

THE DR.'S REVIEW

# 100 High-Impact Verbs

*A Resource Guide for Stronger Dissertation & Thesis Writing*

Precise verbs signal precise thinking. This guide gives you 100 alternatives to the flat, overused verbs that quietly weaken doctoral and master's-level writing — organized by where they work best in your dissertation.

## Ten Swaps to Start With

*These are the ten most common weak-verb patterns we see in dissertation drafts, paired with the high-impact verb we'd reach for instead.*

| Common Verb | High-Impact Verb     | Definition                                       |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Help        | <b>Facilitate</b>    | To make an action or process easier.             |
| Look at     | <b>Scrutinize</b>    | To examine or inspect closely and thoroughly.    |
| Show        | <b>Demonstrate</b>   | To show the truth by providing proof.            |
| Make        | <b>Generate</b>      | To produce or create revenue, ideas, or results. |
| Use         | <b>Leverage</b>      | To use something to its maximum advantage.       |
| Fix         | <b>Rectify</b>       | To correct something that is wrong.              |
| Start       | <b>Launch</b>        | To start or set in motion an enterprise.         |
| Get         | <b>Attain</b>        | To succeed in achieving a difficult goal.        |
| Think about | <b>Conceptualize</b> | To form a concept or an idea of.                 |
| Work with   | <b>Collaborate</b>   | To work jointly on an activity or project.       |

**A word of caution:** high-impact verbs are a tool, not a costume. Reach for the stronger verb only when it's genuinely the more precise word for what happened — precision beats sophistication every time.

## How to Use This Guide

1. Pick one chapter of your draft — don't try to overhaul everything at once.
2. Search for flat, overused verbs (help, show, use, make, get, look at).
3. Find the matching category below and choose a verb that accurately reflects what you did — not just one that sounds impressive.
4. Read the sentence aloud. If it still sounds like you, keep it.

## The Full List — Organized by Use

### Leadership & Management

*For describing how you directed people, processes, or projects.*

**Administer** — To manage and direct a program or organization.

**Champion** — To vigorously support or defend a chosen cause.

**Command** — To have authority and control over a group.

**Delegate** — To entrust a task or responsibility to another.

**Direct** — To manage or guide project or team operations.

**Empower** — To give someone authority or power to act.

**Guide** — To show the way; to direct or advise.

**Lead** — To be in charge or command of a team.

**Manage** — To be in charge of; to handle successfully.

**Mentor** — To advise and train a junior colleague.

**Mobilize** — To organize people to act in concert.

**Pioneer** — To be the first to apply a method.

**Preside** — To be in a position of authority.

**Spearhead** — To lead an attack, movement, or initiative.

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### Creation & Innovation

*For describing how you built, designed, or originated something new.*

**Architect** — To design and structure a complex system.

**Author** — To originate or create a plan or document.

**Build** — To construct by putting parts or materials together.

**Conceptualize** — To form a concept or an idea of.

**Construct** — To build or erect something from scratch.

**Create** — To bring something into existence; to originate.

**Design** — To conceive and plan out in detail.

**Develop** — To grow something to be more advanced.

**Devise** — To plan or invent a complex procedure.

**Engineer** — To skillfully arrange for something to occur.

**Envision** — To imagine a future possibility; to visualize.

**Formulate** — To create a strategy or proposal methodically.

**Generate** — To produce or create revenue, ideas, or results.

**Innovate** — To introduce new methods, ideas, or products.

**Institute** — To establish a formal practice or system.

**Originate** — To create or initiate something entirely new.

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## Analysis & Evaluation

*For describing how you examined, tested, or judged information.*

**Analyze** — To examine data or information in detail.

**Assess** — To evaluate the nature, quality, or ability.

**Audit** — To officially inspect accounts or organizational procedures.

**Critique** — To evaluate a theory or practice analytically.

**Diagnose** — To identify the nature of a problem.

**Evaluate** — To form an idea of the value of.

**Identify** — To establish or indicate what something is.

**Interpret** — To explain the meaning of complex information.

**Scrutinize** — To examine or inspect closely and thoroughly.

## Improvement & Refinement

*For describing how you strengthened or optimized something that already existed.*

**Accelerate** — To increase the speed and scope of projects.

**Amplify** — To increase the scale, volume, or impact.

**Augment** — To make something greater by adding to it.

**Bolster** — To support, strengthen, or prop something up.

**Elevate** — To raise to a more important or impressive level.

**Enhance** — To intensify or further improve the quality.

**Expand** — To become or make larger or more extensive.

**Expedite** — To make a process happen more quickly.

**Modernize** — To adapt something to modern needs or habits.

**Optimize** — To make the best or most effective use of.

**Overhaul** — To make comprehensive repairs or improvements.

**Refine** — To improve something by making small changes.

**Reinforce** — To strengthen or support with additional material.

**Restructure** — To organize a system or company differently.

**Revolutionize** — To change something radically or fundamentally.

**Streamline** — To make a process or system more efficient.

## Execution & Achievement

*For describing how you carried out and completed the work.*

**Achieve** — To successfully reach an objective through effort.

**Advance** — To move a project or cause forward purposefully.

**Attain** — To succeed in achieving a difficult goal.

**Deliver** — To produce the promised or expected result.

**Drive** — To propel and provide impetus for a project.

**Establish** — To set up on a firm or permanent basis.

**Exceed** — To go beyond what is prescribed; to surpass.

**Execute** — To carry out or complete a plan.

**Implement** — To put a decision or plan into effect.

**Inaugurate** — To begin or introduce a new system.

**Launch** — To start or set in motion an enterprise.

**Secure** — To succeed in obtaining something with difficulty.

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## Communication & Influence

*For describing how you conveyed ideas or moved others to act.*

**Advocate** — To publicly recommend or support a specific cause.

**Articulate** — To express complex ideas clearly and effectively.

**Clarify** — To make a situation or statement less confused.

**Consult** — To seek expert information or professional advice.

**Demonstrate** — To show the truth by providing proof.

**Influence** — To affect the character or behavior of.

**Inspire** — To fill someone with the urge to act.

**Mediate** — To intervene in a dispute to resolve it.

**Negotiate** — To bring about a result by discussion.

**Persuade** — To induce someone to act through reasoning.

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## Collaboration & Coordination

*For describing how you worked with others or brought parts together.*

**Collaborate** — To work jointly on an activity or project.

**Coordinate** — To organize elements to work together efficiently.

**Cultivate** — To develop a skill, quality, or relationship.

**Facilitate** — To make an action or process easier.

**Forge** — To create a strong and lasting relationship.

**Foster** — To encourage the development of something desirable.

**Organize** — To arrange systematically; to coordinate actions.

**Reconcile** — To make two ideas or accounts compatible.

**Integrate** — To combine things to become a whole.

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## Strategy & Resourcefulness

*For describing how you planned, prioritized, or made the most of resources.*

- Brand** — To create a distinctive identity for a product.
- Capitalize** — To use a situation to gain an advantage.
- Catalyze** — To cause or accelerate a significant action.
- Consolidate** — To combine things into a more effective whole.
- Customize** — To modify something for a particular task.
- Galvanize** — To shock or excite someone into action.
- Harness** — To control and make use of resources.
- Leverage** — To use something to its maximum advantage.
- Prioritize** — To treat something as most important.
- Rectify** — To correct something that is wrong.
- Redefine** — To define something again or differently.
- Resolve** — To find a solution to a problem.
- Strategize** — To devise a plan to achieve a goal.
- Synthesize** — To combine elements into a new whole.

## Want Help Applying This to Your Draft?

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**Website:** [www.thedrsreview.com](http://www.thedrsreview.com)

**Email:** [dr.ahnna@thedrsreview.com](mailto:dr.ahnna@thedrsreview.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/TheDrsReview](https://facebook.com/TheDrsReview)