

# 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 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**. A signal phrase 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....

A signal phrase can go in front of a quotation, after it, or even in the middle.

"Four score and seven years ago," Abraham Lincoln said, "our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty."

"Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty," said Abraham Lincoln.

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** (sometimes 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 printed book and a magazine article found online) 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.

## In-text citation

## Reference List

### APA STYLE

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

Park (2008) reported that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever” (para. 2).

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

Park, A. (2008, May 21). How safe are vaccines? *Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com>

### MLA STYLE

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

Alice Park reports that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever.”

Graber, Doris A. *Mass Media and American Politics*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed., CQ Press, 2002.

Park, Alice. “How Safe Are Vaccines?” *Time*. Time Magazine, 21 May 2008. Web. 18 March 2011.

### CHICAGO STYLE

Doris Graber suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Doris A. Graber, *Mass Media & American Politics*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002), 210.

Alice Park reports that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Alice Park, “How Safe Are Vaccines?” *Time*, May 21, 2008, accessed March 18, 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1808438,00.html>.

Graber, Doris A. *Mass Media and American Politics*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002.

Park, Alice. “How Safe Are Vaccines?” *Time*, May 2, 2008. Accessed March 18, 2011. <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1808438,00.html>.