

## Signal Phrases and MLA citations

### Signal Phrase Verbs

Introducing quoted, paraphrased or summarized material requires a signal phrase, and signal phrases require verbs. Below is a list of signal phrase verbs. Each verb carries a different meaning, so be sure to use each one correctly.

Eight of the verbs have been used in sentences to illustrate correct usage. Note that some citations indicate paraphrased material, and some citations indicate directly quoted material:

Smith indicates that the plan will become a failure (59).

Smith describes a situation in which students easily learned the procedure (59).

Smith argues for an alternative solution (59).

Smith contends that “twice the budget will be necessary” (59).

Smith shows a relationship between the two phenomena (59).

Smith implies that little can be done to minimize the damage (59).

Smith points out “seven qualities often associated with the effective leadership” (59).

Smith demonstrates how the technology addresses each obstacle (59).

### Other signal phrases:

acknowledges

adds

admits

agrees

asserts

believes

claims

comments

compares

confirms

declares

denies

disputes

emphasizes

endorses

explains

grants

illustrates

narrates

notes

observes

offers

outlines

reasons

refutes

rejects

reports

responds

says

thinks

writes

### **An Alternate Method**

Another way to introduce paraphrased or summarized material is with the phrase “according to.” Be certain, however, to also try to vary the placement of your signal phrases in addition to your sentence structure.

According to Smith, “no amount of argumentation is likely to sway American public opinion away from the right to free speech” (117).

Smith contends, in *Free Speech*, that “no amount of argumentation is likely to sway American public away from the right to free speech” (117).

### **MLA CITATIONS:**

When borrowing text from a source, MLA requires citations. Here’s a brief description of how the process works: the source is introduced by a signal phrase that names the author; a page number (in parenthesis) follows the quoted material; and works cited page (beginning on a new page, alphabetized by author and last name) follows the paper. Below is a resource to help you with signal phrases.