



## Crediting Experts Using Signal Phrases – English Transcript

Now that you've found enough information to answer all of your research questions, it's time to write your paper. This tutorial will show you how to give credit to the experts you learn from by using signal phrases.

So, just what are signal phrases? They are phrases that do two things -- allow you to showcase some of those gems you found while researching and share who the expert is behind your information. This signals, or identifies, the owner of an idea.

This is a lot like how authors of plays indicate who is saying what in the play.

Maria: Hey, Joe. Can you hear me?

Joe: Maria, is that you?

Maria: Who else would it be? We're connected by tin cans and a string.

Joe: Ha, ha, right!

You get the idea. When reading a play, a name followed by a colon tells the reader who is speaking.

In books, authors also use signal phrases to let readers know who is speaking or thinking:

"Maria, which movie would you like to see?" asked Joe. "Something without zombies," replied Maria. "That doesn't leave anything good," he protested. "Well, you can always go by yourself," she teased.

The phrases -- asked Joe, replied Maria, he protested, and she teased -- are signals that tell a reader who is saying what.

When writing a research paper, a similar method is used. It's important that a reader can understand to whom an idea belongs. Wait, you say. I wrote the paper. It all belongs to me.

To some extent, you're right. The paper does belong to you. However, as a researcher, you're expected to use multiple sources to find the opinions and ideas of experts, think about what you have learned, and add your own ideas and conclusions. It is very important that a reader can tell when you are making a point yourself versus when you are borrowing someone else's ideas.

Let's see how signal phrases are used to incorporate information from sources into a research paper. For our first example, we will use this paragraph from Joyce Markovics' book, *The Honey Bee's Hive*. Don't worry. There won't be a quiz about it:



"Honey bees are insects that live in hives. Just as many people live and work in a city, up to 50,000 honey bees live and work in a hive. This home is made up of a honeycomb, which bees build inside hollow trees, on tree branches, in holes in the ground, or in beekeepers' wooden boxes."

If you were to use Markovics' ideas in any way, you would need to give the author credit. The easiest, most direct way to do that is to use a signal phrase. Usually the signal phrase is used for the first time a source is introduced. It includes the author's name and the title of the work.

In this example, notice the phrase -- Joyce Markovics states. Similar to our earlier conversation between Maria and Joe, this phrase signals that the idea belongs to Markovics. The number in parentheses tells the reader that this idea appeared on page 6 of Markovics' book.

Because there are no quotation marks around the idea, we know that it is a paraphrase and not a direct quote. A paraphrase is an idea or details from a source written in your own words. No quotation marks are needed around a paraphrase. In contrast, a direct quote has the exact word from a source. You must include quotation marks around it.

If we used a direct quote instead of a paraphrase to share that same information, it would look like this.

Remember, though, that you should use direct quotes sparingly and only for gems that you find -- phrases or sentences that are stated in an especially helpful, clear, or interesting way. Most of the time, you will paraphrase or just summarize the information you find.

Meet Omar. Omar wants to use some of Markovics' ideas in his research paper about how honey bees live as a community. But, he will need to signal to the reader when an idea belongs to himself versus when it belongs to Markovics.

This is Omar's first draft:

Many honey bees live in hives, which is similar to how people live in cities. Comparisons can be made between how a hive works and how a city or community works. There are different jobs bees do in their community, just as there are different jobs people do in a city.

Can you tell which ideas are Markovics' and which ones are Omar's? Nope! They all look like they could belong to anyone. That's because Omar did not use any signal phrases to distinguish between his own ideas and Markovics'.

In his second draft, Omar incorporates a signal phrase by starting with -- According to Joyce Markovics. These four words signal the reader that the idea that follows belongs to Markovics. However, there's nothing to show when Markovics' idea ends and Omar's begins.



This is Omar's third draft. Omar has further signaled to the reader which ideas belong to Markovics, and which are his own. He added the page number to indicate where the ideas came from in Markovics' book. The page number also shows where Markovics' ideas end.

There are many different ways to incorporate signal phrases. For example, Omar could have included it at the end of the sentence instead of at the beginning:

Many honey bees live in hives, which is similar to how people live in cities, according to Joyce Markovics (6).

Or, he could have changed the verb that he used. For example:

Joyce Markovics explains that many honey bees live in hives, which is similar to how people live in cities (6).

Or:

Many honeybees live in hives, which is similar to how people live in cities, observes Joyce Markovics (6).

Signal phrases use verbs. Some other verbs you could use are claim, state, share, describe, point out, suggest, note, report, define, show, and write.

Signal phrases and citations go hand in hand. When doing research, you mention sources within the paper to show where ideas come from. This is sometimes called in-text or parenthetical citation. You also create citations for all of the sources together in the bibliography or works cited at the end of your paper.

Here's what a full citation would look like for the Markovics book.

By now you understand that signal phrases are important. Use them to tell the reader when you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing someone else's ideas and to indicate when you're adding your own comments, interpretations, or clarifications.

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