



Center of Academic Excellence

Signal Phrases

When citing or borrowing from a source, it is necessary to make clear what information comes from you and what information comes from your source. Signal phrases help to introduce material you are using from a reference. One word, a phrase, or a full sentence might be used to introduce the borrowed material. You can choose signal words to introduce a quotation, paraphrased material, or a summary, keeping in mind that your word or phrasing choice can help guide the reader into the idea of your source. Material paraphrased from a science journal might be introduced using the word *reported*.

Morgan (1990) *reported* that genetic material could be relocated.

Signal phrases often incorporate verbs or verb phrases. The verb should fit the context, such as whether the source claims, argues, observes, concludes, refutes, or states.

As Prescott (2001) *argues*, educational paradigms are obsolete.

Some verbs to use as signal phrases:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Acknowledges | Defines | Posits |
| Adds | Delineates | Presents |
| Admits | Denies | Proposes |
| Advances | Discloses | Purports |
| Affirms | Discounts | Reasons |
| Agrees | Disputes | Recounts |
| Alludes | Documents | Refers |
| Argues | Explains | Reflects |
| Asserts | Expresses | Refutes |
| Attests | Extrapolates | Reiterates |
| Characterizes | Grants | Relates |
| Chronicles | Highlights | Remarks |
| Claims | Hypothesizes | Replies |
| Comments | Illustrates | Reports |
| Compares | Implies | Responds |
| Concludes | Indicates | Reveals |
| Concurs | Insists | States |
| Confirms | Maintains | Submits |
| Contentends | Narrates | Suggests |
| Contrasts | Negates | Supports |

| | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| Creates | Notes | Theorizes |
| Declares | Observes | Verifies |
| Emphasizes | Points out | Writes |