

## Signal Phrases

### APSU Writing Center Handout

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).

### **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, acknowledges, addresses, advises, answers, assert, believes, challenges, cites, claims, contends, compares, decides, discusses, disputes, emphasizes, grants, hypothesizes, etc.

## References

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

[https://www.berkshirecc.edu/academics/academic-support/writing-center/resources/signal\\_phrases.pdf](https://www.berkshirecc.edu/academics/academic-support/writing-center/resources/signal_phrases.pdf)

Bryan Writing Center. (2025). *Signal Phrases and Verbs*. Blinn College.

<https://www.blinn.edu/writing-centers/pdfs/Signal-Verbs-and-Phrases.pdf>

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