



INTRODUCING QUOTATIONS

When you include a quotation, summary, or paraphrase, the reader needs to be guided smoothly from your words to the words of a source. This can be done using signal phrases, which name the author or speaker of the material and provide context for the source material. Use present-tense verbs to introduce the source material. For example:

Signal phrase in present tense

- Cisneros argues that her father did not believe in the value of education for women; in his opinion, college was only good for finding a husband (98).
- Orwell writes, “And suddenly I realized I should have to shoot the elephant after all” (129).

Commonly Used Signal Phrases

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

The first time you mention a source, briefly describe the author’s title, credentials, or experience to lend credibility to your writing. For example:

- Roberta Rubenstein of American University believes that the use of the Gothic is especially noteworthy in Shirley Jackson’s story “The Lottery.” In her article “House Mothers and Haunted Daughters: Shirley Jackson and Female Gothic,” Rubenstein argues that Jackson’s use of the Gothic becomes “increasingly more masterful” (1).

Here are some common ways to introduce quotations:

1. **Incomplete sentence with a comma:**

Notice the comma which separates the signal phrase from the quote. For example:

Wolff writes, “They left the woods and hunted along the creek” (154).

2. **Complete sentence with a colon:**

Notice that the introductory sentence is complete, uses a signal phrase, and uses a colon to introduce the quote. Usually, the quote itself is also a complete sentence. For example:

Jackson describes the atmosphere of suspense surrounding the ritual: “A sudden hush fell on the crowd as Mr. Summers cleared his throat and looked at the list” (120).

3. **Integrate a short part of a quote into your own sentence:**

Notice that no punctuation is needed if the quote can fit smoothly and correctly into your sentence. Punctuate and capitalize as you would with any other sentence. For example:

Cohen’s grandfather walks “exactly like Charlie Chaplin” and has “long fingers” (172).