

CITING YOUR SOURCES

When you use someone else's words or ideas, you always need to show exactly which words or ideas in your paper are yours and which are not. If you're using someone else's words, you need to put them inside quotation marks and (except in specific, special circumstances), you may not change them. If your source says "America," for example, you can't silently change it to "the United States." If you're using someone else's ideas, you need to paraphrase them in your own words and put them in your own order, entirely.

After quoting your source's words or paraphrasing its ideas, you need to connect your source's point to the rest of your paper. If you use a direct quotation, you always have to connect it to a **signal phrase**; if you paraphrase, a signal phrase may be optional. A signal phrase can go in front of a quotation, after it, or even in the middle. It usually identifies the original writer or speaker, and sometimes the original source. In fact, however, almost any words of your own can introduce a quotation-- you'll just have to identify the source in other ways if you don't do so in the signal phrase.

According to George Will...

Senator Hatch disagrees, saying...

In *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, Scrooge says....

Other sources, however, argue that.....

Another researcher writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine* adds,

People who like frogs' legs describe them as....

Once you've worked the quotation and signal phrase into your paper, you need to show where those words or ideas came from. One way to do this is to work all the relevant information into your signal phrase or a nearby sentence, in what is called **informal citation**:

In his column "Will Fight For Oil" in the February 24, 2006 issue of *The New York Times*, Ted Koppel observes that....

More often, however, you'll use one of several methods of **formal citation**. Some of these styles, like the APA and MLA styles, ask you to put parentheses after your quotations containing cues to their sources; others, like the Chicago and AMA styles, use numbers instead. Every style is different. What most styles have in common, however, is a two-part way of helping a reader find the writer's sources: notes or parentheses, called **in-text citations**, **point** the reader towards the right entry on a **reference list** (also called a "bibliography" or "works cited" section) that **lists** all the information the writer has about each source.

A brief comparison of the ways in which two sources (a book and an article) would be cited in three different styles appears on the back of this handout. For more information, look for a handout on the specific style you're planning to use.

APA STYLE

In-text citation

D. Graber (2002) suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least” (p. 210).

T. Koppel (2006) explores the president's rationale for going to war.

Reference List

Graber, D.A. (2002). *Mass media & American politics*. Washington, D.C: CQ Press.

Koppel, T. (2006, February 24). Will fight for oil. *The New York Times*, p. A23.

MLA STYLE

Doris Graber suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least” (210).

Ted Koppel explores the president's rationale for going to war (A23).

Graber, Doris A. *Mass Media & American Politics*. 6th ed. Washington, D.C: CQ Press, 2002.

Koppel, Ted. "Will Fight for Oil." *New York Times* 24 Feb. 2006, late ed.: A23.