

## APSU Writing Center

### Signal Phrases

#### Signal Phrases

- Signal phrases notify readers that a quote, paraphrase, or summary will follow.
- They also show what information should be included in the in-text citation.

#### Why Use a Signal Phrase?

- Provides a smooth transition between your own words and the cited source.
- Prevents dropping quotations into your writing without warning, helping readers understand the context.

#### What Can They Introduce?

##### Quote

- **Example:** The director of the campus writing center explains, “Students who meet regularly with peer tutors often report increased confidence in their writing and a stronger grasp of academic conventions.”

##### Paraphrase

- **Example:** According to a recent study by the National Writing Project, students who visit writing centers consistently improve their ability to organize and revise essays effectively.

##### Summary

- **Example:** Writing center staff note that using campus resources helps students strengthen their thesis statements and improve clarity in their drafts.

#### Creating a Signal Phrase

- **Author’s Name:** Give the author’s full name the first time; after that, use only the last name.
  - **Example:** Jane Smith emphasizes that...
- **Two Authors:** Name both authors in the signal phrase.
  - **Example:** Smith and Johnson argue that...
- **Three or more Authors:** Include only the first author’s name followed by et al. or list all authors.
  - **Example (first author + et al.):** Davis et al. find that...
  - **Example (all authors listed):** Dye, Pearson, and Smith discuss...
- **No Author Given:** Use the organization or title of the website/book.
  - **Example:** According to the National Writing Project...
- **No Page Numbers:** Use a detailed signal phrase followed by a general in-text citation.
  - **Example:** The writing center director notes that...(Smith, 2023).

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### Signal Phrases

#### Signal Phrase Verbs

- The following list of verbs will help you think about ways to incorporate source material into your writing; just be sure your selection fits the context.
- |                |              |                |              |             |              |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| • accepts      | • believes   | • decides      | • indicates  | • notes     | • remarks    |
| • acknowledges | • challenges | • discusses    | • insists    | • observes  | • reveals    |
| • addresses    | • cites      | • disputes     | • interprets | • opposes   | • speculates |
| • advises      | • claims     | • emphasizes   | • lists      | • proposes  | • supports   |
| • answers      | • contends   | • grants       | • maintains  | • questions | • utilizes   |
| • asserts      | • compares   | • hypothesizes | • mentions   | • refutes   | • verifies   |

#### Practice Using Signal Phrases

- Choose a verb from the list of signal phrase verbs. Then write a sentence introducing a quote, paraphrase, or summary based on the prompts below.

**Practice 1:** (Introduce a quote about how peer tutoring helps with thesis statements.)

**Practice 2:** (Paraphrase a source about the benefits of visiting the writing center.)

**Practice 3:** (Summarize research on students' confidence after visiting the writing center.)

**Practice 4:** (Introduce a quote about time management or study habits.)

**Practice 5:** (Paraphrase a source that discusses feedback from peer tutors.)



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### References

Berkshire Community College. (2024). *Signal Phrases*. The Writing Center.

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