

# Attributive Language

Giving credit where credit is due

# Introducing a Source

- Although some facts are easy to physically prove (*trees have leaves*) or well-known (*Japan has a prime minister*), others may be newly discovered (common in news) or not widely known (common in advanced studies).
- If you do not have the authority to make a claim, or another person does not believe you, you can introduce a trusted source of information to prove your statement.
  - Example: A. There's a typhoon coming.  
B. Really? I don't see any clouds or rain.  
A. Well, *according to the Japanese meteorological association*, it will be here tomorrow.
- These expressions are often called “attributive tags.”

*Note: In news reports, these tags allow reporters to share statements from potentially unreliable people, such as witnesses in shock, politicians, or advertisers, without promising that the statements are true. Listeners are told who made the claims, and they can decide if the source is credible.*

# News Writing: Attribution

- All major information should be attributed to a source unless it is commonly known (*example: Donald Trump was the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the USA*) or unless the information itself strongly implies the source (*example: My coworker's mom is sick. Source = my coworker*).
- Don't make a list of direct quotations for the reader.
  - ❖ Summarize or paraphrase some ideas, but still attribute them to the reader.
- Direct quotations should be no more than two sentences long.
- Direct quotations and their attribution should be punctuated properly.
  - ❖ For example: "John did not go with her," he said.

# Attributive Verbs – Common in Summaries

- The court *acknowledges* that the trial has started.
- The suspect *admits* that he stole the car.
- The defense lawyer *agrees* that the suspect should not have confessed.
- The prosecution lawyer *alleges* that the suspect has committed other crimes.
- The defense *argues* that his client was pressured to confess.
- The jury *asks* that there be a short break.
- The judge *asserts* that this case is clear.
- The public *believes* that the man is guilty.
- The prosecution *claims* that they have won.
- The defense *concedes* that the case is over.
- The jury *concludes* that the man is guilty.
- The family *denies* that the trial was fair.
- The suspect *disputes* that his confession was admissible.
- The judge *emphasizes* that the suspect was under oath.
- The attorney *explains* that confessions in court are taken at face value.
- He *implies* that the suspect is not smart enough to understand his own actions.
- The prosecutor *insinuates* that the client was uninformed.
- The defense *insists* that he explained confessions to his client.
- The judge *points out* that the client confessed immediately.
- The news *reports* that the man is guilty.
- His family *responds* that they will sue.
- The lawsuit *reveals* that he has a mental disability.
- The judge *sees* that there is a mistrial.
- The record *shows* that the police did not ask all the necessary questions.
- Reporters *speculate* that there is corruption.
- The police chief *states* that there will be a review.
- The mayor *suggests* that there was a mistake.
- The public *supports* the police.
- The defense *supposes* that they have a chance.
- The prosecution *thinks* that it will win again.
- The judge *verifies* that the new evidence is filed.
- She *writes* that the final ruling is “not guilty”.

# Attributive Verbs: Different Sentence Patterns

(2) V + <i>that</i> + sentence	(3) V + <i>to</i> + V	(4) V + NP + <i>to</i> + V	(5) V + NP	(6) V + <i>-ing</i>
<p>Accept, acknowledge, add, admit, affirm, agree, allege, allow, answer, argue, assert, assume, believe, charge, claim, comment, complain, concede, conclude, concur, confess, confirm, consider, contend, decide, declare...</p> <p><b>Ex. I <u>admit that I am guilty</u></b></p>	<p>Agree, claim, decide...</p> <p><b>Ex. They <u>agreed to see their client on a Saturday</u>.</b></p>	<p>Advise, allow, ask...</p> <p><b>Ex. We <u>advised our clients to stay at home</u>.</b></p>	<p>Account for, acknowledge, address, advise, agree with, allege, analyze, answer, assert, believe in, categorize, challenge, cite, claim, comment on, compare (+pl NP), complain about, concede, conclude, confess to, criticize...</p> <p><b>Ex. She <u>cited a case</u>.</b></p>	<p>Account for, acknowledge, admit to, advise, agree with, argue against, complain about, confess to, confirm, consider...</p> <p><b>Ex. He <u>confessed to stealing the car</u>.</b></p>

More Attributive Verbs:

deny	endorse	hypothesize	interpret	note	propose	remark	show	think
describe	exclaim	illustrate	introduce	object	question	reply	speculate	use
disagree	explain	imply	list	observe	realize	report	state	utilize
discuss	express	indicate	maintain	offer	reason	respond	suggest	verify
dispute	find	insinuate	mention	oppose	refute	reveal	support	whine
emphasize	grant	insist	mumble	point out	reject	see	suppose	write

# Other Attributive Expressions

## *(1) Expression + Subject*

- *According to* (my teacher, this book),
  - Most common
- *Per* (the department recommendations),
  - Professional/formal only
- *In the words of* (Robert Louis Stevenson),
  - Literary/cultural quotes

## *Attributive Expressions Are Important*

- Different attributive verbs give different tones or attitudes to the information.
  - “She implied that she felt tired.”
  - ”She exclaimed that she felt tired.”
  - “She mumbled that she felt tired.”
- Choose wisely...

Check your grammar!

- Look up new verbs and expressions at <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>

# Practice!

## Attribution

1. According to X,
2. X claims
3. X decides
4. X advises
5. X confesses
6. X analyzes

## Extra grammar

- --
- that
- to
- Y to
- to
- --

## Main Idea

- [sentence]
- [sentence]
- [verb phrase]
- [verb phrase]
- [gerundial phrase]
- [noun phrase]

# Other Language Notes

- *Name, title* — When you put the title before a name, **do not** separate them with commas:
  - (WRONG): *Game warden, Brad Fisher, arrested the trespassers.*
  - (RIGHT): *Game warden Brad Fisher arrested the trespassers.*
- However, when the name comes before the title, the title should be set off by commas.
  - (RIGHT): *Brad Fisher, the game warden, arrested the trespassers.*
- *Transitions* — use them to connect your paragraphs. (e.g., *While all of this was occurring, ... Similarly, ..., However, another witness gave a different story.*) Don't jump from one subject to another in a new paragraph without giving the reader some warning.
- *Names* — check them to make sure that they are spelled correctly.



# Example Article with Attributive Tags

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/14/science/venus-life-clouds.html>