Verbs to Introduce References

acknowledges	affirms	argues
asks	asserts	believes
cautions	claims	declares
discusses	emphasizes	explains
illustrates	implies	maintains
notes	observes	refutes
relates	remarks	reveals
says	shows	states
suggests	thinks	writes

Example 1 – Ineffective:

In the poem "Mother to Son", by Langston Hughes, <u>it is about</u> a mother talking to her son about the hardships of her life and how hard his life is going to be as well.

Not only does this sentence contain a grammatical problem, the use of the ambiguous pronoun "it" that leads to an unclear subject, but the phrase "is about" is also not effective. The verbs in the Word Bank that may be more precise include: "notes," "suggests," or "shows."

Example 1 – Effective:

In his poem "Mother to Son," Hughes <u>illustrates</u> that life is hard and unfair, and for some people, a complete nightmare.

A summary of the poem is introduced with the term "illustrates," indicating that the poem contains examples that prove this writer's interpretation.

Example 2 – Ineffective:

The author <u>says</u> that the <u>theme</u> is about the hardships of life and wants to show that there is no easy way out.

The introduction to the textual reference is wordy. Rather than using both the terms "says" and "theme," the introductory tags "discusses," "maintains," or "asserts" may be more concise.

Example 2 – Effective:

King <u>emphasizes</u> that he wants people to "be judged by the content of their character" rather than their race or skin color.

The specific verb "emphasizes" indicates that King was making an argument and stressing his views on the way people should be treated.