

A Referring to source materials

Look at these extracts where the writers are talking about their sources. Although these writers occasionally use 'I', many academic departments advise against doing this in writing if possible.

This paper begins with a **review of the literature on**¹ patient communication. **The medical literature suggests** that patients with serious illnesses tend to communicate poorly, especially if the disease is not considered by the patient to be particularly threatening.

¹ a summary and evaluation of all the important works written on a particular subject

This essay **draws its data** from the most important **primary source**² of information on manufacturing in Nigeria: the Central Bank of Nigeria. I shall **make reference**³ to this source throughout this essay. Several recent **secondary sources**⁴ were also **consulted**.

² an original document or set of documents giving information about a subject ³ slightly more formal alternative to *refer to* ⁴ books or articles about a subject, not original documents

For this project, I consulted the county **archives**⁵ in an attempt to explain why there were so many deaths in 1846 and 1847. These proved a **valuable resource**. I also **surveyed the literature on**⁶ agricultural production during the 1840s. However, I only directly **cite**⁷ those works which are particularly relevant in **the present study**.

⁵ a collection of documents of historical importance ⁶ searched for all the important works, summarised and evaluated them ⁷ refer to for illustration or proof

An **extensive body of literature**⁸ **exists** on the effects of wildfires⁹. Wildfires have burned across the western United States for centuries, but their effects are not fully known or **documented**¹⁰. The present study **draws primarily on**¹¹ the work of Gordon (1996).

⁸ also 'body of knowledge'; note how it combines with *extensive* and *exist* ⁹ fires starting naturally, not caused by human action ¹⁰ written about ¹¹ uses information mainly from

As noted¹² in a recent report, Australia has been at the forefront of developments in e-learning. This success **is often attributed to**¹³ Australia's geographical position, but the factors **catalogued**¹⁴ in the report reveal a more complex picture.

¹² given special mention ¹³ people often say that this is the cause ¹⁴ recorded, listed

B More ways of referring to sources

Beeching's seminal¹ work laid the **foundations**² for the field of functional analysis. Keynes's ideas were set out³ in his book, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, published in 1936. This work changed the way we look at how economies function. Elsewhere⁴, Keynes claimed to be developing classical economic theory. Design of compact heat exchangers is **dealt with** in Appendix A of the report, **treated**⁵ separately from the **main body**⁶ of the report.

¹ important and original work from which other works grow ² created the first ideas from which a major set of ideas grew ³ gave all the details of his ideas, or explained them clearly (especially used about writing) ⁴ in another work by him ⁵ more formal version of *deal with* ⁶ the main part

Exercises

23.1 Match the beginning of each sentence with the most appropriate ending.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 The letters proved to be a valuable | study, which focuses on metals only. |
| 2 An extensive body of literature | body of the book; they are in the appendix. |
| 3 Newspapers are a good primary | the literature on intellectual property rights. |
| 4 The data are not given in the main | exists on human to animal communication. |
| 5 Plastics are not dealt with in the present | source for the period 1980–1985. |
| 6 The thesis begins with a review of | resource for the study of the poet's life. |

23.2 Rewrite the sentences using the word in brackets.

- The article refers to the work of Hindler and Swartz (1988). (MAKES)
- Schunker's book was a useful critique for understanding the pre-war period. I also consulted original government papers. (SECONDARY)
- Tanaka's book uses data from several Japanese articles on galaxy formation. (DRAWS)
- In a different paper, Kallen reports on his research into cancer rates among farm workers. (ELSEWHERE)
- Han consulted the documents of historical importance in the Vienna Museum. (ARCHIVES)

23.3 Complete the table. Use a dictionary if necessary. Do not fill in the shaded boxes.



noun	verb	adjective	adverb
	attribute		
document			
	consult		
		primary	
catalogue			
foundation			
note			
	suggest		
		extensive	
	cite		

23.4 Look at this advice about plagiarism [pronounced /'pleɪdʒˈrɪzəm/, the serious offence of using other people's work while pretending it is your own, without clearly acknowledging the source of that information] given to students by an American university. Underline words and phrases which mean:

- Expressing the same message in different words
- Things known by everyone
- Stating that one has obtained one's information from that source
- Direct repetition of what someone has written or said
- Stating that you have benefited from someone's work

How can students avoid plagiarism?

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit by acknowledging your source whenever you use:

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings – any pieces of information – that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

Being able to use the vocabulary in this unit well will help you avoid repetition in your writing.

A Countable or uncountable nouns

Fact is a countable noun and evidence is uncountable – you can refer to one **piece of evidence** or to the body of evidence [large amount of evidence].

Some people consider **data** as a plural noun – *these data show an unexpected trend* – while others consider it as uncountable – *this data differs from last year's. This is a particularly interesting piece/item of data*. The tendency is increasingly to use **data** as an uncountable noun but you will see both forms and may use it whichever way you prefer yourself.

B Words often used with facts, evidence and data

Researchers try to establish the facts. They hope that the facts will **bear out**¹ or support their hypothesis. Most carefully check their facts before **presenting** them to others although there are, of course, dishonest people prepared to **distort**² the facts in order to claim that their facts are interesting, **relevant**³, **undeniable** or **little-known**.

¹ confirm ² change ³ connected to the topic being discussed

Notice how *fact* is also often used in sentences like the following:

It is hard to **account for the fact that**⁴ share prices rose over this period.

The problem **stems from the fact that**⁵ there is a basic conflict of interests.

The lecturer **drew attention to the fact that**⁶ the economy was starting to improve.

⁴ explain why ⁵ has arisen because ⁶ emphasised that

Researchers may **look for**, **collect**, **examine** and **consider evidence**. The evidence they collect may **point to** or **suggest a conclusion**. If the evidence is **growing** or **widespread** it may serve to **support a theory**. In writing up their research they aim to **provide** or **offer sufficient evidence** to support their theories. They are happy if the evidence they find is **convincing** or **powerful** and are less happy if the evidence is **flimsy**⁷ or **conflicting**⁸. They are pleased if **new evidence comes to light**⁹ or emerges and if they find **abundant**¹⁰ evidence. They may talk about finding **hard evidence**¹¹.

⁷ not strong ⁸ contradictory ⁹ becomes known, see Unit 9 ¹⁰ plenty of ¹¹ evidence which is reliable and can be proven, used mainly in spoken in English

	reliable ¹² .	obtain		suggests	
	comprehensive ¹³ .	organise		reflects	
The data is	accurate.	You analyse	data.	Data	indicates something.
	empirical ¹⁴ .	interpret			shows
		record			demonstrates

¹² can be trusted ¹³ full, complete ¹⁴ based on observation rather than theory

C Giving examples

You often need to give or **provide an example** to illustrate the facts you're presenting. A good example can be described as **striking**, **clear**, **vivid**, **illuminating** or **telling**. Sometimes, particularly in written English, the word **instance** is used as an alternative to **example**. *There is a striking instance of the author's use of metaphor in the final poem. We shall now analyse one specific instance of this problem.* Say can be used in informal English instead of *for example*. *Try and finish writing the report by, say, next Friday.*

TIP

There are many verbs in English which can be spelt either *-ise/-yse* or *-ize/-yze* depending on whether the writer is using British English or American English spelling. See Reference 4.

Exercises

24.1 Fill the gaps in this extract from a university seminar on forest conservation. Some students are questioning aspects of a presentation given by Sandra, one of the group. The first letter of each missing word is given to help you.

Aidan: I enjoyed your presentation, and you've e..... some interesting facts about the loss of forests year on year, and it's u..... that tropical forests are in danger. But I think the evidence you o..... for your claim that sustainable forest exploitation is failing is very f..... and not very c..... at all. We need to c..... a lot more data. Right now there's a lot of c..... evidence, so we can't say for certain that it's not working.

Sandra: If you want h..... evidence, just look at the International Tropical Timber Organisation, and read their latest report. Their evidence d..... that only three per cent of tropical forests are being managed properly.

Petra: Well, I've read the ITTO report, and actually it d..... attention to the fact that their previous report had found only *one* per cent of forests were properly managed, so you may be d..... the facts a little by just looking at one year. And also, there's a lot of l.....-k..... work being done with local people to encourage them to conserve the forests, so you could say there's g..... evidence that things are getting *better*.

Dr Li: Hmm, I don't think we're going to agree on this. I think, as usual, it's a question of how you i..... the data. Thanks, anyway, for your presentation, Sandra.

24.2 The sentences below are correct. Vary them by substituting the words in bold for words or expressions with similar meanings.

- 1 The data **show** that the drug education project has been successful.
- 2 The data in the latest study are more **complete** than in the earlier one.
- 3 This is the most interesting **piece** of data in the whole thesis.
- 4 What a clear example this is of the power of the human mind!
- 5 Unfortunately, the facts do not **bear out** the hypothesis.
- 6 We cannot **explain** the fact that attitudes are more negative now than five years ago.
- 7 The problem **arises** from the fact that the software was poorly designed.
- 8 The article **gives** examples of different methods which have been used over the years.
- 9 New evidence has **emerged** that the cabinet was not informed of the Minister's decision.
- 10 We need to **examine** the evidence before we can reach a conclusion.
- 11 The evidence suggesting that sanctions do not work is **plentiful** and **very strong**.
- 12 A considerable amount of evidence now exists, but we always try to **get** more.
- 13 We have a lot of **observed** data which suggest the problem is on the increase.
- 14 This is a clear example of how conservation can benefit local people.

24.3 One word in each sentence does not fit the sentence. Which is it?

- 1 Thorsen's aim was to *establish* / *check* / *bear out* / *present* the facts.
- 2 The evidence *suggests* / *points to* / *supports* / *emerges* a different conclusion.
- 3 Lopez *collected* / *reflected* / *obtained* / *recorded* some fascinating data.
- 4 The writer provides some *growing* / *telling* / *striking* / *illuminating* examples.
- 5 The evidence Mistry presents is *convincing* / *flimsy* / *vivid* / *conflicting*.

FOLLOW UP

Look at any text from your discipline and see what words are used with *facts*, *data* and *evidence*. Are they the same as the ones in this unit? Note any different ones.