

MURPHY BI-WEEKLY WRITING TIP

Dear Murphy Institute Students,

Do you use “says” or “states” too much when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing an author’s ideas or responses? If so, today’s tip offers a variety of different ways to describe what and how an author makes their point(s) using different *signal verbs*.

Signal Verbs

When author makes a claim:

- Argue
- Assert
- Believe
- Claim
- Emphasize
- Insist
- Observe
- Remind us
- Report
- Suggest

When author recommends:

- Advocate
- Call for
- Demand
- Encourage
- Exhort
- Implore
- Plead
- Recommend
- Urge
- Warn

When author agrees:

- Acknowledge
- Admire
- Agree
- Endorse
- Extol
- Praise
- Reaffirm
- Corroborate
- Support
- Verify

When author disagrees:

- Complain
- Complicate
- Contend
- Contradict
- Deny
- Qualify
- Question
- Refute
- Reject
- Renounce

Review what the author writes and decide which of the words above *best* describes what they are doing:

Are they *suggesting* something? *Demanding* a change? *Praising* an idea? *Questioning* an idea? *Advocating* for a certain approach? *Rejecting* a conclusion?

Using these words instead of “says” or “states” will make your writing stronger!

Smith (2008) *advocates* for this diet.

Coleman (2018) *rejects* those findings and instead *suggests* that the methods are faulty.

Puckett (2016) *emphasizes* the need to evaluate the situation further.

Remember: the words above are *not* interchangeable – make sure to look up the exact definition of the word you want to use to make sure you use it correctly!

As always: Remind yourselves what you have accomplished, and Best of Luck!

Sign Up for a One-On-One Tutoring Session

1. Visit <https://murphy.mywconline.net/>
2. [Register for an account](#)
3. Log in and select the “Murphy Queens Writing Center” calendar.
4. Choose any of the available white rectangles.
5. Fill out the form with your assignment info.

Jean Soto, Writing Specialist

Jean.Soto@slu.cuny.edu

(929) 265-2101

**If you have questions
or want to put this into
practice, feel free to
contact me! ☺**