“Says” is a word commonly used in essays and serves a very important purpose. However, this word is a bit vague, and using it too much can become repetitive and weaken your point. If you find yourself using “says” too much, try figuring out exactly what “says” means (a good tip is to put another word or phrase in the sentence in place of “says”) and substitute another word that more accurately reflects your meaning.

When “says” means “tells,” you can use:

- announces
- declares
- exclaims
- expresses
- mentions
- discusses
- points out
- proclaims
- reports
- states
- voices
- informs

When “says” means “interprets,” you can substitute:

- argues
- asserts
- claims
- demonstrates
- explains
- explicates
- reveals
- shows
- speculates
- suggests

When “says” means “agree/disagree with,” you can write:

**Agrees with:**
- acknowledges
- affirms
- avows
- concedes
- concurs
- supports
- upholds
- vouches

**Disagrees with:**
- admonishes
- argues
- debates
- denies
- protests
- rebukes
- refutes
- reproves

Select information taken from Lunsford, Ronald F. and Bill Bridges. *The Longwood Guide to Writing*

Last updated by RJG on 08/12/2015