



Adverbs of Certainty and Uncertainty

What do these linking expressions have in common?

1. Apparently,...
2. Clearly,...
3. Controversially,...
4. Evidently,...
5. Hypothetically,...
6. Invariably,...
7. Objectively (speaking),...
8. Obviously,...
9. Potentially,...
10. Presumably...
11. Reportedly,...
12. Supposedly,...
13. Theoretically
14. Undoubtedly

They can be divided into two types. What are the two categories? Which expressions above go in which category?

Category 1 =

Category 2 =

Label the underlined adverbs below with S for sure or U for unsure in the same way.

15. Smith allegedly manipulated his results.
16. The policy will assuredly have a positive effect on the situation.
17. Subsidies certainly change business behaviour, the question is...
18. Patients conceivably benefit from the placebo affect nevertheless.
19. Scientists conclusively disproved that idea as early as the 17th century when...
20. Gonzalez convincingly argues that there is no cause and effect relationship between...
21. It is definitely the case that sociological research changes the thing that is being studied.
22. Schwartz definitively showed that...
23. Gravity demonstrably falls outside what Newtonian theories would suggest when...
24. Policies which aim for high inflation are inherently unjust.
25. It is likely that this will continue or even accelerate in the medium term.
26. This discrepancy possibly invalidates the whole report.
27. The two sets of figures correlate precisely.
28. The majority of governments will probably experience the same effect.
29. It has been reliably reported that...
30. The results of the new survey seemingly show the former to have been badly designed.
31. This undeniably has an impact on society, but what impact has yet to be determined.
32. Government spending universally correlates with decreased entrepreneurial spirit, though this does not mean the same thing as less actual enterprise.

Use the key words below to help with the last task. They are in the same grammatical form as the answer key that you will see later, but you can change them if you like. More than one might be possible with each sentence above.

- all
- almost
- appears to
- As is predicted
- attempted
- clear
- convincingly
- difficult
- fairly
- formerly
- high
- highly
- It is more than
- It seems
- little
- may
- more
- not necessarily
- not really
- obvious
- presume that...
- reasonably
- seemingly
- strong
- There is a more than
- There is no reason not to...
- There seems to be
- un-
- What is (often) said to be
- would suggest

What's the difference between "certainly" and "surely"? Which is stronger? Which is more academic?

Look at the answer key and underline other useful words and phrases for expressing certainty and uncertainty.