

Signal Phrases

Signal phrases are essential to properly cite a source. They signal to the reader the source of the information you're providing. Signal phrases also help convey what the author is doing in the text: arguing, explain, analyzing, asking or stating.

Verbs for Signal Phrases

Important questions to ask yourself are as follows: Is the author analyzing something? Arguing a certain viewpoint? Is the author responding to something? By answering these questions, you can determine the appropriate verb for your signal phrase.

Acknowledges	Argues	Believes	Asks
Claims	Explains	Emphasizes	States
Illustrates	Observes	Reports	Responds

Structure of a Quoted Citation

Use the following structure to introduce a quote:

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 Summary or Paraphrased Citation

Use the following structure to introduce a summary or a paraphrase:

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).