

Signal Phrases

Signal phrases are essential to properly cite. They signal to the reader the source of the information you're providing. It's important to know the signal phrase structure whether it's for a quoted or paraphrased citation.

Signal phrases also help convey what the author is doing in their article, book, etc. Important questions to ask yourself are as follows: Are they analyzing something? Arguing a certain view? Are they responding to something? By answering these questions, you can determine the appropriate verb for your signal phrase.

Verbs for Signal Phrases

Acknowledges	Argues	Believes
Claims	Discovers	Emphasizes
Illustrates	Observes	Reports

Structure of a Common Quoted Citation:

Author → Verb → **Quote**

Examples:

In a study conducted by McClain, he discovered “60% of students in the English 1A course did not know what signal phrases meant” (6).

In her research, Stokes claims, “96% of students’ papers will be stronger if they learn about signal phrases” (4).

Professor Martin reports that “40% more of his students properly cited in their essays after learning how to incorporate signal phrases in quoted citations” (8)

Structure of a Common Paraphrase Citation

Author → Verb → **Summary/Paraphrase**

Examples:

Pierce observes that her English 1A class can identify the appropriate verbs to use for their signal phrases (12).

Wallace argues more instructors should teach their students the structure of signal phrases, so they know how to properly cite (4).

Santos emphasizes that it's important to properly cite so your work as a writer is not discredited (2).