

APA: Integrating Sources and In-text Citations



When using outside sources, it is important to understand how to incorporate them into your writing effectively. This handout explains how to introduce, use, and cite outside sources in your paragraphs.

First, create a signal phrase or introduce the source into your sentence.

The signal phrase alerts your readers that a source is coming, whether it's a quotation, summary, or paraphrase. Usually, the signal phrase mentions the author and/or text and gives a context to the source you are using (Hacker, 2010, p. 508). Typically, signal phrases are good to use when you need to establish the credibility of your sources. *(Signal phrases are underlined in the example below.)

According to Anne Lamott (1994), author of *Bird by Bird*, readers need to have friends read their work before submitting it.

Writers need to come to writing with fervor and passion notes science fiction author Stephen King (2003).

In some situations, you may not need to establish the credibility of your sources in your signal phrase; in this case, you will integrate them into your sentence. Here are some examples:

Although she thought she was in the clear, “An unexpected tap on [her] shoulder startled [her]” (Brandt, 1993, p. 103).

It is unclear what Mrs. Mallard dies from: “a joy that kills” or realizing she will not have freedom (Chopin, 2001, p. 3).

Here are some common verbs in signal phrases (Hacker, 2010, p. 509). Please note that APA asks for past tense verbs.

acknowledged	believed	declared	illustrated	reasoned	thoughts
added	claimed	denied	implied	refuted	wrote
admitted	commented	disputed	insisted	rejected	
agreed	compared	emphasized	noted	reported	
argued	confirmed	endorsed	observed	responded	
asserted	contended	granted	pointed out	suggested	

How do I punctuate the transition from the signal phrase to the source?

This often creates some confusion for students, but by following a few simple rules, you can correctly punctuate this transition.

- **Comma:** When the signal phrase is NOT a complete sentence, end the signal phrase with a comma. Then insert the quotation.
Example: According to Diana Hacker (2010), “Readers need to move from your words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt” (p. 509).
- **No Punctuation:** When the signal phrase ends with “that” or “which,” do not insert a comma or capitalize the first letter of the quotation. This also applies when the quotation is necessary for the sentence to be grammatically correct.

Example: Diana Hacker (2010) argued that “readers need to move from your words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt” (p. 509).

Example: Writers need to make sure “readers . . . move from your words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt” (Hacker, 2010, p. 509).

Example: Brandt (1993) stole the pin, which “was never mentioned again” (p. 103).

- **Colon:** When a signal phrase is a complete sentence, use a colon.

Example: Grant and Lee shared an amazing quality: “There was the ability, at the end, to turn quickly from war to peace once the fighting was over” (Diaz, 2002, p. 267).

- **Capitalization:** Capitalize the first letter of a quotation when 1) you use a comma at the end of the signal phrase, or 2) the first letter of the quotation is capitalized in the original source.

Example: Although she thought she was in the clear, “An unexpected tap on [her] shoulder startled [her]” (Brandt, 1993, p. 103).

Example: Brandt (1993) was not ready for “An unexpected tap” from security after she stole the pin (p. 103).

Second, there are three ways to use a source: quote, summary, or paraphrase. Choose which way you want to use your source.

1. **Direct Quotation:** A direct quotation is the use of the author’s *exact* words in your essay. When you use a direct quotation, indicate this by putting the author’s words in quotation marks.

Example: When describing her mother’s English, Tan (1998) wrote, “My mother’s expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands” (p. 47).

2. **Summary:** When using a summary in your essay, you condense a lengthy source to just a few sentences or a short paragraph of your own words. If you use any words from the source in your summary, you must put those words in quotation marks.

Example: In Chopin’s (2001) *The Story of an Hour*, readers saw the main character, Mrs. Mallard, experience various reactions to the news of her husband’s death. First, she cried, but quickly stops. Next, she gazed out of her window, imagining a freer life. Finally, she died from a “joy that kills” upon seeing her husband alive (p. 3).

3. **Paraphrase:** Paraphrasing is somewhat similar to summarizing; you put a source’s ideas into your own words. The main difference, though, is that a paraphrase is around the same length as the original source while a summary is a shortened version of a source. The example below comes from *The Bedford Handbook*.

Original Source: In earlier times, surveillance was limited to the information that a supervisor could observe and record firsthand and to primitive counting devices. In the computer age surveillance can be instantaneous, unblinking, cheap, and maybe, most importantly, easy.

Example Paraphrase: Scholars Carl Botan and Mihaela Vorvoreanu (2011) claimed that the nature of workplace surveillance has changed over time. Before the arrival of computers, managers could collect only small amounts of information about their employees based on what they saw or heard. Now, because computers are standard workplace technology, employers can monitor employees efficiently.

Third, add an APA format in-text citation.

Below you will find examples of how to cite your sources in-text according to the 7th edition of the APA *Publication Manual*. **Please note that the examples below are single spaced to conserve space; however, APA format requires that your essay be double-spaced throughout the entire document, including citations. APA also dictates that you use past to introduce your source.**

Paraphrase/summary with Author and Date Cited in Text (no parenthetical citation necessary)

In her 2002 book *In Cold Fear*, Steinle explored some of the controversy surrounding *Catcher in the Rye*.

Paraphrase/summary with Author Not Cited in Text

In her book *Bird by Bird*, the author claimed that writers need to bounce their ideas off friends or family members to get an idea of how their work will be received (Lamott, 1994).

Paraphrase/summary with Author Cited in Text

Lamott (1994) attributed her success as a writer to the fact that she knows and recognizes that her writing needs several drafts and revisions before it is close to a “good” draft.

Direct Quotation with Name of Author Cited in Text

Steinle’s (2002) study of the 1982 Calhoun County book banning found “that of those involved in the Calhoun County incident, only the librarian had actually read the majority of the books cited and some of the ‘censors’ had not read one of those books in question” (p. 1).

Direct Quotation without Name of Author Cited in Text

Writers don’t often realize that “knowledge of your characters also emerges the way a Polaroid develops: it takes time for you to know them” (Lamott, 2002, p. 44).

Long (Block) Quotations

Place direct quotations that are 40 words or longer in a free-standing block of typewritten lines and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation 1/2 inch from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout, but do not add an extra blank line before or after it. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

Example below.

Two Authors: list both authors in the signal phrase. (Payte & Goncalves, 2022)

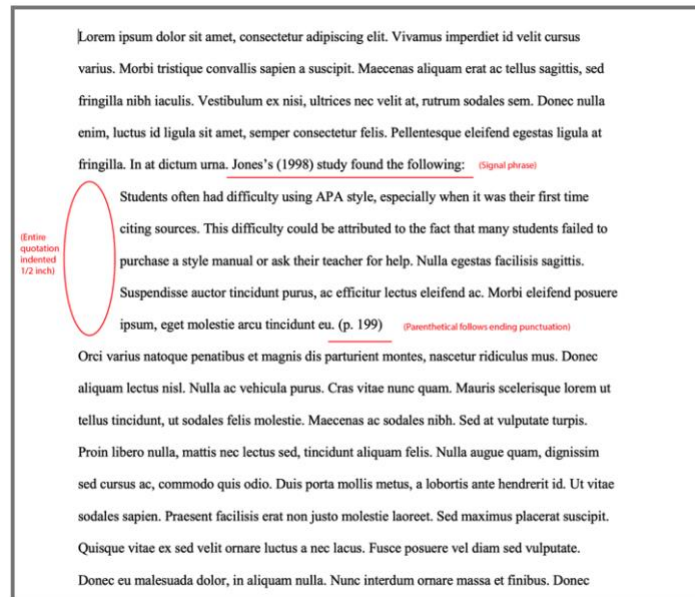
Three or more authors: List only the first author’s name and “et al.”

Secondary Source:

In the reference list, provide an entry for the secondary source that you used. In the text identify the primary source and write “as cited in” the secondary source that you used.

Ex: (Rabbitt, 1982, as cited in Lyon et al., 2014)

Ex: (as cited in Nicholson, 2003)



Formatting example for block quotations in APA 7 style.

Electronic and Multimedia Sources without Page Numbers: Electronic sources are cited in the typical author-page number style with one difference: when an Internet site does not have page numbers, offer other location information such as screen, section (sec.), paragraph (para.), track, or time frame (minute).

Because of Greece's physical characteristics—its jagged coast made almost all settlements within 40 miles of the sea—the ancient Greeks relied on the sea for most long—distance traveling (Martin, 2002, sec. 2.4).

Hoppin and Taveras (2004) pointed out that several other medications were classified by the Drug Enforcement Administration as having the “potential for abuse” (Weight-Loss Drug, para. 6)

Students wonder “what to do when there is no page number” (Hall, 2001, para. 5).

According to Smith (1997), “People can move objects with their mind” (Mind over Matter, para. 6).

Unknown Author and Unknown Date (e.g. articles on websites): If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation “n.d.” (for “no date”).

Another study of students and research decisions discovered that students succeeded more often with tutoring than without (“Tutoring and APA,” n.d.).

*If the date is given, replace “n.d” with the date: (“Tutoring and APA,” 2003).

A few pointers to keep in mind:

1. Do not “drop” quotations into your writing without using a signal phrase.
2. Longer quotations have specific formatting issues, depending on the style citation you are using.
3. To indicate you have left a portion of a quotation out, indicate this by using an ellipsis mark (. . .).
4. Use brackets to indicate a change in the original source.

Source: Hacker, D. & Nancy Sommers; *The Bedford Handbook and Purdue OWL*.