

TOOLKIT FOR ACADEMIC WRITERS: Wording for Article Critiques

About the Argument's Importance:

Ambitious
Clarifies early attempts to
Classic, Ground-breaking
Exploratory
Influential
Informative
Innovative
(Un) Necessary
Obvious
Part of a larger trend that
Preliminary
Reiterative, Redundant
Relevant
Seminal, Decisive, Formative, Pivotal
Significant
Synthesizing
Traditional

About the Argument's Clarity:

(Un) Clear
(Un) Clear methodology
(In) Explicit
(Unclear, Unnecessary) Jargon
Nebulous
Obtuse
Straightforward
Vague
Well-defined / Well defined (adjective / adverb verb)

About the Argument's Ideas, Approaches, Evidence:

(In) Accurate
Anecdotal evidence
Applied, Empirical, Evidence-based
Applies (in) specific
Approaches informed by the discipline
Associates
Broad scope
Contradicts their prior statements
(In) Correctly emphasizes
Correlates
Data (Interpretations of data) do (not) match (support)
Defines
Does (not) control for/Does (not) account for
Establishes
Equivocal
Flawed
Implies but does not prove
(Multi-, Cross-) Interdisciplinary approach
(Il) Logical
(Im) Precise

(In) Definite
Justifies methodology (measurements, participant pool)
Latitudinal
Limited
Loaded language
Logical leap
Longitudinal
(Mis) Representation of text, theory, definition, method, data
Needs clarification
Over (under) samples
Proves
Recognizes (discards, eliminates) outliers (aberrations)
Relates
Relies on (draws from) data collected by the author
Draws from (relies on) data sets from others
(Un) Reasonable
Restricted scope
(Not) Sound, (Not) Rigorous
(In) Sufficient support/evidence
(Un) Supported claim (clarification, contribution, observation)
(Un) Successful refutation
Theory-based
Traces
Well-developed / Well developed (adjective / adverb verb)

About the Argument's Author:

Ambiguous and never takes a firm stance
Assumes
Assertive
Biased
Does (not) engage with current scholarship
Focused
Objective
Overlooks details
Provides (Does not provide) affiliations and funding
Too focused on sustaining his/her argument
Transparent

About the Argument's Structure:

(Un) Clear purpose
Each point is analyzed thoroughly
Introduction is not supported by the argument (by the data)
(Un) Necessary information
(Un) Organized
(Ir) Relevant data provided
Repetitive
Scattered
(In) Sufficient literature review/background material provided
Well-crafted / Well crafted (adjective / adverb verb)

Want more possibilities? See the "Verbs" handout on our wikis