

# ABSOLUTE DOs

(Source: Dr. Traci Giuliano)

Use words that imply argument rather than conversation (don't say "the authors state/say/believe")

- **Making a claim:** Smith (1994) argues, asserts, claims, contends, emphasizes, suggests, concludes.
- **Reporting a finding:** The results found, revealed, reported, showed, indicate, suggest.
- **Inconsistent findings:** The findings refute, contradict, call into question, are contrary to.
- **Consistent findings:** These results corroborate, confirm, support, verify, substantiate, are consistent with.

Use "template" phrases (i.e., common phrases that good writers use in various situations) to convey your ideas. (This is not plagiarism, but a way for beginning writers to learn the "basic moves" used by expert writers.)

- **Introducing standard views:** Conventional wisdom has it that \_\_\_\_; Historically, it has been assumed that...
- **Introducing a controversial issue:** Twenty years ago, the notion that \_\_\_ seemed preposterous; within the past few years, however, several researchers (cite) have shown that...
- **Describing a theory:** Taylor (1999), in her \_\_\_ theory, argued that \_\_\_\_; According to Smith (2010), people...
- **Challenging a theory:** A major weakness of this idea is that \_\_\_\_; These findings are at odds with those of Hu (1994); Although it is true that X, it does not necessarily follow that Y...; Other criticisms of this theory...
- **Mixed evidence:** Although other research supports San's (2004) point that X, his conclusion is questionable; The evidence supporting Hu's (2001) theory is mixed. On the one hand \_\_\_\_; on the other hand.
- **Discussing a gap in the literature:** At present, research has yet to establish whether X is true; Relatively little empirical research has been devoted to Y; The scant research to date suggests that...
- **Synthesizing the literature:** Together, such studies suggest...; Emerging research has established that...; A growing body of research suggests...; In short, the bulk of the evidence supports that...
- **Discussing a gap in the literature:** At present, research has yet to establish whether X is true; Relatively little empirical research has been devoted to Y; The scant research to date suggests that...
- **Making a claim (thesis):** The premise of this paper is that...; The question then arises whether there is a similar pattern for...; To our knowledge, there is no empirical data to suggest...; The purpose of the current study was to examine...
- **Signaling your own idea (not others):** It could logically be assumed that...; Thus, it can be surmised that...; It seems plausible that...; One interpretation of these findings is that...
- **Supporting your claim with evidence from others:** Consistent with this notion, recent research (cite) confirms that...; Supporting this view is a study of X (cite)...; Indeed, research (cite) confirms that...
- **Acknowledging limitations:** (check with your professor to see if this is expected in your work) Although there is compelling evidence that X, some limitations must be acknowledged...; Until the issue of X is resolved, caution is advised in interpreting these results.
- **Theoretical implications/Suggestions for future research:** An important avenue for future research is to identify...; In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend the current findings by identifying...

## DOs (Continued)

Use “template” phrases (i.e., common phrases that good writers use in various situations) to convey your ideas. (CONTINUED.)

- **Practical Implications:** Smith’s (2005) findings have significant applications in the field of medicine; for example...; Our findings have important consequences for the broader domain of...
- **Beginning of the closing paragraph:** Clearly, much work remains to be done to develop a comprehensive understanding of X; in the meantime...; In short, the emerging body of evidence suggests X, and in doing so has enhanced our understanding of the relationship between a and b.
- **Describing a theory:** Taylor (1999), in her \_\_\_ theory, argued that \_\_\_\_; According to Smith (2010), people...

Use transition words and phrases at the start of sentences to avoid a “choppy” sound and to indicate the relationship between ideas.

- **To clarify/explain:** That is; In other words; In effect, In short
- **To give an example:** Specifically; For example; As one example; Indeed; In fact
- **To make a concession:** Admittedly; Of course; To be sure; Although it is true
- **To emphasize a point:** Interestingly; Surprisingly; Importantly
- **To show cause/consequence:** As such; As a result; Consequently; Therefore; Thus
- **To show contrast:** By contrast; However; Although,; Whereas; Despite; Nonetheless
- **Similarity/additional examples:** Similarly; In a similar vein; In addition; Moreover; Furthermore
- **To summarize/conclude:** In short; In sum; In essence; Overall; In conclusion; In general
- **Sequence of events:** First; Next; Then; Finally
- **To relate to a hypothesis:** Consistent with predictions; Contrary to predictions; As predicted

### MORE TIPS

Outline your paper before writing. Never ever sit down to write a paper without organizing your thoughts and writing down an outline first. (Organization doesn’t “magically” happen; it must be created by the writer beforehand!) If you are writing a literature review, you’ll want to sort the articles into the order you want to bring them up in your paper based on the argument you’re making; do not just present the articles in chronological order. You’ll also want to outline your paper’s structure (i.e., how you will introduce the topic and your specific thesis; the ordering of articles, along with descriptions and evaluations of them; and your concluding thoughts and suggestions for the future). Consider using subheadings to organize your paper. If you are writing an empirical research report, you’ll want to outline your introduction (introducing the topic, the order in which you want to present your articles, pointing out the gap in the literature that justifies your study, and your hypotheses) and discussion (generating ideas for your study’s limitation, practical implications, and suggestions for future research) sections for sure, and possibly your method and results sections as well.