

SIGNAL PHRASES

It is necessary not only to cite all sources but also to make clear which information comes from you and which comes from a source. Signal phrases help to introduce material borrowed from a reference. One word, a phrase, or a full sentence might be used to introduce the borrowed material. You can choose signal words to introduce a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, keeping in mind that your word or phrasing choice can help to guide the reader into the idea of your source. For example, material paraphrased from a science journal might be introduced using the word reported: Morgan (1990) reported that genetic material could be relocated.

Signal phrases often incorporate verbs or verb phrases. The verb needs to fit the context, such as whether the source; claims, argues, observes, concludes, refutes, or states. A list of verbs follows to assist you with thinking about possibilities for your own writing; should you use any of these words, be sure your selection fits the context.

Some Verbs to Use in Signal Phrases

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Acknowledges | Defines | Points out |
| Adds | Delineates | Posits |
| Admits | Denies | Presents |
| Advances | Discloses | Proposes |
| Affirms | Discounts | Purports |
| Agrees | Disputes | Reasons |
| Alludes | Documents | Recounts |
| Argues | Explains | Reflects |
| Asserts | Expresses | Refutes |
| Attests | Extrapolates | Reiterates |
| Characterizes | Grants | Relates |
| Chronicles | Highlights | Remarks |
| Claims | Hypothesizes | Replies |
| Comments | Illustrates | Reports |
| Compares | Implies | Responds |
| Concludes | Indicates | Reveals |
| Concurs | Insists | States |
| Confirms | Maintains | Submits |
| Contends | Narrates | Suggests |
| Contrasts | Negates | Supports |
| Creates | Notes | Theorizes |
| Declares | Observes | Writes |
| Emphasizes | Refers | Verifies |