

Signaling Sources in Your Work

Why?

When you use sources in a research paper – whether quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing – you are required to cite the source, letting readers know that the information has been borrowed from somewhere else, and showing them how to find the original material.

How:

Avoid giving a paragraph of information with a source plunked beneath it. Instead, introduce all borrowed material, whether summarized, paraphrased, or quoted directly. Readers should always be able to distinguish between your ideas and those you have borrowed from other authors. So you must provide a SIGNAL whenever source material is going to be used. **Think of it as framing this material to set it off from your own words.** In a long paragraph that includes your own words and reference to someone else's words, you cannot just plunk a source at the bottom of the entire passage of text. You must signal where your own ideas end and your source's ideas begin in the paragraph.

- A signal phrase identifies the author, title, or source you are about to use and establishes the source's reliability.

Introduce (signal)

Use (quote, paraphrase, or summary of information from source)

Comment (explain, discuss, amplify, relate)

- **An Example:**

Many of today's highways follow the routes of ancient hunting paths that grew by frequent use into major trading and migration trails, which later were paved as modern use proliferated. In fact, *Arizona Highways* magazine notes that "Highway 40 follows Old Route 66, which itself was built upon the well-worn wagon route across the plains to newly opened territories of the West." An earlier view of this well-traveled wagon route would reveal hunter-gatherer tribes crossing the plains by foot to trade goods with pueblo people of the Southwest.