

## Citing and Using Sources

Any time you draw ideas or information from outside your own experience, you should cite where you found the information. In other words, in order to avoid plagiarism, give credit to the source. For specifics regarding documentation styles (MLA, APA, CME, CMOS, Turabian, how to cite WWW and other electronic sources, or how to cite government documents,) visit the TAMU Library's [Citation Guides](#).

### What do I need to document?

Any idea, conclusion, information, words, or data directly derived from someone else

Paraphrases and summaries

Quotations

### How can I best bring outside sources into my paper?

Summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting directly are the most common ways to incorporate sources into your researched prose. Why should you think about the ways you use sources? It is important to keep the subject interesting to your reader. Restrain yourself when you feel the urge to quote. Often, direct quotes contain more information than is necessary for your purpose. To be more succinct, paraphrase the author's ideas. It is a good idea to quote only when the author has said it so well that you can't improve it. Otherwise, summarize or paraphrase. Your audience will appreciate hearing your voice when they read your writing.

### Direct Quotation

Direct quotation is simply that—using the source's exact words within the context of your own prose. Quotes should be identified with quotation marks (four typed lines or less) or by a block quote format (longer than four typed lines) in order to separate them from your words or the words of other sources. Direct quotations should always have three parts:

**Quote** : Material taken directly from the author

**Source** : Material that documents the source, such as page numbers

**Tag** : Material that explains the quote

Note the following examples, in which the **tag** and **source** (MLA is used in this example) are marked. Also note the different ways the same information is conveyed in each example:

1. In **Duin's and Graves' study of vocabulary instruction**, it is noted that "traditional vocabulary instruction is not effective" (328).
2. "Traditional vocabulary instruction is not effective," **notes a recent study** (Duin and Graves 328).
3. "Traditional vocabulary instruction," **notes a recent study**, "is not effective" (Duin and Graves 328).

Remember that tags, or signal phrases as they are sometimes called, are an excellent place to give the credentials of your source, no matter what type of citation you are using (summaries, paraphrases, direct quotations). Reference lists rarely give degrees or offices held, but these can help lend credibility to the information within the citation. Tags can also be used to add needed information to the actual quotation, summary, or paraphrase without detracting from your reference material.

For example:

According to Lloyd Benson, veteran lead dispatcher for the Dixie National Forests, "In my experience, forest fires can frequently be predicted with careful attention to weather conditions" (Smith 4).

Without the tag, or signal phrase, we would have no reason to believe the source.

Also, consciously using tags or signal phrases may help prevent quote dumping, or not integrating quotes.

**Dumped Quote:**

The passage also stresses that the foreigner must be able to blend in with hegemonic British society. "[Dracula] was a criminal socialist, a monster who had no respect for the hereditary continuities, the racial 'equilibrium,' or the evolutionary elite" (Dijkstra 271).

**Revised with proper attribution (tag, signal phrase):**

The passage stresses that the foreigner must be able to blend in with hegemonic British society. Critic Brian Dijkstra also argues that, "[Dracula] was a criminal socialist, a monster who had no respect for the hereditary continuities, the racial 'equilibrium,' or the evolutionary elite" (271).

Avoid monotony by varying the manner in which you give credit to a source. Is your source taking a neutral stance, inferring or suggesting some connections, arguing a point, or agreeing with other scholars? For example:

As Flora Davis has noted, "..."

Toni Morrison, recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, has stated, "..."

"...", claims linguist Noam Chomsky.

Psychologist H. S. Terrace offers an odd argument for this view: "..."

Terrace answers these objections with the following analysis: "..."

The following list offers a variety of verbs that might help to make your source's stance clear.

acknowledges	adds	admits	agrees
argues	asserts	believes	claims
comments	compares	confirms	contends
declares	denies	disputes	emphasizes
endorses	grants	illustrates	implies
insists	notes	observes	points out
reasons	refutes	rejects	reports
responds	suggests	thinks	writes

Adapted from Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* (Boston: St. Martin's, 1992. 217-218) and Jane E. Aaron's *The Little, Brown Essential Handbook for Writers* (Boston: Longman, 1996. 101-102).