicate that over half of prison inmates are locked up for drug offenses.  Research indicates another possible solution to the problem. |
| **maintains that** + SVC  **maintains** + NP | states firmly that something is true | Kaur maintains that decriminalization is the best strategy.  Kaur maintains her position that decriminalization is the best strategy. |
| **mentions that** + SVC  **mentions** + NP | says something that is not a main idea, sometimes while talking about another topic | Kaur mentions that prescription drug abuse is another related problem that cannot be ignored.  Kaur mentions prescription drug abuse, another related problem that cannot be ignored. |
| **points out that** + SVC  **points out** + NP | tells something that may not be obvious or that people might not know | Kim points out that crime has not increased in Colorado since marijuana was legalized.  Kim points out stable crime rates in states where marijuana has been legalized. |
| **proposes that** + SVC  **proposes** + NP (often verb-ing) | tells an idea of what people should do | Kim proposes that the government should combine regulation with treatment.  Kim proposes a combination of regulation and treatment. |
| **remembers that** + SVC **remembers** + NP (often verb-ing) | remembers a story or event | Kim remembers that the guards seemed depressed.  Kim remembers visiting a high security prison for the first time. |
| **recalls that** + SVC  **recalls** + NP (often verb-ing) | remembers or tells the story of an event | Kim recalls that the guards seemed depressed.  Kim recalls meeting a guard who seemed depressed. |
| **regrets that** + SVC  **regrets** + NP (often verb-ing) | wishes s/he hadn’t done something | The inmate regrets that she lost custody of her child.  The inmate regrets losing custody of her child. |
| **suggests** (that) + SVC  **suggests** + NP (often verb-ing) | tells an idea of what people should do OR (more common in academic texts) indicates, points to, or supports an idea that is not 100% sure | Many recent studies suggest that drug addicts are not deterred by the threat of arrest.  Kim suggests that governments should decriminalize drug use.  Kim suggests decriminalizing drug use. |

Some reporting words can follow **different patterns** (as well as the ones above):

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| ***reporting word(s)*** | *special meaning (flavor of “says”)* | *example* |
| **asks if/whether** + SVC  **asks about** + NP  **asks why** + SVC | has a question about something; stronger than *wonders* but more neutral than *questions* | Kim asks if spending more on prevention would be more effective.  Kim asks about the efficacy of prosecuting drug users.  Kim asks why current policies continue, despite evidence that they are not working. |
| **questions if/whether** + SVC  **questions** + NP | argues against; tests; refuses to believe; expresses doubts | Kim questions current policies.  Kim questions whether current policies are working. |
| **recommends that** + SVC, *verb in base form*  **recommends** + NP (often verb-ing) | tells an idea of what people should do | Kim recommends that governments focus on treatment, not punishment.  Kim recommends focusing on treatment, not punishment. |
| **writes that** + SVC  **writes about** + NP (often verb-ing) | neutral, just like says/talks | Kim writes that the effects of criminalizing drugs are worse than the effects of drug abuse.  Kim writes about effects of criminalization. |
| **wonders if/whether** + SVC  **wonders about** + NP  **wonders why** + SVC | has a question about something; guesses; thinks that something may be true | Kim wonders if spending more on prevention would be more effective.  Kim wonders about the efficacy of prosecuting drug users.  Kim wonders why current policies continue, despite evidence that they are not working. |
| **according to** + someone, SVC | this means s/he said, is totally neutral, and works as a prepositional phrase – do not also use another reporting expression for the same idea. | According to Kim, decriminalization is the first step toward solving the drug crisis. |

**- composed by Gabe Winer**