

The Thesis Whisperer verb cheat sheet

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Verbs are judgmental. The verb you use to describe someone else's work indicates your feeling about the *quality* of the work. For instance, "Mewburn (2010) argues..." is kinder than "Mewburn (2010) asserts..." (a scholar who asserts is not really a scholar at all).

Choose your feeling, and then pick a verb from the list that fits your sentence. Or just scan the list for best fit. This is the list I made to put on my own wall – you may disagree with my categories. Feel free to change it to suit your style.

This work is awesome!		
argues	concludes	explains
demonstrates	differentiates	identifies
critiques	deduces	discriminates
evaluates	proves	assesses
examines	distinguishes	predicts
proposes	assesses	integrates
discusses	illustrates	outlines
I feel neutral		
shows	applies	outlines
composes	proposes	uses
states	organises	differentiates
uses	produces	examines
separates	develops	appraises
selects	performs	illustrates
interprets	paraphrases	reports
prepares	restates	reviews
uses	classifies	contrasts
debates	relates	produces
This work is poor		
asserts	chooses	justifies
invents	uses	constructs
states	makes	selects
recalls	recites	tells
generalises	changes	characterises

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